



60th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Item 4: Interactive dialogue with the Group of Independent Experts on Belarus 19 September 2025 Joint oral statement

Mr. President,

The Law Society of England and Wales, the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, Lawyers for Lawyers and Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, thank the Group of Independent Experts on Belarus for their update and important work.

Lawyers in Belarus continue to face disbarment, arbitrary detention, and prosecution simply for doing their job. Such action violates the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.

This harassment also extends beyond the border to lawyers who have fled Belarus. Our organisations are alarmed by the State Security Committee's decision of 18 August 2025 to designate the Belarusian Association of Human Rights Lawyers, as an "extremist formation." This carries penalties of up to 10 years' imprisonment.

This Association was founded by exiled lawyers and works to uphold the rights to defence, fair trial, and the independence of the legal profession. Its designation as "extremist" organisation is an arbitrary misuse of law that undermines fundamental freedoms.

We urge this Council to demand an immediate withdrawal of the Association's designation as an "extremist formation", and an end to reprisals against Belarusian lawyers. We also call on members to raise these concerns during Belarus's upcoming Universal Periodic Review and to continue supporting the Group of Independent Experts and Special Rapporteur in their vital work.

Thank you.

This statement was delivered by:
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