

An open letter from Member of European Parliament Liudas Mažylis, in concerns of imprisoned and prosecuted women of Belarus

To whom it might concern,

Due to the last year unfolded events, I am profoundly concerned and greatly disappointed of continuous deterioration of women rights in Belarus. Nonetheless, for the 8th of March, International Women's day it is a right moment to remember all wrongly and unjustifiably prosecuted and imprisoned women. Since 9th of August 2020 every single day new cases of detention, police violence and prosecution of Belarusian woman for standing up for democracy are being brought up. For the context, Human Rights Center "Viasna" indicated that approximately there have been around 511 detentions in connection with the exercise of rights and freedoms, including arrests of 176 women just in the last month. To best of my knowledge, in 2020 total number of publicly known detainees during the post-election protests, exceeded 31,000, while more than 20% of them were women. These developments are simply unacceptable.

For this reason, I urge Belarusian state authorities to stop any kind of brutal prosecution that violate fundamental human rights, moreover, I call for unconditional release of all wrongfully detained women over the past seven months immediately. I condemn inhumane treatment of imprisoned women in Belarus and insist that such behaviour from Belarusian state authorities cannot be excused nor forgotten. Furthermore, I call all concerned parties, from numerous institutions and academic communities to stand up and to continue your support for a democracy and women dignity, as it is defined in Geneva Convention. Svetlana Tschihanovskaja, Maria Kalesnikava and many other women emerged as a leading political forces and drivers of societal and political change in Belarus. For this reason, we must continue our joint effort in support and solidarity.

Sincerely,

Member of the European Parliament prof. Liudas Mažylis