

Viešoji įstaiga «Teisinė iniciatyva»

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To: Ministry of Justice
CC: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Interpol National Bureau
Public Prosecutor's Office

Vilnius, 18/12/2024

Interpol requests from Belarus processing procedure

Following the contested presidential election in August 2020, numerous reports from international organizations have raised serious concerns about the situation in Belarus. These include the breakdown of the justice system, the widespread use of torture in prisons, and the detention of over 60,000 individuals, with around 1,500 recognized as political prisoners. Detentions and arrests reportedly continue to this day.

Regrettably, even those who have left Belarus, including politicians, journalists, lawyers, and other prominent figures, often remain under threat due to the extraterritorial reach of Belarusian authorities. One concerning example is the use of Interpol mechanisms, such as Red Notices and diffusions, to target political opponents abroad.

VšĮ «Teisinė iniciatyva» (Legal Initiative) is a Belarusian human rights organization that has continued its work after being re-registered in the Republic of Lithuania. Previously, we operated as the NGO Legal Initiative, officially registered in the Republic of Belarus.

Our organization co-founded the International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus and actively represents this initiative. The Committee plays a significant role in documenting evidence of torture and human rights violations in Belarus. It is also a co-lead and Steering Committee member of the International Accountability Platform for Belarus (IAPB), established to gather, preserve, and analyze evidence of human rights abuses in Belarus. More details about our work can be found on our website: legin.info.

In addition to our work on accountability for human rights violations, we are actively engaged in the field of forced migration and human rights. Our organization provides legal and informational support to Belarusians who have been forced to leave their country due to persecution and threats to their safety. This includes advocacy for their protection, assistance in asylum procedures, and efforts to ensure respect for their fundamental rights.

The Justice and Home Affairs Council of the EU, in its meeting on March 3-4, 2022, emphasized the importance of adhering to the Interpol Constitution, which prohibits any actions of a political, military, religious, or racial nature. In light of this, it is crucial to carefully examine extradition requests from Belarus and reject those with evident political motives.

We recognize and deeply value the role your country can play as a place of refuge and protection for Belarusians seeking safety from persecution. Ensuring that individuals fleeing political repression have the opportunity to remain on your territory and seek protection would reflect your country's strong commitment to international human rights standards.

Given the above, we would be grateful if you could clarify the following points:

1. Is there currently a special procedure applied to Red Notices and diffusions issued by Belarus in your country?
2. Does this imply that a Belarusian individual might be detained pending a court's extradition decision?
3. Are there publicly available statistics on such cases for further analysis?

We are ready to provide detailed legal information on why deportations to Belarus may raise serious concerns under international human rights standards, as well as examples of Belarusians persecuted abroad through Interpol mechanisms. Additionally, we would be happy to share suggestions on preventing the misuse of Interpol by the Belarusian authorities.

Please do not hesitate to contact us directly should you require further clarification. We look forward to your response.

Please send your reply to the email address: **migration.legin@gmail.com**

Best regards,

Kristina Rikhter
Legal Advisor

Director VšĮ «Teisinė iniciatyva»

Viktorija Fedorova

