



Chairman Aliaksandr Yarashuk
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Subject	Annex
Violence against peaceful protest in Belarus; Solidarity from FNV	-

Dear Aliaksandr,

On behalf of FNV, the largest trade union organisation of the Netherlands, I want to express our solidarity and sympathy with you, your leaders and members who have been arrested and severely abused after the peaceful protests that followed the fraudulent elections of August 9th in your country. We are appalled by the disproportionate violence, persecution and arrests directed at people peacefully protesting.

We have taken notice of the messages reported by the independent observers on serious fraud, manipulation and irregularities before, during and after the elections. Lukashenko's authoritarian regime responded by cutting internet access for several days, and arresting protestors and independent journalists. Despite these repressive measures there are widespread actions now undertaken in the whole of Belarus. The increasing number of labour strikes that are occurring at this very moment show the growing political activity of the workers. We can only respect this.

We have reported the violence and arrest of innocent civilians to our foreign ministry and demanded action, including the mistreatment of the union leaders who peacefully participated in the elections as independent observers, such as the former president of the Independent Trade Union of Belarus (BNP) Nikolai Zimin, together with at least three other activists.

We have understood Zimin was sentenced to 25 days of detention while attending peaceful protests in the city of Soligorsk. His colleague Maxim Sereda was sentenced to 12 days. Jan Roman, a journalist and activist of the Free Metal Workers' Union (SPM), was brutally beaten and detained at the police station, after going to enquire about the fate of colleagues who had been arrested earlier.

We know Belarus has a reputation for the continuous systemic violation of freedom of association and fundamental workers' rights and in various occasions we have protested against these violations on repeated occasions.

We ask our government to insist with the EU for a strong and unequivocal reaction and for a reassessment of the relations with Belarus.

Please be sure we will stand with you and other likeminded organizations in your struggle for the universal principles of democracy, including freedom of association, freedom of speech and freedom of access to information as the fundamental prerequisites of a democratic society.

In solidarity,



Han Busker,
President FNV,
The Netherlands

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