



**29th session of the
Human Rights Council**

Item 4

**Individual ID with SR on Belarus
23 June 2015
Delivered by Renate Bloem**

Thank you, Mr. President,

Mr. Haraszti, CIVICUS welcomes your timely report and shares your concerns over the systemic denial of human rights to citizens by means of restrictive laws and abusive practices.

During Belarus' second UPR Review last month, CIVICUS' partners from the ground shed light on the restrictions adopted by the Belarusian government since its first Review, further impeding the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. The human rights situation has deteriorated since 2011 as a result of repressive practices such as arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, abductions and continued harassment of human rights defenders.

They drew particular attention to the fact that Belarusian law enforcement bodies took a decision to deport human rights defender Elena Tonkacheva, the Chairperson of the board of the **Legal Transformation Center**, which had provide professional legal and expert assistance to non-profit institutions of Belarus for over 20 years.

Mr. Vice President,

The government of Belarus does **not** cooperate with international human rights mechanisms on the most important and acute problems of human rights. It demonstratively ignores and challenges resolutions of this Council, does not implement most of the recommendations of the UN treaty bodies and refuses to implement decision of the UN Human Rights Committee.

We are particularly worried that Belarus flatly rejected any further cooperation with your mandate, thereby denying to its own peril constructive dialogue to improve its human rights situation. We therefore call on the Council to renew and strengthen your mandate and urge the Government of Belarus to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release all remaining political prisoners;
- Comply with all provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders;
- Repeal article 193.1 of the Criminal Code which imposes criminal sanctions for participating in unregistered CSOs;

- End repression against independent journalists and bloggers, repeal restrictive media and internet laws, stop the practice of blocking internet sites with critical information; and
- Allow independent civil society monitors to observe the elections later this year.

Thank you