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Statement by Slovenia

at the

**48th Session of the Human Rights Council**

**Interactive Dialogue on the interim oral update of the OHCHR on Belarus**

*Geneva, 24 September 2021*

Madame President,

We thank the High Commissioner for her update. Slovenia aligns itself with the EU statement.

We are deeply concerned by relentless crackdown on civil society and unprecedented wave of repression against non-governmental organizations carried out by the Belarus regime resulting in serious violations of fundamental rights and deteriorating human rights situation in Belarus.

Slovenia strongly condemns the persecution of representatives of the civil society, human rights defenders, journalists, political opponents, members of trade unions, lawyers, and members of national minorities and their organizations.

All political and other prisoners illegally detained for legitimately exercising their human rights in Belarus should be promptly released and allowed to challenge the charges brought against them.

We are appalled by the instrumentalization of the illegal migration and by reports of exploitation of the vulnerable situation of migrants by the Belarus regime for political purposes. Migration must not be used as a bargaining chip and we urge the Belarus to stop this practice.

We reiterate our full support to the newly established OHCHR Examination on of the human rights situation in Belarus and repeat our strong call on Belarus to cooperate fully with international and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms by granting them unhindered access to Belarus, and implement their recommendations.

*Madame President,*

*What further steps should the international community take to ensure that perpetrators of human rights violations in Belarus will be brought to account?*

Thank you.