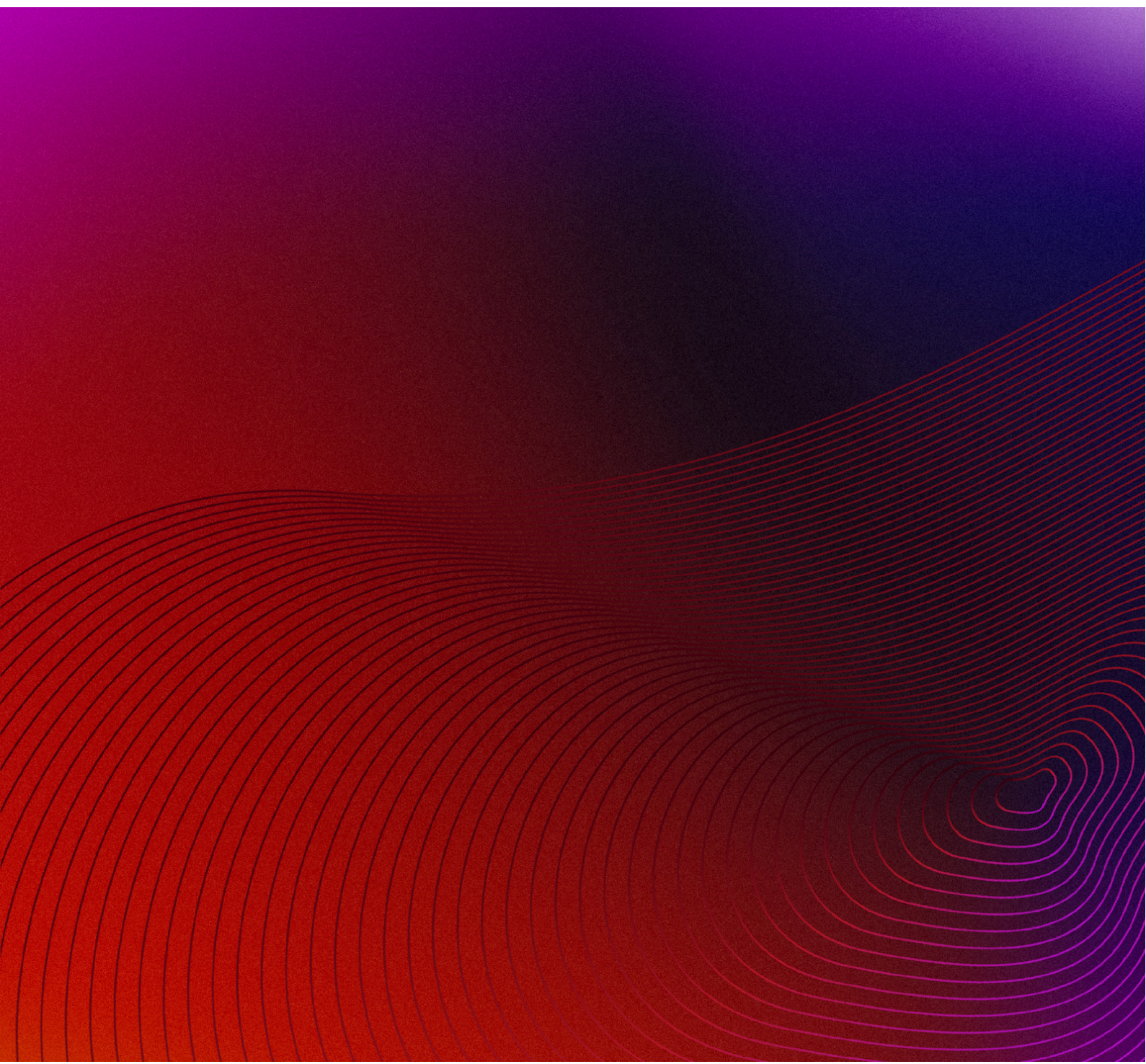


КАНФЕРЭНЦЫЯ  
НОВАЯ  
БЕЛАРУСЬ <sup>2025</sup>

# On the Inadmissibility of Violating Freedom of Conscience and Religion in Belarus

Resolution by the Democratic Forces of Belarus  
for the New Belarus Conference 2025





**We, representatives of the democratic forces of Belarus,**

**Strongly condemn** the systematic violations of the right to freedom of conscience and religion in Belarus, carried out by the Lukashenko regime. Repression against religious organizations is part of a large-scale campaign to destroy civil society and suppress any form of alternative public identity.

Since 2020, the authorities have deliberately used the guise of “combating extremism” and “destabilization to destroy independent NGOs. In total, about 2,000 civil society organizations have been eliminated during this period. In 2021, the attacks targeted human rights defenders; in 2022, trade unions; in 2023, political parties. In 2024–2025, the repression shifted to religious communities.

Amendments to the Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” required all denominations to undergo re-registration by June 5, 2025. At the same time, Article 193-1 of the Criminal Code of Belarus provides for criminal liability for any activity carried out on behalf of an unregistered organization.

***Numerous cases have been recorded in which religious communities of various denominations have been stripped of their state registration under this repressive legislation. As a result, a number of parishes and religious groups have been forced outside the legal framework and placed under the threat of criminal prosecution.***

**We also note** severe repression against clergy who refuse to submit to regime propaganda.

- In December 2024, Catholic priest Henrykh (Henadz) Akalatovich was sentenced to 11 years in prison for alleged “espionage” for Poland and the Vatican.
- On October 17, 2022, Orthodox priest Siarhei Rezanovich was sentenced to 16 years for an alleged “conspiracy to seize power”.
- On 30 April 2025, priest Andrzej Yukhnevich (Juchniewicz) was sentenced to 13 years in prison after multiple arrests and charges of “extremism” for posting photos with national and Ukrainian symbols.

According to human rights defenders, since 2020, at least 74 clergy of all denominations – Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant – have faced repression. Forms of persecution have included arrest, fines, searches, dismissal, bans on ministry, and forced emigration.

**We believe** this policy violates the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus and international treaties, assaulting on the spiritual and cultural diversity of Belarusian society.

A particularly symbolic manifestation is the destruction of Belarusian-language worship services. Only one Orthodox church remains in Minsk where the liturgy is conducted in Belarusian. This is a telling act of discrimination aimed against national identity.

**In this regard, we demand:**

- the repeal of the repressive amendments to the Law *“On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations”*;
- the repeal of Article 193-1 of the Criminal Code, which criminalizes the activities of unregistered organizations, including religious groups;
- the release of all clergy imprisoned on political grounds;
- the return of confiscated churches to the faithful, including the Red Church in Minsk;
- an end to harassment, censorship, and administrative control over religious communities;
- the restoration of registration to all religious organizations and communities that were deprived of it on political or unfounded administrative grounds, including during the 2024–2025 re-registration process.

**We call on the international community to:**

- immediately respond to violations of freedom of religion in Belarus;
- ensure regular international monitoring and documentation of violations;
- urge the EU Special Envoy for the Promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief to investigate these cases;
- provide legal and technical support to persecuted religious communities;
- promote international solidarity among denominations and assistance to those from Belarus in exile;
- strengthen cooperation with international human rights structures and Belarusian civil society to ensure transparent and regular monitoring of the situation.

**We affirm that freedom of conscience is not only a human right but also an unshakable foundation for peace, harmony, and democracy.**

*Adopted at the New Belarus Conference  
Warsaw, August 2025*