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SVIATLANA
TSIKHANOUSKAYA
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This document was prepared by the **Office of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya** in cooperation with **BELPOL**, an association of former law enforcement officers of the Republic of Belarus who have opposed political repression and abuses of power, and with the support of the **Cyber Partisans** – a decentralized group of Belarusian hacker-activists documenting the activities of Belarusian security structures and exposing violations of human rights and abuses of state institutions. The document also draws on the expert contributions of independent specialists in international law, human rights, international police cooperation, and countering transnational repression. The preparation and expert review of the document involved, among others, lawyer and former presidential candidate of the Republic of Belarus Ales (Alaksiej) Michalevic, as well as representatives of partner organizations and experts with many years of practical experience in supporting cases of individuals subjected to politically motivated persecution.

The purpose of this document is to analyze the existing information-sharing mechanisms within the International Criminal Police Organization (hereinafter – INTERPOL), identify the risks of their use for political purposes, and develop practical recommendations aimed at improving the effectiveness of the system while simultaneously strengthening safeguards for the protection of human rights. Particular attention is paid to the misuse of INTERPOL's instruments by authoritarian regimes to persecute political opponents, human rights defenders, journalists, representatives of civil society, and participants in democratic movements residing outside their countries of origin.

In recent years, Belarus has become one of the most illustrative examples of the use of international law enforcement cooperation mechanisms to exert pressure on individuals targeted for political reasons. Following the events of 2020, hundreds of thousands of Belarusian citizens were forced to leave the country due to the threat of criminal prosecution, arbitrary detention, torture, and other serious human rights violations. At the same time, there has been an increase in attempts to use international legal and police cooperation mechanisms to continue the persecution of such individuals

outside Belarus.

The first part of the document examines the main principles governing INTERPOL's processing of personal data, including mechanisms for publishing Notices and disseminating Diffusions, as well as existing procedures for monitoring compliance with the INTERPOL Constitution and international human rights standards. The second part provides a detailed analysis of the problems arising from the abuse of these mechanisms by repressive regimes, including the practice of politically motivated requests, insufficient transparency of certain procedures, and existing risks for individuals under international protection or those forced to leave their countries for political reasons. The final part presents specific recommendations aimed at improving information verification mechanisms, increasing procedural transparency, and strengthening safeguards against politically motivated persecution.

The authors of the document proceed from the understanding that effective efforts to combat international crime and ensure international security are impossible without trust in INTERPOL's mechanisms. Such trust is undermined when individual states use international police cooperation channels to persecute individuals for political reasons, disguising such cases as ordinary criminal or economic offences, which contradicts Article 3 of the INTERPOL Constitution and its fundamental principle of political neutrality. Maintaining trust in the INTERPOL system is possible only through strict compliance with the INTERPOL Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and other international human rights standards. The recommendations proposed in this document are not aimed at restricting international police cooperation, but rather at strengthening its legitimacy, effectiveness, and resilience against abuses by states that use law enforcement mechanisms for political persecution.

**Leanid Marozau**

Legal Advisor to Sviatlana
Tsikhanouskaya, Head of the
Legal Department, PhD candidate

"The Lukashenka regime has long gone beyond domestic repression and has consistently developed practices of transnational persecution against its opponents. In recent years, we have witnessed cases of detentions, threats of extradition, and other forms of pressure against Belarusian citizens in Poland, Lithuania, Slovakia, Armenia, Georgia, Türkiye, Vietnam, Italy, Argentina, and other countries. Such actions affect journalists, human rights defenders, representatives of democratic forces, former political prisoners, and ordinary citizens who had to leave Belarus due to politically motivated persecution.

The use of international law enforcement mechanisms to target political opponents must receive a strong international response. Officials, law enforcement personnel, and other representatives of the regime involved in organizing transnational repression and abusing international cooperation mechanisms must become subject to targeted sanctions and other accountability measures. Impunity for such actions poses a threat not only to Belarusians, but also to the international justice system itself, which is based on the principles of the rule of law and respect for human rights."

**Uladzimir Zhyhar**

Security analyst for the Eastern
European region, spokesperson
for BELPOL

"In recent years, according to various estimates, between 800,000 and one million citizens have left Belarus. Many had to flee the country to escape politically motivated repression, which has reached an unprecedented scale since 2020. Criminal cases have been brought against thousands of people on political grounds, and many have been convicted in absentia. However, the danger posed by the Lukashenka regime persists for anyone who has come under its scrutiny.

Using every means at its disposal, the Lukashenka regime consistently and systematically persecutes those who dared to engage in civil disobedience in 2020. One of the key elements of this system is the Belarusian National Central Bureau of INTERPOL, which is part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. By manipulating documents and evidence and taking advantage of international partners' limited awareness of what is happening inside the country, the regime in Belarus often obtains critically important information about its political opponents and other individuals who have left Belarus.

After the start of the full-scale war against Ukraine, repression has spread to those who have openly spoken out against the war. Today, this puts at risk not only politicians and well-known activists. Journalists,

human rights defenders, athletes, volunteers, and their families are all under attack. No one whom the regime considers disloyal can feel completely safe.

INTERPOL was created to combat international crime. It cannot and must not become a tool in the hands of a dictatorship, used for the transnational persecution of political opponents."



Ales Michalevic

PhD, public and political figure, attorney

"I would like to note that the European Parliament's recent resolution on countering transnational repression (dated June 16, 2026) went unnoticed by the media, even though it took a significant step toward recognizing the Lukashenka regime's abuse of INTERPOL's mechanisms. The resolution explicitly pointed to Belarus's use of INTERPOL's Red Notice system to persecute political opponents in exile. What lawyers and human rights defenders have been documenting for years has, for the first time, been formally established as the position of the European Union authorities.

For me, as a lawyer defending Belarusians forced into exile, this provides a new foothold. All EU member states now have an institutional basis for treating arrest warrants issued by Belarus with heightened caution. I hope that there will be some progress in the same direction on the part of INTERPOL as well. However, it will be some time before we can assess the impact of specific decisions on practice – I think in about a year."

BELARUS: A STATE OF SYSTEMIC REPRESSION

Since the 2020 presidential election, the human rights situation in Belarus has remained consistently repressive. Despite the prolonged nature of the crisis, no systemic improvements have taken place. On the contrary, repression has become institutionalized and is carried out through criminal and administrative prosecution, as well as through the broad application of legislation on “extremism” and “terrorism.”

Human rights organizations, including **the Viasna Human Rights Center**, have documented the ongoing nature of politically motivated detentions, criminal cases, and pressure on civil society. The scale and persistence of these practices attest to the systemic nature of the repression.

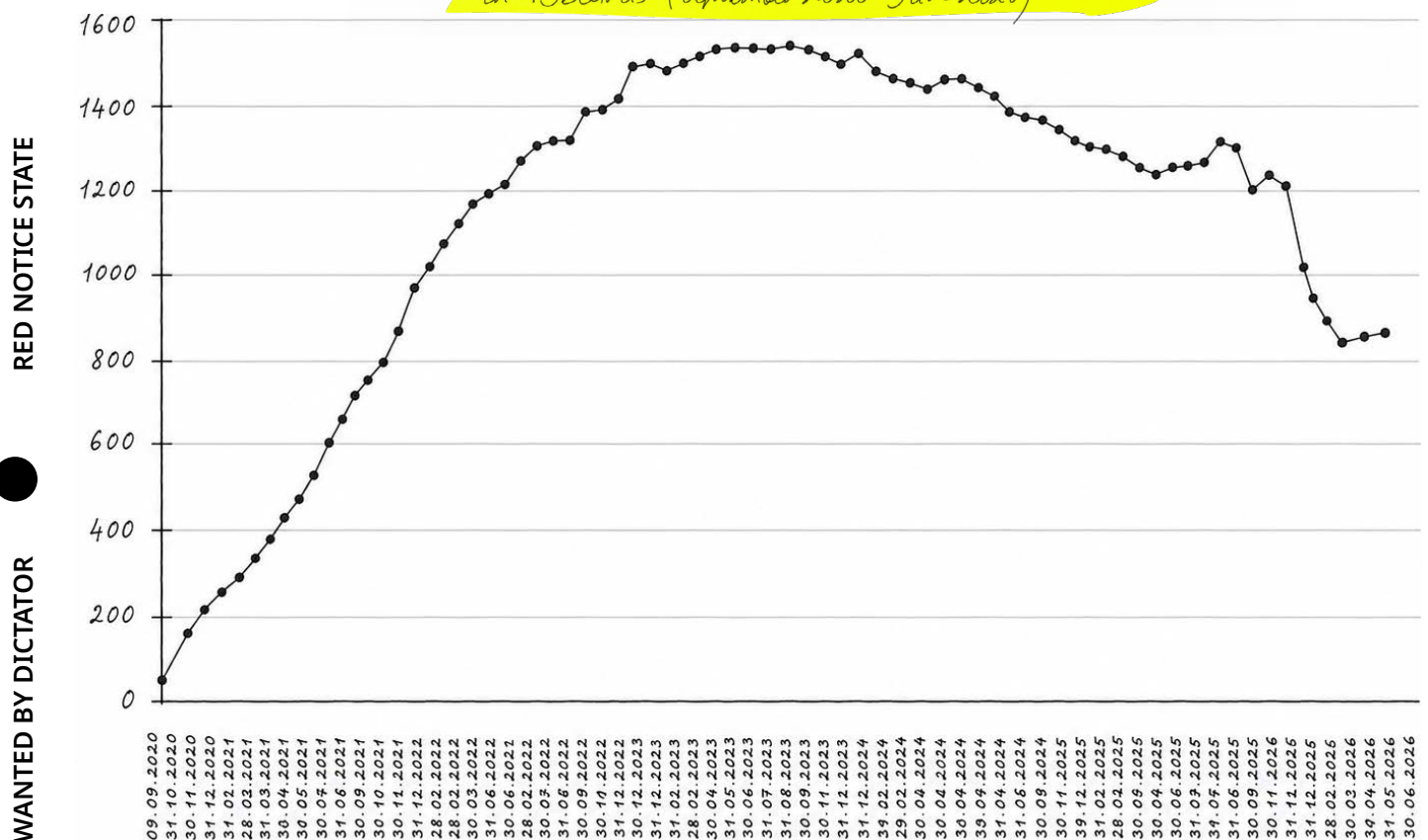
THE SCALE OF POLITICALLY MOTIVATED PERSECUTION

Since 2020, mass politically motivated repression has been documented in Belarus:

- in 2020 – more than 33,000 detentions;
- from 2021 to 2024 – between 6,300 and 6,550 detentions annually;
- in 2025 – at least 1,254 people convicted in politically motivated criminal cases;
- by June 2026 – at least 500 people subject to criminal prosecution.

In total, since 2020, more than 65,000 people have been subjected to politically motivated detentions and subsequent prosecution. During the same period, at least 8,590 guilty verdicts were handed down in politically motivated cases.

Trends in the Number of Political Prisoners in Belarus (September 2020–June 2026)



As of late June 2026, there were 859 political prisoners in Belarus, including 117 women. Since May 2020, 4,675 individuals have been granted this status, while more than 3,867 have already been released.

Detention conditions remain extremely harsh. Some political prisoners are held incommunicado – without correspondence, telephone contact, access to lawyers, or information for relatives regarding their health.

Human rights defenders continue to document cases of torture, cruel and degrading treatment, and pressure within places of detention. In April 2026, UN **experts expressed serious concern** over reports of torture, prolonged isolation, suicide attempts, deaths in custody, and repression against prisoners, pointing to possible gross violations of international law.

According to human rights defenders, at least 176 political prisoners are in a vulnerable situation due to their health or other risk factors.

Since 2020, at least 31 deaths linked to political persecution have been documented, including at least 9 deaths of political prisoners in places of detention. Another 6 cases are considered potentially linked to the actions of the authorities.

EXPANSION OF REPRESSIVE MECHANISMS

The regime of A. Lukashenka systematically uses legislation on “extremism” and “terrorism” as a tool for political pressure and the suppression of dissent.

As of June 2026:

- 6,745 people have been placed on the “extremist activity” list;
- 1,628 people have been placed on the “terrorist activity” list;
- approximately 373 organizations and initiatives have been designated as “extremist groups”;
- more than 9,350 materials have been included on the list of “extremist” materials.

Since 2020, at least 2,044 nongovernmental organizations have also been shut down, which effectively amounts to the dismantling of the independent civil society sector.

REPRESSION TARGETING PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

Political pressure extends to various professional groups, including journalists, lawyers, and human rights defenders.

As of June 2026:

- at least 21 journalists are in detention;
- about 60 media organizations have been designated as “extremist groups”;
- 33 journalists have been included on the “extremist” list, and 12 on the “terrorist” list.

In addition, at least 7 lawyers and 2 human rights defenders have been sentenced to long prison terms in connection with their professional activities; one of the human rights defenders is currently in pretrial detention.

According to estimates by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, “since 2020, up to 300,000 people have been forced to leave Belarus as a result of a coordinated campaign of violence and repression deliberately targeting those who oppose – or are perceived to oppose – the government or express critical or independent views.”⁰¹ The UN Group of Independent Experts on Belarus characterizes these events as a “coordinated campaign of violence and ill-treatment,” which is “part of a discriminatory policy aimed at the systematic persecution and intimidation of any individual and the closure of any civil or political organization” that disagrees with the government of A. Lukashenka.⁰²

But the repression does not stop at the border. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has condemned transnational repression – the state’s persecution of its critics abroad – as a growing threat to human rights and reminded host countries of their obligation to protect such individuals.⁰³ The European Parliament has called for immediate measures against the Belarus regime’s transnational repression – including the abuse of INTERPOL mechanisms – and for the protection of Belarusians in exile.⁰⁴ Unfortunately, the Lukashenka regime is increasingly persecuting those in exile, including through channels of international cooperation on criminal matters, such as INTERPOL. This system relies on several interconnected practices: trials in absentia, forcible expulsions, and the revocation of the passports of those who have been expelled. These actions have become the subject of an investigation by the International Criminal Court.

TRIALS IN ABSENTIA

Since 2022, it has been possible in Belarus to convict a person in absentia – as part of so-called “special proceedings” targeting those abroad. According to the Viasna Human Rights Center, by late 2025, there were at least 200 such cases on record; in 2025 alone, 30 people were convicted in absentia.⁰⁵ A conviction in absentia entails a lengthy prison sentence and the confiscation of property; since 2023, it has also included the possibility of stripping a person of their citizenship for “extremism.”⁰⁶ UN experts are alarmed by the scale of this practice: in their assessment, “Belarusian legislation on trials in absentia disregards basic fair trial guarantees provided by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Belarus has ratified.”⁰⁷

It is precisely these in absentia convictions that the regime is attempting to use to issue international warrants for those in exile. According to lawyer Ales Michalevic, “official Minsk believes that engaging INTERPOL channels based on such a court decision will somehow help them.”⁰⁸ The European Parliament has called the in absentia persecution

01 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Situation of Human Rights in Belarus in the Run-Up to the 2020 Presidential Election and in Its Aftermath,” UN document A/HRC/55/61 (March 15, 2024), para. 47.

02 Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Human Rights Situation in Belarus, “Closing the Accountability Gap for Human Rights Violations and Related Crimes in Belarus” UN document A/HRC/60/CRP.1 (September 4, 2025), para. 16.

03 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Resolution 2509 (2023) “Transnational Repression as a Growing Threat to the Rule of Law and Human Rights” (adopted June 23, 2023), available at: <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/32999/html>

04 European Parliament Resolution of October 22, 2025, “On the Situation in Belarus Five Years After the Rigged Presidential Election,” P10_TA(2025)0249, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-10-2025-0249_EN.html

05 Viasna Human Rights Center, “‘Even Abroad, You Remain Within The Reach Of The State.’ How Belarusians Were Persecuted Outside the Country in 2025?” available at: <https://spring96.org/en/news/119364>

06 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Belarus: UN Experts Denounce Expulsion of Citizens, Warn about Risk of Statelessness” (December 8, 2025), available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/12/belarus-un-experts-denounce-expulsion-citizens-warn-about-risk-statelessness>

07 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Belarus: UN Experts Alarmed about Widespread In Absentia Trials” (January 22, 2025), available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/01/belarus-un-experts-alarmed-about-widespread-absentia-trials>

08 Ales Michalevic, “Trials in Absentia of Those in Exile – On a New Initiative by the Authorities in Belarus,” available at: <https://michalevic.org/news/trial-in-absentia/zaochno-sudit-uexavshix-o-novoj-inicziative-vlastej-belarusi>

of Belarusians for peaceful activities abroad a direct violation of the sovereignty of EU countries and has urged member states to ignore INTERPOL requests aimed at the extradition of Alexander Lukashenko's political opponents.⁰⁹

FORCIBLE EXPULSIONS

Since 2025, the release of political prisoners has, as a rule, led to their forced expulsion from the country. In June 2025, 14 released prisoners were transported to Lithuania.¹⁰ On September 11, 2025, following an agreement with the United States, Belarus released 52 people and transported them to the Lithuanian border. In December 2025, another group of released individuals, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialiatski, was deported from the country.

UN experts stated that "the country's deportation of its own citizens and the arbitrary confiscation of their identity documents violate a number of human rights": 14 of the 52 people deported in September 2025 had their passports confiscated.¹¹ In a February 2026 report, the UN Group of Independent Experts concluded that deportation as a condition of release constitutes a gross violation of human rights, and called for the protection of Belarusians in exile and for those responsible to be held accountable.¹² Many of those deported found themselves abroad without documents or legal status – and thus without proper access to work, housing, and medical care.¹³

INVALIDATION OF PASSPORTS OF DEPORTED PERSONS

Former political prisoners who have been forcibly deported are deliberately left without documents.¹⁴ Since September 2023, Belarusian consulates have not been issuing or renewing passports – those who have left are told to return to Belarus to obtain their documents. And in March 2026, Viasna reported that the passports of former political prisoners deported in September and December 2025 had been invalidated – this includes virtually everyone who left with documents, about 20–25 people.¹⁵ According to Viasna lawyers, the passports were retroactively declared "unfit for use": this is how the authorities are formalizing the deportation that has already taken place and depriving people of the opportunity to return home.¹⁶

The UN Group of Independent Experts strongly condemned this measure: it was adopted without legal grounds and violates basic human rights – freedom of movement, the right to enter one's own country, and the prohibition against discrimination.¹⁷ The experts also warn that such measures could leave people stateless.¹⁸ They describe what is

09 European Parliament Resolution of April 3, 2025, "On the Immediate Risk of Further Repression by Lukashenko's Regime in Belarus – Threats from the Investigative Committee," P10_TA(2025)0063, paras. 3–4, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-10-2025-0063_EN.html

10 Viasna Human Rights Center, "Siarhei Tsikhanouski and 13 Other Political Prisoners Released," available at: <https://spring96.org/en/news/118178>

11 Zerkalo, "Authorities Revoke Passports of Former Political Prisoners Who Were Deported from Belarus After Their Release – Viasna" (March 30, 2026), available at: <https://news.zerkalo.io/life/123928.html>

12 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Belarus: UN Experts Welcome Prisoner Releases, but Warn That Forced Expulsion and Deportation Violate Human Rights" (February 27, 2026), available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/02/belarus-un-experts-welcome-prisoner-releases-warn-forced-expulsion-and>; Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the situation of human rights in Belarus, UN document A/HRC/61/57

13 Nasha Niva, "Deported Political Prisoners Stuck Between Hell and Earth" (November 2025), reprinted at: https://udf.name/news/main_news/284826-deportirovannye-politzakljuchennye-zastrjali-mezhdu-adom-i-zemlej.htm

14 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Belarus: Presidential Decree Denying Consular Services Puts Belarusians Abroad at Risk" (September 2023), available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/09/belarus-presidential-decree-denying-consular-services-puts-belarusians>

15 Viasna Human Rights Center, "'This Is Another Crime of Lukashenko.' The Regime Invalidates the Passports of Exiled Political Prisoners" (March 30, 2026), available at: <https://spring96.org/en/news/119963>; Zerkalo (March 30, 2026), see footnote 12; Charter '97, "The Lukashenko Regime Has Revoked the Passports of at Least 16 Former Political Prisoners" (April 1, 2026), available at: <https://charter97.org/ru/news/2026/4/1/679110>

16 Ibid

17 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Belarus: UN Experts Condemn Government Move to Invalidate Passports of Exiled Opponents" (April 20, 2026), available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/04/belarus-un-experts-condemn-government-move-invalidate-passports-exiled>

18 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Belarus: UN Experts Denounce Expulsion of Citizens, Warn about Risk of Statelessness" (December 8, 2025), available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/ru/press-releases/2025/12/belarus-un-experts-denounce-expulsion-citizens-warn-about-risk-statelessness>

10 happening as “a continuation of repression – simply in a different form and now outside the country’s borders.”¹⁹

INVESTIGATION BY THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

In September 2024, Lithuania appealed to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, stating that the deportation and persecution of Belarusians constitute crimes against humanity, some of which were committed on Lithuanian territory.²⁰ On March 12, 2026, the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC, having completed a preliminary review of the situation, opened an investigation. According to its findings, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the forcible expulsions and politically motivated persecution were carried out “as part of a widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population” and were encouraged or approved at the highest levels of the government in Belarus.²¹

Convictions in absentia without a fair trial, forcible expulsions, and the invalidation of passports are elements of a single state policy that UN mechanisms and the ICC Prosecutor consider to be potential crimes against humanity. Therefore, Belarus’s requests through INTERPOL channels regarding those who have left the country should, by default, be considered politically motivated – that is, incompatible with Article 3 of the INTERPOL Constitution, which prohibits the organization from any political interference.

WITHOUT A RED NOTICE: HOW BELARUS PURSUES DETENTIONS AND EXTRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD

Despite the significant attention paid to the abuse of INTERPOL’s mechanisms, practice shows that the international persecution of political opponents is not limited to the use of notices and requests through INTERPOL.

In a number of cases, the regime of A. Lukashenka resorts to other instruments of international cooperation in criminal law, including the Convention on Legal Assistance and Legal Relations in Civil, Family, and Criminal Matters among CIS Member States (the 1993 Minsk Convention and the 2002 Chisinau Convention)²², as well as bilateral treaties on legal assistance and extradition concluded by Belarus with foreign states.

The use of such mechanisms allows Aliaksandr Lukashenka’s regime to secure the detention of wanted individuals, initiate extradition proceedings, and submit requests for international legal assistance even in cases where INTERPOL channels are not involved or where the relevant notices have been rejected or removed by INTERPOL due to their political nature. In practice, this creates additional risks for Belarusians living abroad.

Below are examples of cases demonstrating how mechanisms of international criminal law cooperation continue to be used to persecute political opponents outside the country, even in the absence of an INTERPOL Red Notice.

19 Zerkalo (March 30, 2026), see footnote 11.

20 Statement of ICC Prosecutor Karim A.A. Khan KC on Receipt of a Referral by the Republic of Lithuania (September 30, 2024), available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-icc-prosecutor-karim-aa-khan-kc-receipt-referral-republic-lithuania>

21 International Criminal Court, “ICC Office of the Prosecutor Concludes Preliminary Examinations into Venezuela II and Lithuania/Belarus” (March 12, 2026), available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/icc-office-prosecutor-concludes-preliminary-examinations-venezuela-ii-and-lithuania/belarus>; ICC Office of the Prosecutor, “The Situation in the Republic of Lithuania / Republic of Belarus: Summary of Preliminary Examination Findings,” available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/2026-03/Summary-of-findings-Situation-Lithuania-Belarus.pdf>

22 Convention on Legal Assistance and Legal Relations in Civil, Family, and Criminal Matters, concluded in Minsk on January 22, 1993 (Minsk Convention): <https://eccis.org/document/192>

CASE № 1

Department Operations & Investigation

Ms. Dziyana Maisyenko, a Belarusian activist associated with the protest movement following the 2020 presidential election in Belarus, was detained in Armenia in 2024 at the request of Belarus while crossing the land border from Georgia.

Belarus sought her extradition in connection with criminal charges related to her alleged participation in protests following the 2020 presidential election. According to Maisyenko, prior to her detention abroad, she was unaware that a criminal case had been opened against her in Belarus. Before the incident, Maisyenko had been living in Georgia, having left Belarus due to fears of political persecution.

Following Ms. Maisyenko's detention in Armenia, representatives of the democratic forces of Belarus and Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Office intervened and informed the Armenian authorities of the risks of Ms. Maisyenko's extradition to Belarus.

As a result, the Armenian authorities released Ms. Maisyenko,²³ and she subsequently filed an application for political asylum.

²³ Civilnet, "Belarus Opposition Activist Released Following Brief Detention in Armenia" (September 3, 2024), available at: <https://civilnet.am/en/news/795729>

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CASE № 2

Department Operations & Investigation

An extradition request initiated by Belarus was filed against Mr. Dzmitry Pleskachou, a Belarusian civil society and opposition activist who participated in protests against the Lukashenka regime following the 2020 presidential election. Belarus sought his extradition in connection with criminal proceedings that the country's democratic forces considered politically motivated.

On November 28, 2024, the District Court in Poznań rejected the extradition request filed by Belarus regarding Mr. Pleskachou. The Polish court concluded that the criminal prosecution against him in Belarus was politically motivated and that his extradition would expose him to a serious risk of politically motivated persecution, an unfair trial, and violations of his fundamental rights. During the extradition proceedings, a representative of the Polish Prosecutor General's Office also stated that the extradition request submitted by the authorities in Belarus was unlawful.

After the district court issued its ruling in Mr. Pleskachou's case, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Advisor on Legal Affairs, Leanid Marozau, stated that Mr. Pleskachou's extradition would constitute a "flagrant violation of international law" and expressed gratitude to Poland "for its consistent support in upholding democratic values and defending the rights of Belarusians."²⁴ This case has become a public example of the Polish judicial authorities' recognition of the political nature of the criminal prosecution initiated by Belarus against an opposition activist, and their refusal to cooperate on that basis.

²⁴ Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, "Polish Court Denied Lukashenka Regime's Request to Extradite Belarusian Activist Dmitry Pleskachev" (November 29, 2024), available at: <https://tsikhanouskaya.org/en/news/polish-court-denied-lukashenka-regimes-request-to-extradite-belarusian-activist-dmitry-pleskachev.html>.

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These cases are examples of a broader pattern of transnational repression, in which the regime of A. Lukashenka uses not only INTERPOL mechanisms but also extradition procedures based on CIS multilateral agreements and bilateral treaties on legal assistance and extradition.

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INTERPOL AND BELARUS: THE SYSTEM AND ABUSES

INTERPOL is an intergovernmental organization headquartered in Lyon, France, with 196 member countries, including the Republic of Belarus (hereinafter – Belarus).

According to INTERPOL, its mission is to “help police in [various jurisdictions] work together to make the world a safer place.”²⁵

Interpol’s primary objective, according to its Constitution,²⁶ is to “ensure and promote the widest possible mutual assistance among all criminal police authorities, within the limits of the laws in force in the various countries and in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”²⁷ This objective is subject to a strict constitutional prohibition against INTERPOL “undertaking any intervention or activities of a political, military, religious or racial character.”²⁸

One of the most important aspects of INTERPOL’s work is the preparation of INTERPOL notices – international requests for cooperation or alerts – that enable the police forces of member countries to exchange important crime-related information with one another. Notices are published by the INTERPOL General Secretariat at the request of the relevant National Central Bureau and are distributed to all INTERPOL member countries.

For example, INTERPOL’s Red Notices are issued to locate and arrest individuals wanted for criminal prosecution or to serve a sentence, with the aim of subsequent extradition to the requesting country.

INTERPOL member countries may also request cooperation from one another through another mechanism known as Diffusion. Diffusions are sent directly by National Central Bureaus to all or some INTERPOL member countries. Like INTERPOL Red Notices, Diffusions must comply with the INTERPOL Constitution and the INTERPOL Rules on the Processing of Data (hereinafter – the Rules).²⁹

The INTERPOL Constitution³⁰ provides for the existence of the Commission for the Control of INTERPOL’s Files (hereinafter – the Commission), an independent body tasked with ensuring that INTERPOL’s processing of personal data complies with INTERPOL’s standards,³¹ primarily the Rules.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION THROUGH INTERPOL: HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS AND HOW IT IS MANIPULATED

A notice is a request for international cooperation or any international alert published by INTERPOL at the request of a National Central Bureau and sent to all members.³² All requests to post notices are reviewed by the INTERPOL General Secretariat for compliance with the Rules.³³

²⁵ <https://www.interpol.int/Who-we-are/What-is-INTERPOL>.

²⁶ I/CONS/GA/1956 (2023), available at: <https://www.interpol.int/Search-Page?search=Constitution+of+INTERPOL> (hereinafter – the Constitution).

²⁷ The Constitution, Article 2(1), emphasis added by the author.

²⁸ Ibid., Article 3.

²⁹ III/IRPD/GA/2011 (2025), available at: <https://www.interpol.int/Search-Page?search=Rules+on+the+Processing+of+Data> (hereinafter – the Rules).

³⁰ The Constitution, Article 36

³¹ <https://www.interpol.int/Who-we-are/Commission-for-the-Control-of-INTERPOL-s-Files-CCF>.

³² The Rules, Article 1 (13).

³³ The Rules, Article 77(1).

A Diffusion is a request for international cooperation or any international alert issued by a National Central Bureau that is sent directly to one or more National Central Bureaus and simultaneously recorded in the INTERPOL database.³⁴ 15

In practice, if a Diffusion is sent to all other National Central Bureaus, it has the same effect on the person concerned as a notice.

Unlike notices, the transmission of Diffusions via INTERPOL's information systems does not require the involvement of the General Secretariat and is carried out exclusively at the initiative of the relevant National Central Bureau. National Central Bureaus have the right to direct access to the INTERPOL information system when performing their functions in accordance with the Constitution, including entering, updating, and deleting data directly in the database, as well as establishing links between data.³⁵ The National Central Bureau is required to ensure that data complies with Article 2 of the Constitution and that data is processed in accordance with "international conventions and fundamental human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."³⁶

HOW TO CONTACT INTERPOL AND PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS: A GUIDE FOR BELARUSIANS

The only available recourse for an individual is the Commission,³⁷ which can provide him or her with information and remove data from INTERPOL's information systems. The Legal Department at Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Office systematically provides assistance with filing complaints with the Commission on behalf of Belarusians who have faced the use of INTERPOL's tools and mechanisms by the Lukashenka regime for politically motivated persecution.³⁸ **Those in need of such assistance may contact the legal team at: legal@tsikhanouskaya.org.**

USE OF CHARGES OF EXTREMISM, TERRORISM, FRAUD, OR ECONOMIC CRIMES AS A COVER FOR POLITICAL PERSECUTION: PRACTICE

The problem of repressive regimes, such as that of A. Lukashenka, abusing INTERPOL's information systems through their National Central Bureaus is well documented in academic commentary and professional reports.

Red Notices are referred to as the "autocrats' sniper rifle," used to persecute dissidents outside the country.³⁹ Leaked audio recordings of telephone conversations among law enforcement officials in Belarus,⁴⁰ as well as documented practices by the Legal Department of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Office, reveal how staff at the National Central Bureau in Minsk discuss ways to conceal the political nature of cases, disguising them as ordinary criminal charges, including charges of tax evasion, fraud, property crimes, drug-related crimes, or defamation.

For example, the Legal Department of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Office has documented the case of a Belarusian citizen named Aleh (name changed).

34 The Rules, Article 1(14).

35 The Rules, Article 6 (1)(a).

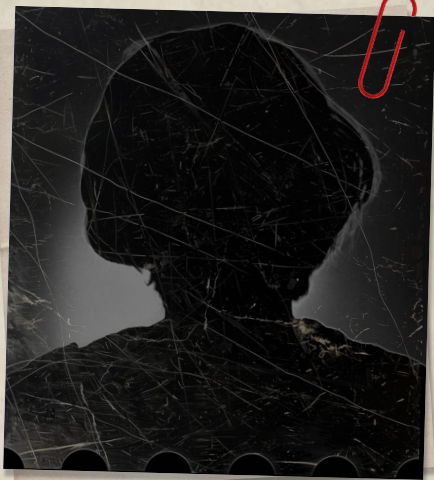
36 The Rules, Article 34(1).

37 Statute of the Commission, [II.E/RCIA/GA/2024 (2025)], Article 29.

38 Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Office, "Interpol Removed a Belarusian Citizen from its Database for the First Time Thanks to Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Office", <https://tsikhanouskaya.org/en/news/interpol-removed-a-belarusian-citizen-from-its-database-for-the-first-time-thanks-to-sviatlana-tsikhanouskayas-office.html>

39 Ben Keith, Jacqueline Jahnel, "Repression Through INTERPOL: How Belarus Turns Police Cooperation Into A Tool Of Transnational Repression And Creates Constitutional Challenges For Europe" published on Verfassungsblog in January 2026, available at: <https://verfassungsblog.de/repression-through-interpol/>.

40 BELPOL, "WORLD SCANDAL – Lukashenka Misuses INTERPOL," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjrtNtYJGKD0>



CASE No 1614

On charges against

of committing a crime under part 3 of Article 328
of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus

Aleh, who participated in peaceful protests following the 2020 presidential election and supported the Belarusian opposition, was persecuted by the regime of A. Lukashenka. After his detention in Belarus, he reported that he had been subjected to violence in detention facilities, death threats, and cruel treatment by law enforcement officers. Under pressure from the security services, he fled Belarus and was granted international protection in Poland.

In January 2024, Aleh was detained in Poland based on a request from Belarus transmitted through INTERPOL. The National Central Bureau in Minsk placed him on an international wanted list based on charges under Article 328(3) of the Criminal Code of Belarus, which pertains to large-scale drug trafficking or drug trafficking committed by an organized group.

A Polish court denied Aleh's extradition, ruling that if he were returned to Belarus, there would be a real risk of politically motivated persecution, torture, and violations of Aleh's fundamental rights, and also noted that the criminal prosecution against him by Belarus is linked to his participation in protests and his support for the country's democratic forces.

In August 2025, the INTERPOL General Secretariat officially confirmed that Aleh is no longer the subject of an INTERPOL wanted notice or alert, as his file had been removed from the INTERPOL database.⁴¹

41 Zerkalo, "Remember the Protester Whose Extradition on Criminal Charges the Authorities Had Re-
 requested? Here's How the Case Ended" (August 14, 2025), available at: <https://news.zerkalo.io/life/106242>.
 html (in Russian).

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One of the leaked audio recordings of telephone conversations between law enforcement officers also indicates attempts to conceal the true politically motivated nature of the charges. Below is a dialogue between Dzmitry Miadzvedzeu, an employee of the National Central Bureau of Interpol, currently Head of the First Division of the National Central Bureau of Interpol, and Siarhei Barmosau, Head of the Criminal Intelligence Division of the Maskouski District Police Department (RUVD) of Minsk.

Context

In this conversation, **Dzmitry Miadzvedzeu** and **Siarhei Barmosau** discuss the search for individuals located abroad in cases with an obvious political context. Miadzvedzeu explicitly points out that the INTERPOL General Secretariat does not accept such cases due to Article 3 of the INTERPOL Constitution, which prohibits interference in matters of a political nature. Later in the conversation, he effectively advises on how to frame the case involving protest graffiti in order to conceal the political motive and increase the chances of the request being approved through INTERPOL channels.

Barmosau: Yes, Barmosau speaking.

Miadzvedzeu: Mikalayevich, this is Miadzvedzeu.

Barmosau: Yes, yes, yes.

Miadzvedzeu: So, tell me, what's going on with Voitek?

Barmosau: Well, Dzima, we detained him yesterday.

Miadzvedzeu: Detained, huh?

Barmosau: Yes.

Miadzvedzeu: In that case, please send us a message asking that the search operations be halted, since he has been located on the territory of Belarus.

Barmosau: I've already written you a letter; it'll be sent to you today.

Miadzvedzeu: Oh, it'll go out today? Well, great, everything's fine.

Barmosau: Yes, yes.

Miadzvedzeu: How are things in general?

Barmosau: Well, you know... we're swamped with political cases.

Miadzvedzeu: Well, that's understandable, I get it...

Barmosau: We're still okay – we've only lost three, so to speak. But our neighbors – the Frunze, Lenin, and Central districts – I know things are really bad for them. They have 10 or 20 people each, and every single one of them is abroad.

Miadzvedzeu: And unfortunately, we can't do anything about this...

Barmosau: Well...

Miadzvedzeu: I don't know – has any information reached you? Have they sent anyone back to you yet?

Barmosau: No. Who have you sent back?

Miadzvedzeu: Well, we're sending them back – the General Secretariat won't take these people. I mean, we have Article 3. INTERPOL categorically rejects, denies, and does not participate in cases of a political, racial, or military nature. The political nature of this is obvious.

Barmosau: I get it; that's clear. That's according to their charter.

Miadzvedzeu: Yes, yes. According to the charter, according to the charter – Article 3 – and that's it; we're sending them back.

Barmosau: So, do they apply this article to absolutely all – all – all of these individuals, or just some of them?..

Miadzvedzeu: No, we're clarifying each case individually; some we send right away, others are already prepared. Article 130 – incitement of racial discord – that's it, hostility – yes, that's the obvious political subtext, the racial aspect – we're already handling that, yes. Defamation – we consulted with them, and they said, "No, it doesn't matter." Defamation specifically against a public official is also Article 188 – same nonsense.

.....
Discussion of graffiti and circumventing INTERPOL rules
.....

Barmosau: Well, look, let's say...

Miadzvedzeu: ...Article 364 – they've already shut us down on that one, too.

Barmosau: They've shut down all the 364 cases, right?

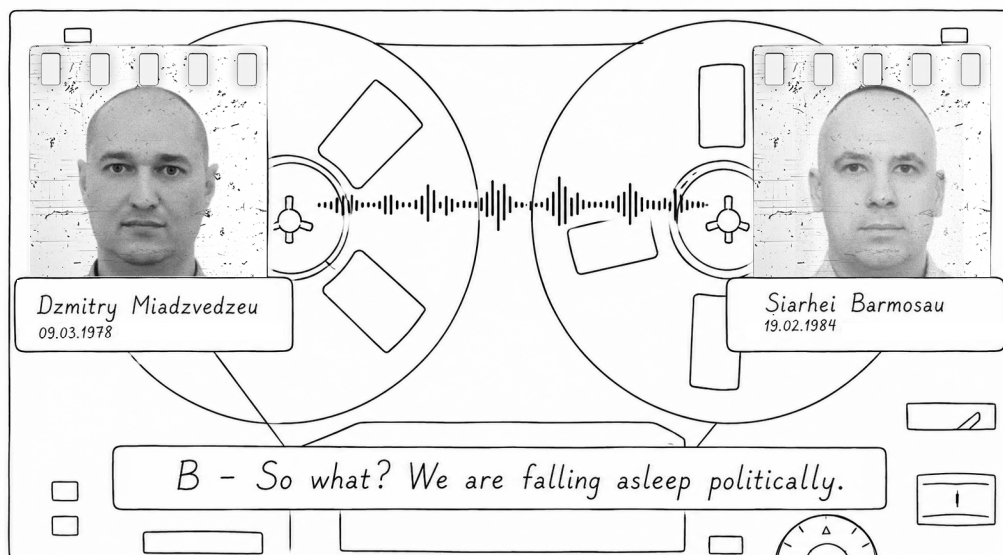
Miadzvedzeu: Yes, yes, yes.

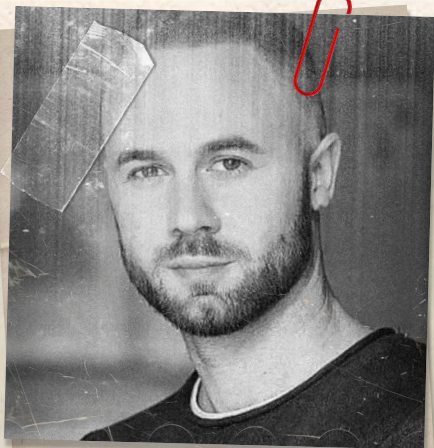
Barmosau: We'll have just 339 now – a new one. Now it'll be 339. A new case.

Miadzvedzeu: If it's clean – no questions asked. If 339 is clean.

Barmosau: They painted the walls and electrical panels with white-red-white flags.

Miadzvedzeu: Well, in this case, then look – if it's specified that they painted flags, then they won't be approved. If it simply says they damaged property – that they painted on it with paint or something like that – then it might be approved.





CASE № 1501

On charges against Andrei Viktorovich Gnyot of committing a crime
under p.3 of art. 243 of the Criminal Code
of the Republic of Belarus

Another example from the practice of the Legal Department of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Office is the case of the detention in Serbia of Andrei Hniot (Andrew Gnyot) – a Belarusian journalist and film director, an opposition activist who became the subject of an extradition request to Belarus on charges of tax evasion. Andrei Hniot rejected the charges and stated that the criminal case against him was politically motivated and linked to his anti-Lukashenka activities, public criticism of the regime, and participation in the protest movement following the 2020 presidential election in Belarus.

In October 2023, Andrei Hniot was detained based on a request sent by Belarus through INTERPOL channels. He spent more than seven months in custody awaiting extradition proceedings, after which he was placed under house arrest in June 2024. Throughout the proceedings, Hniot repeatedly stated that extradition to Belarus would expose him to the risk of torture, politically motivated persecution, and denial of the right to a fair trial.

Andrei Hniot's case has attracted widespread international attention. Human rights organizations, Belarusian democratic forces, artists, filmmakers, and journalists have publicly spoken out against his extradition from Serbia to Belarus. The European Parliament adopted a resolution calling on Serbia not to extradite Mr. Hniot and expressing concern about the 300,000 Belarusians who have been forced into exile since 2020 and have faced political repression abroad.⁴²

In September 2024, the Serbian Appellate Court overturned the earlier decision to extradite Andrei Hniot and ordered a retrial. After approximately one year in custody and under house arrest, in October 2024, Serbian authorities released him⁴³ and allowed him to leave Serbia and travel to a European Union country. Belarus's extradition request, which had been circulated through INTERPOL, was subsequently removed from the database.

2023

⁴² European Parliament Resolution of September 19, 2024, "On the Severe Situation of Political Prisoners in Belarus" (2024/2804(RSP)), available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-10-2024-0009_EN.pdf, para. 7.

⁴³ RFE/RL's Belarus Service, "Belarusian Activist Andrey Hnyot Freed By Serbia" (October 31, 2024), available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/belarus-hnyot-released-serbia-lukashenka/33182434.html>.



CASE № 13.10

2024

On charges against Oleg Igornovich Kavirgin of committing crimes
under p.1 of art. 132, p. 3 of art. 243, p. 4 of art. 16 and p. 2 of
art 243-1, p. 4 of art 16 and art 369-1, p. 4 of art. 16, p. 1 of art. 427 of
the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus

Another case clearly demonstrates how the Lukashenka regime attempts to use INTERPOL's mechanisms to persecute its political opponents, disguising politically motivated persecution as a general criminal case. This refers to the case of Aleh Kauryhin, a Belarusian entrepreneur and founder of Novoe Zrenie, a network of medical centers, who was placed on an INTERPOL international wanted list on charges of tax evasion. A subsequent review of the case by INTERPOL revealed that the prosecution was primarily politically motivated.

In February 2024, Belarus initiated an international search for Aleh Kauryhin through INTERPOL on charges of tax evasion on an especially large scale. As early as March 2024, he was detained at the Ukrainian-Polish border based on a corresponding request.

Despite the formal economic nature of the charges, Kauryhin was subsequently also charged with "discrediting the Republic of Belarus," facilitating "extremist activities," calling for sanctions, and inciting hostility. This served as further confirmation of the political motivation behind the persecution.

In March 2026, INTERPOL decided to remove Aleh Kauryhin's data from its information systems. According to the petitioner, the Commission concluded that the case was politically motivated and that evidence had been manipulated.

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A further illustrative example is the attempt by representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus to influence the General Secretariat of INTERPOL, information about which was also captured in a recording of a telephone conversation between **Aliaksandr Piatran**, Head of the National Central Bureau of INTERPOL, and **Aleh Khlyshchanka**, Head of the International Legal Department of the Prosecutor General's Office.

Context

This conversation concerns an attempt by the Lukashenka regime to exert pressure on INTERPOL through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs following the rejection of a request concerning Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, referred to by the interlocutors as "Princess." Piatran states that, at the instruction of Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makei, the Belarusian ambassador attempted to intervene in the matter and secure a review of INTERPOL's position, but was effectively rebuffed. The conversation confirms that INTERPOL assessed the requests concerning Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya as having a political context and refused to consider them within its mandate, in accordance with Article 3 of the INTERPOL Constitution.

Khlyshchanka: Hello

Piatran: Aleh Viktaravich, hello.

Khlyshchanka: Good afternoon..

Piatran: Do you have a minute?

Khlyshchanka: Go ahead.

Piatran: Are you already aware of what's going on at the Foreign Ministry – how they even tried to go after one suspect? You're aware of it, I suppose, right?

Khlyshchanka: No, I'm not aware of that.

Piatran: You don't know? Oh... When... When there was a refusal, so to speak, regarding the person known as "Princess."

Khlyshchanka: Oh, I see.

Piatran: You get it, right?

Khlyshchanka: Well, I have the documents for "Princess."

Piatran: Yeah, Makei ordered the ambassador to try to storm in there. And he stormed in. After that...

Khlyshchanka: I hope they didn't turn him in to the police? Because he has a [diplomatic] passport – he's immune, right?

Piatran: No, they just kicked him out (laughs).

Khlyshchanka: They kicked him out of there?

Piatran: I'm not kidding. I mean, it's that kind of situation, I'm telling you...

Khlyshchanka: Well, they seem like serious people. They've been working with international law for a long time...

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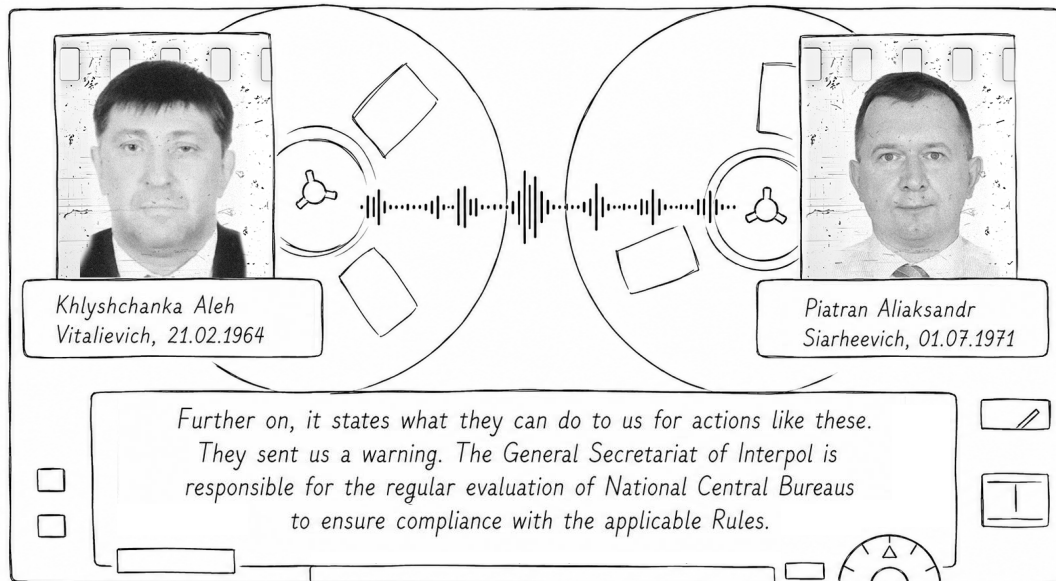
RED NOTICE STATE

Piatran: And they have nowhere else to go. It's international law, after all – there's this little trick to it. They chose this very elegant, politically... what's it called? A political subtext – that's one thing. And second... they have some kind of mantra...

Khlyshchanka: No, well, did you expect only fools to be working there?

Piatran: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And second, they say, "We see the crime, but it's not within our jurisdiction."

Khlyshchanka: Well, they're right.



INTERPOL DOES NOT RESPOND OVERNIGHT: REALISTIC TIMEFRAMES FOR REVIEWING REQUESTS

A separate issue regarding the Commission's work is the timeframes for reviewing requests. The Commission's Requests Chamber is required to make decisions within specific timeframes. For requests for access to data, the Commission must make a decision within four months of the date the request is deemed admissible.⁴⁴ For requests to correct or delete data, the Commission must make a decision within nine months of the date the relevant request is deemed admissible by the Commission.⁴⁵

In exceptional cases, these time limits may be extended.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the Rules do not set any time limits for the Commission to decide on the admissibility of a case.

In practice, the Commission's work is characterized by widespread and prolonged delays. The European Criminal Bar Association (hereinafter – ECBA) notes that the "statutory

⁴⁴ Statutes of the Commission, [II.E/RCIA/GA/2024 (2025)], Article 40(1).

⁴⁵ Ibid., Article 40(2).

⁴⁶ Ibid., Article 40(3).

deadlines are very often not met” and that “the applicant is rarely informed of delays or provided with any substantive explanations regarding them, either during the [Commission’s] investigation or in the [Commission’s] final decision.”⁴⁷

An example of such delays on the Commission’s part is a non-public case currently being handled by the Legal Department of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya’s Office.

Belarusian entrepreneur X., who openly supported the democratic forces of Belarus and participated in events related to Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya’s 2020 presidential campaign, became the target of politically motivated persecution by the Lukashenka regime. His advertising company posted information about an opposition rally, after which the relevant media screen was shut down by order of local authorities. Following the nationwide strike announced by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya in October 2020, pro-regime Telegram channels began publishing threats and personal information about X.

From October through December 2020, X.’s company was subjected to numerous inspections by various regulatory agencies, including the Financial Investigations Department of the State Control Committee of Belarus, health authorities, emergency services, and trade regulators. The company was later fined, and its business documents were seized. X. himself began to face threats of arrest. Fearing imprisonment and persecution, the businessman left Belarus and fled to Ukraine in December 2020.

Subsequently, a criminal case was opened in Belarus against X. on charges related to tax evasion and alleged “business fragmentation” for the purpose of tax evasion. His assets in Belarus were seized in January 2021.

In April 2025, it became known that Belarus had issued an INTERPOL Red Notice for X. on charges related to fraud. The Legal Department of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya’s Office submitted a request to delete X.’s file in August 2025. The request was deemed admissible only in September of that year. To date, INTERPOL has not provided a final decision regarding the request to delete X’s data.

THE RIGHT TO KNOW DENIED: WHY INTERPOL DOES NOT DISCLOSE INFORMATION ON PERSECUTED BELARUSIANS

Another problem Belarusians face when submitting such requests to the Commission is the lack of information at the initial stage of the proceedings, which prevents applicants from actively defending their rights and legitimate interests.

As a result, many requests for access to data, or for its deletion or correction, are submitted without knowing whether files exist or not. In practice, such requests become “preemptive.” Upon review of such a request, it may turn out that, at the time of its receipt, there is no data regarding the specific individual in INTERPOL’s information systems.⁴⁸

Consequently, a practice has emerged whereby individuals submit their requests to the Commission as a precautionary measure and explain why data concerning them should not be processed by INTERPOL, even though INTERPOL does not hold any data on that individual. This practice stems from the lack of information regarding whether the relevant National Central Bureau has actually initiated the procedure by submitting a request for the issuance of a Red Notice or a Diffusion.

According to the ECBA, the Commission’s approach to reviewing such preventive requests “is based on an unclear legal foundation, as they are not provided for in the rules.”⁴⁹

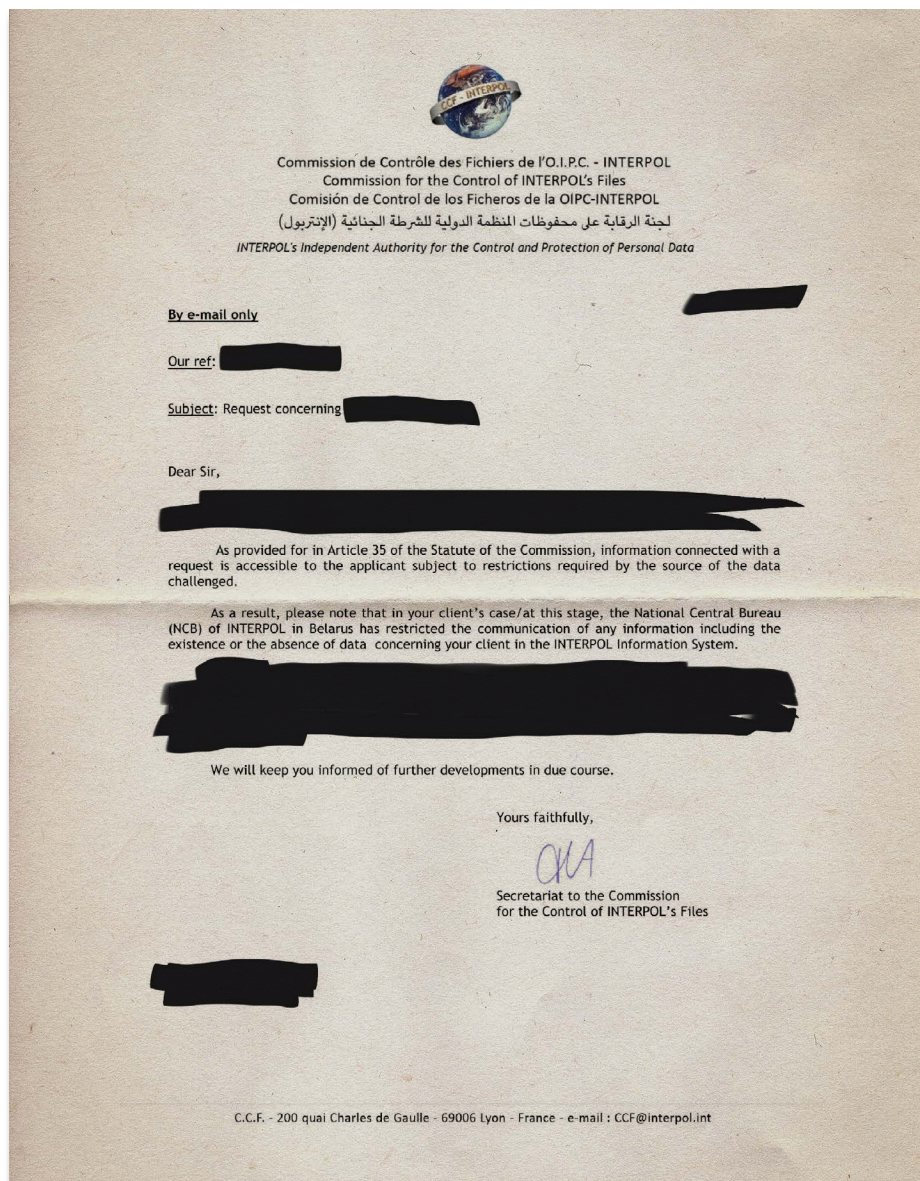
⁴⁷ European Criminal Bar Association, “Safeguarding INTERPOL’s Systems: Recommendations for Reform” [February 13, 2026] (hereinafter – ECBA Report), available at <https://site.ecba.org/working-groups/international-co-operation/ecba-latv-submit-joint-response-to-interpols-ccf-statute-amendments/>, p. 4, paras. 1.3–1.4.

⁴⁸ ECBA Report, p. 10, section 3.1.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 10, section 3.2.

- 24 The Legal Department of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Office regularly encounters such "preemptive" requests, in which activists from Belarus ask the Office to submit a request to the Commission without knowing for certain whether INTERPOL is processing data concerning them. Often, such requests are motivated by the fact that the person is on either a nationwide or interstate wanted list in accordance with the CIS Convention on Legal Assistance and Legal Relations in Civil, Family, and Criminal Matters. Obtaining information about such a wanted notice is not difficult due to constant leaks from the Russian Federation's wanted persons database.⁵⁰

Since the National Central Bureau of Belarus retains control over the data it enters, it has the right to restrict access to this information for other participants in the INTERPOL system. In practice, this can lead to a situation where a person is unable to find out whether INTERPOL's databases contain information about a wanted notice or other data concerning them. Such a lack of transparency creates additional risks of abuse, as it deprives individuals of the opportunity to challenge the information in a timely manner or have it removed. As a result, the protection of rights becomes predominantly reactive: individuals learn of the existence of such data only after negative consequences have already occurred, such as when crossing a border, being detained, or undergoing other checks by law enforcement agencies.⁵¹



50 Mediazona. "Who Is the Ministry of Internal Affairs Looking For? Complete Wanted List on Mediazona" <https://zona.media/wanted?p=1&t=all&s=statusAll&q=>

51 Ben Keith, Jacqueline Jahnel, "Repression Through INTERPOL: How Belarus Turns Police Cooperation Into A Tool Of Transnational Repression And Creates Constitutional Challenges For Europe," published on Verfassungsblog in January 2026, available at: <https://verfassungsblog.de/repression-through-interpol/>.

The Rules provide for specific rights of the General Secretariat that may be exercised with respect to a National Central Bureau that submits inaccurate or irrelevant data to the system ("corrective measures"), such as suspending or revoking access rights, correcting processing errors, supervising data processing operations carried out by the National Central Bureau, suspending access rights granted to users of the National Central Bureau, and dispatching an evaluation team to the National Central Bureau.⁵²

Academic commentators note the following regarding the corrective measures provided for in the Rules: "The concept of corrective measures is not always sound, as it assumes that abuse is caused by ignorance rather than intent. Certainly, some misuse may stem from poor training or limited capacity at the national level, in which case supervision might be appropriate. But when abuse is repeated, persistent, and targeted at regime opponents... the idea that supervision alone will produce compliance is implausible. INTERPOL operates, even when imposing corrective measures, on an assumption of national good faith. It accepts the existence of frequent errors but does not acknowledge systemic abuse, because doing so would mean recognizing politically motivated misuse."⁵³ This position must change.

The Lukashenka regime is aware of these standards and would prefer they not be applied. This is evidenced by audio recordings of telephone conversations published by Belpol between **Aliaksandr Piatran**, Head of the National Central Bureau of INTERPOL in the Republic of Belarus, and **Aleh Khlyshchanka**, Head of the International Legal Department of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Belarus.

Context

In this conversation, Aliaksandr Piatran informs Aleh Khlyshchanka, a representative of the Prosecutor General's Office, about a warning from INTERPOL. The conversation indicates that the INTERPOL General Secretariat has already explicitly pointed out to the Belarusian side its violation of Article 3, including in the cases of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and Volha Kavalkova. Piatran acknowledges the risk that the Belarusian NCB's access to INTERPOL channels could be suspended if such actions continue.

Khlyshchanka: Hello.

Piatran: Aleh Viktaravich, hello. I found everything... So... Could you please open Viber? I'll send it to you on Viber first and read what it says.

Khlyshchanka: No, that's okay. Just send it this way.

Piatran: Let me read it to you then.

Khlyshchanka: Otherwise, I don't have an app to forward it from Viber to anywhere else.

Piatran: Okay, let me read it to you then. Okay?

⁵² The Rules, Articles 130-131.

⁵³ Charlie Magri, Ted R. Bromund, Sandra A. Grossman, "Corrective Measures and the Problem of Transparency at INTERPOL" (March 30, 2026), available at: <https://journals.law.harvard.edu/ilj/2026/03/corrective-measures-and-the-problem-of-transparency-at-interpol/>.

Khlyshchanka: Well, sure.

Piatran: So, take a look at page 3 for now... Well, I'll ask them to translate it. Or should I send it to you in English? Everything's highlighted there. So, the phrase "Interpol's Rules on the Processing of Information," which we're required to follow. So, the National Central Bureau is responsible for defining and establishing procedures to ensure that its national law enforcement agencies comply with the principles and obligations set forth in these Rules before they can submit data to the system for processing. **Well, that's our situation.** The National Central Bureau is responsible for regularly evaluating the activities of its national authorities in light of these Rules to determine the limits of their application and takes all necessary measures to, specifically, halt any activity in the event that non-compliant data is submitted. These, um... these may also include risks related to the non-compliance of data with this Statute. **Moving on. And further on, it says what they can do to us for such things.** And they've already sent us a warning. The INTERPOL General Secretariat is responsible for regularly assessing the activities of National Central Bureaus for compliance with these Rules. The INTERPOL General Secretariat is required to take all corrective measures to halt any non-compliant activities related to data processing. This means that any measures may include a long-term suspension of, well, access rights and privileges for the National Central Bureaus. And this proposal from the General Secretariat is submitted to the Executive Committee for approval. That's it – in a nutshell. **Before this, they sent us a document like this – specifically, regarding Tsikhanouskaya – instructing us to cease all activities.** They explicitly stated that we were violating – as they put it – Article 3, in connection with the August 2020 election. That we have no right to disseminate this information through INTERPOL channels. They sent it once. And they denied our request regarding Kovalkova – they specifically wrote that this was, so to speak, a violation of Article 3. **Well, that's it – the circle is complete.**

Khlyshchanka: Hmm, I see.

Piatran: Well, I mean, that's why... the next step they'll take is... **if we keep going – they'll just bring it before the executive committee, and they'll cut us off, so to speak, from this kind of information.** I mean... sort of... Well, if the motherland wants to be cut off – I'm ready to send it. So that I don't have to ask again...

Khlyshchanka: Come on, what are you talking about? No...

It is telling that in November 2024, at a meeting of the joint collegium of the Prosecutor General's Office of Belarus and the Prosecutor General's Office of Russia, Andrei Shved, the Prosecutor General of the Lukashenka regime, publicly acknowledged that INTERPOL "effectively blocks" the issuance of international arrest warrants for a significant portion of individuals persecuted by the regime. According to him, more than half of those sought are individuals accused of committing so-called "extremist crimes" and evading military conscription, most of whom had already left Belarus before criminal cases were initiated against them. Shved also reported that the Lukashenka regime was developing a mechanism to appeal INTERPOL's decisions to refuse to publish notices or to remove information about wanted individuals from the organization's information system.

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THE NEED TO REIMPOSE RESTRICTIONS ON THE LUKASHENKA REGIME'S ACCESS TO INTERPOL MECHANISMS

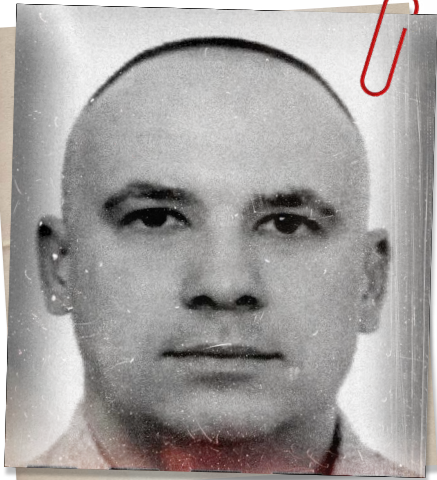
In 2023, abuses by the regime of A. Lukashenka had already become the subject of review within INTERPOL: Belarus was subject to the organization's so-called "corrective measures," which directly indicated the existence of serious problems with the Belarusian National Central Bureau's use of INTERPOL channels.⁵⁴ Moreover, at the INTERPOL General Assembly in Vienna in 2023, Belarus promoted an initiative that would effectively oblige INTERPOL to publish requested Red Notices after a certain period had elapsed, even if such requests had not yet been verified for compliance with the organization's rules. This approach demonstrates not an intention to eliminate abuses, but a desire to weaken preliminary review mechanisms and make politically motivated requests more automatic. Under these circumstances, INTERPOL should not only maintain but also further strengthen restrictions against the Lukashenka regime, including stricter preliminary vetting of all requests submitted through the Belarusian National Central Bureau, as well as the ability to reapply special restrictive or corrective measures as long as the regime continues to use criminal prosecution as a tool of transnational repression.

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⁵⁴ Ben Keith, Sandra Grossman, Ted R. Bromund, "Assessing the 2023 Annual Meeting of Interpol's General Assembly" (December 5, 2023), available at: <https://rednoticemonitor.com/assessing-the-2023-annual-meeting-of-interpol-s-general-assembly>

WHO IS TARGETING BELARUSIANS TODAY? BELARUS'S NATIONAL CENTRAL BUREAU OF INTERPOL



**Siargei
Barmosau**

Head of the Criminal Intelligence
Division of the Maskouski District
Police Department (RUVD) of Minsk



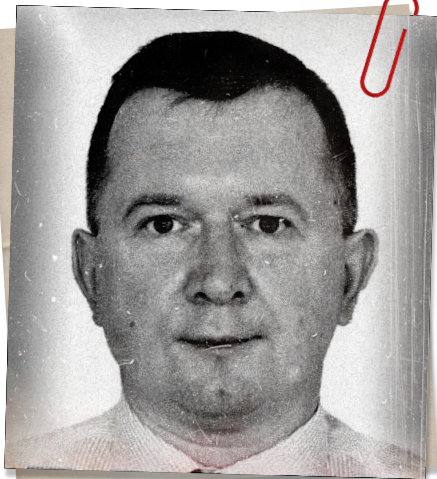
**Aleh
Khlyshchanka**

Head of the International Legal
Department of the Prosecutor
General's Office of the Republic of
Belarus



**Aliaksei
Vershal**

Head of the 2nd Division
(Countering Transnational Crime)
of the National Central Bureau of
INTERPOL, police lieutenant colonel



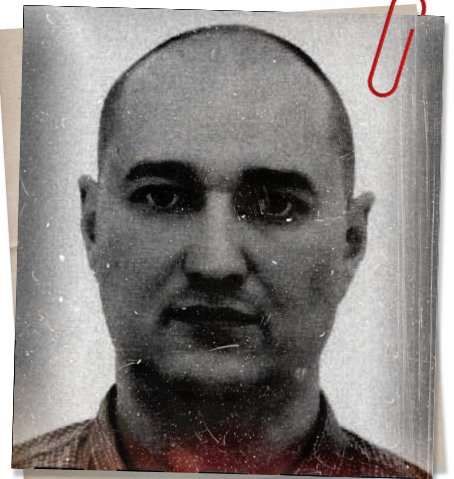
**Aliaksandr
Piatran**

Former Head of the National
Central Bureau of INTERPOL, police
colonel



**Kiryl
Mikhasenka**

Senior Operational Officer for
Particularly Important Cases
of the 2nd Division (Countering
Transnational Crime) of the
National Central Bureau of
INTERPOL, police lieutenant colonel



**Dzmitry
Miadzvedzeu**

Employee of the National Central
Bureau of INTERPOL; Head of the
1st Division (International Wanted
Persons and Extradition), police
lieutenant colonel; former Head
of the National Central Bureau of
INTERPOL, police lieutenant colonel

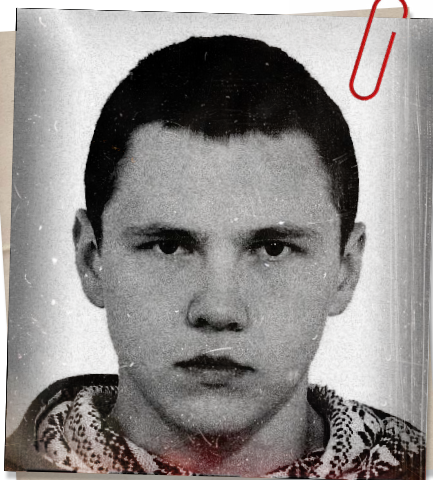
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**Dzmitry
Bykau**

Employee of the Central Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; Senior Operational Officer for Particularly Important Cases of the 2nd Division (Countering Transnational Crime) of the National Central Bureau of INTERPOL, police lieutenant colonel



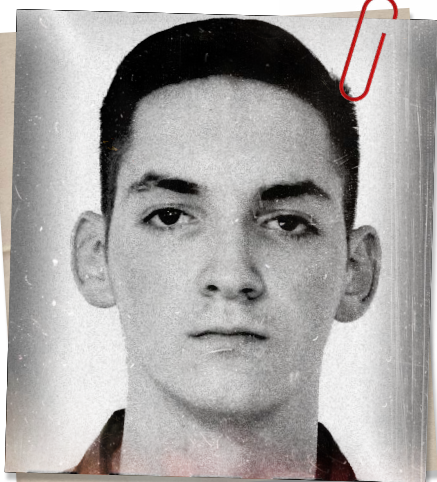
**Dzianis
Petryk**

Operational Officer for Particularly Important Cases of the 2nd Division (Countering Transnational Crime) of the National Central Bureau of INTERPOL, senior police lieutenant



**Aliaksandr
Lavyshyk**

Senior Inspector of the 3rd Division (Operational Information Processing) of the National Central Bureau of INTERPOL, senior police lieutenant



**Maksim
Suntseu**

Employee of the 3rd Division (Operational Information Processing), Senior Inspector of the National Central Bureau of INTERPOL, police lieutenant



**Aliaksandra
Zhalova**

Operational Officer for Particularly Important Cases of the 2nd Division (Countering Transnational Crime) of the National Central Bureau of INTERPOL, police captain

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The analysis conducted demonstrates that the use of INTERPOL mechanisms and other international law enforcement cooperation instruments by the regime in Belarus is not limited to isolated disputed cases or errors in the application of the law. On the contrary, the collected materials show an established practice whereby the criminal prosecution of actual or perceived opponents of the regime takes on a transnational dimension and continues far beyond the borders of Belarus.

A significant number of individuals targeted by such actions left Belarus precisely because of well-founded fears of politically motivated persecution. Despite this, they continue to face risks of detention, restrictions on freedom of movement, extradition proceedings, and other forms of pressure in third countries. The cases examined in this report demonstrate that even when INTERPOL mechanisms are not used or are unavailable, the Lukashenka regime continues to pursue similar outcomes through bilateral requests, mutual legal assistance, and other channels of cooperation.

Of particular importance are the published materials containing alleged internal communications of law enforcement officials. If the information contained therein is accurate, it indicates not only that certain officials were aware of the restrictions established by Article 3 of the INTERPOL Constitution, but also that there were deliberate attempts to circumvent these restrictions by changing the legal classification of charges, choosing specific wording in requests, and using other methods to make politically motivated cases appear as ordinary criminal proceedings. Such practices are incompatible both with INTERPOL's principle of political neutrality and with the fundamental principles of international cooperation in criminal matters.

The analysis also identifies structural problems in INTERPOL's existing oversight system. Despite the important role of the Commission for the Control of INTERPOL's Files, individuals whose data are being processed often face limited access to information, lengthy review periods, and an inability to develop an effective defence strategy promptly. As a result, many applicants have to submit requests to the Commission proactively, without having full information about the nature and content of the data held on them.

The experience of Belarus in recent years demonstrates that transnational repression has become one of the key instruments used by the ruling regime against citizens residing outside the country. At the same time, the consequences of such actions extend far beyond individual cases. The abuse of international cooperation mechanisms undermines trust in international institutions themselves, creating a risk that they will be used for purposes directly contrary to the objectives for which they were established.

Maintaining trust in the INTERPOL system requires not only effective responses to individual cases of abuse but also a willingness to recognize and address systemic risks that enable the politically motivated use of international police cooperation mechanisms. Such a consistent pattern of conduct requires a systemic response from INTERPOL, its member states, and international organizations.

The Legal Department of the Office of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya maintains that protecting INTERPOL's political neutrality and ensuring compliance with Article 3 of its Constitution is not only a matter of the organization's institutional reputation but also a crucial safeguard for protecting thousands of people who have been forced to leave their countries due to political repression. International cooperation in criminal matters must not become a tool for persecution based on political beliefs, civic engagement, participation in peaceful protests, or support for democratic change.

The cases documented in this report demonstrate that the abuse of international mechanisms by the regime in Belarus remains a pressing issue and requires continued

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attention from international partners. Only consistent oversight, transparent procedures, 31
and a willingness to respond to violations can ensure that no person becomes the subject
of international persecution solely for exercising their fundamental rights and freedoms.

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CALL TO ACTION

In light of the above, the Legal Department of the Office of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya respectfully proposes the following measures aimed at improving the work of INTERPOL, particularly with regard to requests originating from repressive regimes such as Belarus.

INTERPOL bodies are encouraged to:

- treat Diffusions and requests for the issuance of Red Notices originating from Belarus with particular caution and critically assess them at the initial stage of receiving the relevant information from the National Central Bureau in Minsk;
- consider establishing a structured process for the automatic referral of requests originating from Belarus to the Commission for the Control of INTERPOL's Files before their dissemination through INTERPOL channels;
- assess requests submitted by law enforcement authorities in Belarus concerning individuals who left Belarus after 2020 through the lens of an increased risk of politically motivated persecution;
- inform individuals subject to Red Notices or Diffusions so that they can promptly challenge the processing of their data before the Commission;
- ensure compliance with the timelines for reviewing cases before the Commission, including by providing the Commission's Secretariat with additional resources necessary for the effective and timely consideration of requests;
- publish aggregated statistics on the number of requests rejected or deleted due to violations of Article 3 of the INTERPOL Constitution, including data on the states that initiated such requests;
- consider introducing a special monitoring regime for the activities of the National Central Bureau of INTERPOL in Minsk, including regular audits of whether its requests comply with Article 3 of the INTERPOL Constitution and the Rules on the Processing of Data;
- consider applying corrective measures provided for under the Rules in relation to the National Central Bureau of INTERPOL in Minsk, including restricting or suspending access to certain INTERPOL channels and tools in the event of continued systemic abuse.

Competent authorities of member states are encouraged to:

- significantly strengthen the review of all requests, Diffusions, and other communications originating from Belarus, taking into account the high risk of political motivation;
- strictly require court decisions as a mandatory condition for considering such requests;
- not consider court decisions from Belarus as sufficient confirmation of the legality of persecution without an additional assessment of the independence of the proceedings, compliance with the right to a fair trial, and the possible political motivation of the case;
- take into account the systemic nature of human rights violations in Belarus, documented within the mandates established by the United Nations Human Rights

Council;

consider the existence of international protection, humanitarian status, an asylum application, participation in the democratic movement, or other indications of political persecution as significant factors when assessing requests originating from Belarus;

strictly uphold the principle of non-refoulement and always assess the safety of potential return in light of the current human rights situation in Belarus, taking into account, in particular, country guidance issued by the European Union Agency for Asylum and other relevant international organizations.

International partners, including INTERPOL member states, their MPs, international organizations, and human rights institutions, are encouraged to:

submit communications to the INTERPOL General Secretariat and the Commission for the Control of INTERPOL's Files expressing concern regarding the systematic use of INTERPOL channels by the regime in Belarus for the transnational persecution of political opponents;

call on INTERPOL to assess the activities of the National Central Bureau of INTERPOL in Minsk for compliance with Article 3 of the INTERPOL Constitution, the Rules on the Processing of Data, and its obligation to act in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

raise the issue of Belarus's abuse of INTERPOL mechanisms at bilateral and multilateral levels, including within the frameworks of the European Union, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the United Nations, and parliamentary diplomacy;

support Belarusians who have become subject to politically motivated requests, Diffusions, extradition proceedings, or other forms of transnational repression, including through legal assistance, case monitoring, and public advocacy;

contribute to increasing the transparency and accountability of the INTERPOL system to ensure that international police cooperation is not used as a tool of political repression.

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