



General Assembly

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Human Rights Council

Twentieth session

Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council*

20/13.

Situation of human rights in Belarus

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and other applicable human rights instruments,

Recalling Human Rights Council resolution 17/24 of 17 June 2011, and deploring the lack of cooperation by the Government of Belarus with the requests of the Council made in that resolution, including the denial of access to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and several thematic special procedures mandate holders to the country,

Welcoming the oral and comprehensive written¹ reports of the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in Belarus, presented to the Council at its eighteenth and twentieth sessions respectively, and regretting the lack of implementation by the Government of Belarus of the preliminary recommendations made in the oral report,

1. *Expresses grave concern* at the findings of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in her report¹ that suggest the existence of a pattern of serious violations of human rights since 19 December 2010, that is of a systemic nature, and includes intensified restrictions on the fundamental freedoms of association, assembly, opinion and expression, including with regard to the media, as well as allegations of torture and ill-treatment in custody, impunity of perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses, harassment of civil society organizations and human rights defenders, violations of due process and fair trial safeguards, and pressure on defence lawyers;

2. *Urges* the Government of Belarus to immediately and unconditionally release and rehabilitate all political prisoners, to address, through comprehensive, transparent and

* The resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council will be contained in the report of the Council on its twentieth session (A/HRC/20/2), chap. I.

¹ A/HRC/20/8.

credible investigations, reports of torture and ill-treatment, to implement all other recommendations contained in the report of the High Commissioner, and to put an immediate end to arbitrary detention of human rights defenders, the increased use of short-term arbitrary detention and arbitrary travel bans aimed at intimidating representatives of the political opposition and the media, as well as human rights defenders and civil society;

3. *Decides* to appoint a special rapporteur to monitor the situation of human rights in Belarus and to make recommendations for its improvement; to help to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the High Commissioner; to assist the Government of Belarus in fulfilling its human rights obligations; to offer support and advice to civil society; to seek, receive, examine and act on information from all relevant stakeholders pertaining to the situation of human rights in Belarus; and to report annually to the Human Rights Council and to the General Assembly in accordance with their respective programmes of work;

4. *Calls upon* the Government of Belarus to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur and to provide him/her access to visit the country, as well as the information necessary to facilitate the fulfilment of the mandate;

5. *Requests* the Office of the High Commissioner to provide the Special Rapporteur with the assistance and resources necessary to allow the fulfilment of the mandate.

31st meeting

5 July 2012

[Adopted by a recorded vote of 22 to 5, with 20 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Austria, Belgium, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chile, Congo, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Jordan, Maldives, Mauritius, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, United States of America

Against:

China, Cuba, Ecuador, India, Russian Federation

Abstaining:

Angola, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Djibouti, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mexico, Nigeria, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Thailand, Uganda, Uruguay]