Resolution on the new wave of mass arrests in Belarus of opposition activists and their family members

2024/2550(RSP) - 08/02/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 459 votes to 14, with 33 abstentions, a resolution on the new wave of mass arrests in Belarus of opposition activists and their family members.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA, ECR groups and Members.

In January 2024, the Belarusian State Security Committee (KGB) carried out raids, interrogations and detentions targeting over 200 family members of current and former political prisoners as well as beneficiaries of the 'INeedHelpBY' initiative on 'extremism'-related charges. The majority are mothers and wives of political prisoners.

Members reiterated their solidarity with the people of Belarus and its support for their legitimate aspirations for a democratic and European future and remains committed to working tirelessly with democratic forces, civil society and independent media to benefit the Belarusians.

Parliament strongly condemned the recent wave of mass arrests in Belarus and urged the illegitimate Lukashenka regime to cease repression, especially any gender-based persecution, and reminds the regime of its international obligations. It called for the immediate unconditional release and compensation of all more than 1 400 political prisoners, as well as their families and arbitrarily detained persons, while restoring their full rights.

Members reiterated their position on the **lack of transparency, freedom and fairness** ahead of the parliamentary and local 'elections' in Belarus and called for the EU, its Member States, and the international community not to recognise the results.

Regarding the Lukashenka regime, Parliament called on the VP/HR and the Council to respond by imposing **stronger sanctions** on the regime, including against goods involving political prisoners' forced labour, stricter financial sanctions, and sanctions on individuals responsible for serious human-rights violations, including high-level officials and members of the security forces. It also called for a further reduction of the diplomatic presence of Belarus in the EU, continued support for regime victims through special instruments allowing them to obtain EU visas and residence permits and addressing cases of statelessness.

The Commission and the Member States are called on to further support the documentation of human rights violations in Belarus.