

August 13, 2020

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, P.C, M.P.  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
125 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0G2

Dear Minister Champagne:

**Re: Violent attacks on peaceful demonstrators in Belarus**

We, the undersigned representatives of Canadian community organizations, denounce the widespread violence that the tyrannical regime of Alexander Lukashenka has wrought upon peaceful demonstrators in cities and towns across Belarus.

The August 9 presidential election in Belarus was marred by the severe restrictions on ballot access for candidates, the jailing of and intimidation tactics against opposition candidates, and the prohibition of independent observers at polling stations. Since the announcement of fraudulent election results, in which Mr. Lukashenka claimed victory, the people of Belarus have taken to the streets in support of their inalienable right to have their voices heard by their government. We stand with the people of Belarus in support of their right to freedom and democracy.

The Lukashenka regime has responded to these demonstrations with extensive and ruthless violence – thousands of demonstrators have been imprisoned; many have been severely beaten; journalists attempting to report on the demonstrations have been targeted by security forces. Yesterday, in a serious escalation by Mr. Lukashenka's regime, live-fire ammunition was used against demonstrators. There are credible reports emerging from Belarus of the ill-treatment and torture of demonstrators held in police detention.

The people of Belarus have, as do all peoples, the right to decide their own destiny, free from state intimidation, violence and repression. Therefore, we call on the Government of Canada to:

1. Refuse to recognize the results of the August 9 election, as published by the Belarusian Central Election Commission;
2. Unequivocally condemn the Lukashenka regime's persecution and violence against demonstrators, opposition leaders and media;
3. Together with our allies, implement Magnitsky sanctions against representatives of the Lukashenka regime responsible for targeting demonstrators, suppressing dissent and violating internationally recognized human rights;
4. Together with our allies, support Belarusian civil society and Belarusian groups seeking freedom and democracy.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Chyczij  
UKRAINIAN CANADIAN CONGRESS

Alena Liavonchanka  
BELARUSIAN CANADIAN ALLIANCE

Marcus Kolga  
CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNCIL  
IN CANADA