



May 23, 2021

The Honourable Marc Garneau, PC, MP
Minister of Foreign Affairs
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0G2

Dear Minister Garneau:

Re: Hijacking of Ryanair Flight FR4978 by the regime of self-proclaimed Belarusian “President” Lukashenka

Today the illegitimate, self-proclaimed regime of Belarusian “President” Aleksandr Lukashenka hijacked Ryanair Flight FR4978, flying from Athens to Vilnius, in order to abduct dissident journalist Roman Protasevich, forcing the aircraft to land in Minsk.

This hijacking endangered the lives of over 100 people on board the aircraft. This act by the Lukashenka regime violates more international treaties than can be named. It is an act of state terrorism.

The hijacking follows a weak and insufficient response by the European Union and allies to months of regime violence and political terror by the Lukashenka regime against its own citizens.

The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to:

1. Demand the immediate release of dissident journalist Roman Protasevich;
2. Ensure that no Canadian airlines fly over Belarusian airspace;
3. Issue a travel warning to all Canadian citizens about the danger of boarding flights from other airlines that may over Belarusian airspace;
4. Work with NATO and EU allies to significantly strengthen sanctions against the Belarusian regime.

Every autocrat and dictator in the world, including Lukashenka’s principal sponsor and ally, Russia’s President Vladimir Putin, is watching how Western democracies respond to this brazen act of state terror. Should the response be ineffectual, autocracies and dictatorships will be further emboldened to continue committing similar heinous acts.

Yours truly,
UKRAINIAN CANADIAN CONGRESS

Alexandra Chyczij
National President