

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 9, 2021

The Honorable Linda Thomas-Greenfield  
U.S. Representative to the United Nations  
U.S. Mission to the United Nations  
799 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield:

We write to propose further action by the United States government to respond to the increasingly concerning situation in Belarus.

Since mid-2020, the political and human rights situation in Belarus has deteriorated at an alarming rate. The multitude of crimes committed by Alexander Lukashenka's regime indicate that his government has no intention of protecting the fundamental human rights of its citizens as required by the international community.

Our allies and partners around the world have spoken out strongly against the regime's various human rights abuses, which include the persecution of political opposition and press, and violent crackdowns on peaceful protests. The blatant theft of an election, the illegal hijacking of an international commercial flight to capture dissident journalist Raman Pratasevich, the forced displacement of migrants to Lithuania, and an attempt to forcibly repatriate an Olympic athlete from the Tokyo Games are the most flagrant examples of the Lukashenka regime's hostility, not only to Belarusians, but to its neighbors and the international community at large.

The regime must not be allowed to enjoy the privileges of international recognition so long as it continues to violate international norms.

Unilateral and bilateral sanctions implemented by the United States, the European Union, and our allies have been good steps. We welcome today's executive order, but additional firm action must be taken to show Lukashenka that the entire international community is united against his behavior.

We formally request that the U.S. Mission to the United Nations (U.N.) propose a resolution at the upcoming General Assembly to condemn the actions of the Belarusian government and call for an international diplomatic boycott of the country. This resolution would not only condemn the actions of the Belarusian government, but reaffirm the global community's support for human rights, good governance, and acceptable international relations among nations. It will also send a strong message to the people of Belarus, the opposition working diligently in exile, and the countries in the region that the world stands firmly behind them in their fight for freedom.

This U.N. General Assembly resolution should call for:

- A boycott and ban on Belarus' participation in and hosting of international cultural events, such as conferences, sporting competitions, and performance art tours.
- A condemnation of Belarus' violations of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, specifically against the rights to free speech, from threat of violence, etc.
- A suspension of all non-essential U.N. or other international organizations' activities in country.

Unified action at the U.N. is essential to bolster the effort to return Belarus to its people. A U.N. resolution in support of the people and condemnation of the government will carry a powerful statement to Belarus and authoritarian governments around the world who may be unsure of the consequences of rogue-state behavior.

Now is a critical time in the fight for freedom and democracy around the world. President Biden has declared his commitment to strengthening our alliances and restoring American leadership, and there is no better place to carry out that mission than the U.N. As we confront mounting challenges from authoritarian governments around the world, this is the perfect opportunity to take action.

Sincerely,



JAMES E. RISCH  
Ranking Member  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee



RICHARD J. DURBIN  
Chairman  
Senate Judiciary Committee