



Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada
NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

**Human Rights
Institute**



**The Law Society
of England and Wales**

58th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

Item 4: Interactive dialogue with the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus 19 March 2025

Joint Oral Statement

The International Bar Association, the Belarusian Association of Human Rights Lawyers, the Law Society of England and Wales; Lawyers for Lawyers; Lawyers Rights Watch Canada, thank the Group of Independent Experts their excellent work and are alarmed at their findings.

We continue to condemn the repression of civil society in Belarus, in particular the reprisals against defence lawyers representing political opposition, protesters or defending the rule of law.

We deplore the State's full control over the judiciary, and condemn the repression against independent lawyers representing dissenting voices and the nearly complete takeover of the legal profession in Belarus, with the interference of the Ministry of Justice in their licensing and activities and the Bar Association fails to protect its members

We keep condemning the landmark case of lawyer Maksim Znak, arbitrarily detained since 2020 and still held incommunicado, as well as the arbitrary conviction of lawyers Danilevich, Braginiec, Lazarenka, Yurhilevich and Barodka. We recall that Belarus has ratified and is therefore bound by, inter alia, the UN Convention against Torture and the ICCPR.

We urge Belarus to immediately release all individuals arbitrarily detained for political reasons, including lawyers, and cease further persecution.

Lastly, we welcome the referral of the situation in Belarus to the International Criminal Court by Lithuania, and urge other States to join it.

This statement was delivered by:

Francesca Restifo

Senior Human Rights Lawyer and UN Representative

International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)

For further information please contact: francesca.restifo@int-bar.org