

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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The Human Rights Council must renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Belarus

Amnesty International deplores the sharp rise in death sentences and executions in Belarus and the continued violation of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, association and expression.

Five men have been executed since 2016, and two are currently on death row.¹ By retaining full secrecy regarding the use of the death penalty, Belarus also violates the rights of the families of those sentenced to death and executed.

The detention of hundreds of peaceful protestors across the country in March and April this year, with multiple reports of excessive use of police force, was extreme even by Belarusian standards. On 25 March, Amnesty International witnessed the violent arrest of dozens of peaceful demonstrators in Minsk.² Over 900 people were detained across Belarus, with at least 177 receiving severe administrative penalties.

In such a context, it is imperative that the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Belarus is extended and that the Belarusian authorities grant full access to the country. The government should also increase its engagement with other UN human rights mechanisms.

Amnesty International also calls on the Belarusian government to:

- Immediately commute all death sentences to terms of imprisonment and establish a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty;
- Lift all secrecy surrounding the use of the death penalty;

¹ Siarhei Ivanou was executed in April 2016. Siarhei Khmialeuski, Ivan Kulesh and Hyanadz Yakavitski were executed around 5 November 2016. Kiryl Kazachok was sentenced to death in December 2016. Aliaksei Mikhalenia was sentenced to death in March 2017. Siarhei Vostrykau was executed in April 2017.

² <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/03/belarus-vicious-crackdown-on-peaceful-protests-mars-freedom-day/>

- Guarantee and respect the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

End/