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United States Mission to the OSCE

Recent Developments in Belarus

As delivered by Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Elisabeth Rosenstock-Siller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 16, 2021

Thank you, Madam Chair.

While the Permanent Council paused over recess, unfortunately, repression in Belarus did not. We are particularly concerned by the authorities' provocative, politically-motivated arrest of members of the Belarusian Polish community. These arrests have been accompanied by an increasingly virulent feed of anti-Polish propaganda on Belarusian state television, as well as pressure on Polish language schools to provide details about their teachers and students (including minors).

We remind our Belarusian colleagues that their citizens, including those of Polish descent, are not their enemy. We urge the Belarusian authorities to stop treating their citizens as such and instead respect their human rights and fundamental freedoms. This state-sponsored repression of members of the Polish community is accompanied by a continuing broader crackdown in Belarus on the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association. We support efforts by the *International Accountability Platform for Belarus* to collect evidence of torture and repression to hold those responsible to account.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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