

Side-event at the UN 47th Session of the Human Rights Council Lawyers Under Threat: Increasing Suppression of the Legal Profession in Belarus

Tuesday, July 6, 2021, 3:00pm–4:00pm CEST, Virtual Event Via Zoom

Register [HERE](#)

Context

This side-event will address apparent government-led attempts to undermine the legal profession in Belarus in the aftermath of Belarus's 2020 presidential election. The speakers will present a joint report prepared by legal organizations including Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L), the American Bar Association Center for Human Rights (ABA CHR), and the International Bar Association Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI). The report outlines the government crackdown on opposition and critical voices in Belarus following the 2020 presidential election, including on lawyers defending opposition figures and protestors or speaking out about the rule of law, administration of justice, and human rights. It uses various case studies to illustrate the pattern of unwarranted state interference with and harassment and intimidation of Belarusian lawyers. The cases not only reveal the impact of the government crackdown on individual lawyers but also a concerning trend of unwarranted interference with the independence of the legal profession in Belarus and violations of lawyers' human rights to the freedoms of expression, assembly, and association through disbarments or administrative or criminal charges against lawyers.

The experts will describe the situation on the ground and will emphasize the importance of international solidarity, cooperation, and assistance. The speakers will offer recommendations on how to support lawyers in Belarus.

Objectives

The side-event will be held online with experts from civil society, state and UN bodies. Space will be provided for interactions with participants from the floor. The side-event will be recorded.

Format

The experts will describe the situation on the ground and will emphasize the importance of the international solidarity, cooperation and assistance. The speakers will offer recommendations on how to support lawyers in Belarus.

Date 6 July 2021 – 47th UN Human Rights Council Session

Time 15:00-16:00 Geneva, Switzerland

Moderator **Baroness Helena Kennedy**

Director of IBAHRI

Panelists **Ms. Patricia Lee Refo**

ABA President

Ms. Anaïs Marin

UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus

Ms. Radmila Dacic

ICJ Commissioner & Judge of the Supreme Court of Serbia

Ms. Sophie de Graaf

Executive Director of Lawyers for Lawyers

Ms. Olga Salomatova

International Program Coordinator at the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights

Ms. Liudmila Kazak

Belarusian Human Rights Lawyer (disbarred)