



Joint Statement of the Presidents of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland on Belarus

23 August 2021, Kyiv

- A year ago, in August 2020, the citizens of Belarus hoped that they have the right to determine the future of their country in free elections. The Belarus' authorities did not listen to their voices. Participants in the peaceful popular movement, unprecedented in recent history of the country, have been punished by imprisonment, exile or silencing. Hope has been replaced by fear and spreading repressions. We stand in solidarity with all the people of Belarus, who are restricted in their rights in their homeland.
- We witness with growing concern the violation of the rights of Belarus' citizens abroad. Ryanair flight 4978 forced landing was an act of state hijack and unprecedented violation of international law, shall not be tolerated.
- Since June, we have been facing hybrid attacks on the European Union's and NATO's eastern border. Vulnerable citizens from third countries are being used to fuel illegal border crossings from Belarus. This is not a migrant crisis but a politically orchestrated hybrid operation by Alyaksandr Lukashenka's regime to divert attention from the regime's growing human and civil rights abuses. We condemn this unacceptable behavior. Futile pressure and reckless actions will not change our agreed policy on the crisis in Belarus.
- We appreciate our EU partners and NATO allies for their solidarity, political and operational support in stopping hybrid attacks. Efforts made by the European Commission and EU agencies to stem irregular migration are of utmost importance. Additionally, we seek continued cooperation as well as sustainable solutions with Iraq and other countries in order to stop malicious scheme of human smuggling.
- We extend our deepest sympathies to 631 political prisoners [as of 13.08] and their relatives. All political prisoners must be released and their rights restored.
- We actively support all international initiatives aimed at tackling impunity in Belarus. In the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act, the people of Belarus must be given the freedom to choose their democratic future. The only way to end the political crisis is inclusive national dialogue leading to free and fair elections.
- Since October 2020, the EU has progressively imposed sanctions against Belarusian regime. We welcome the recent sanctions by our NATO Allies US, UK and Canada. Further cooperation with our partners and allies continues to impose additional sanctions against the Belarus authorities.
- We – the Presidents of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland – stand in solidarity against the aggressive and destabilizing behavior of Alyaksandr Lukashenka and the Belarus' authorities. We remain convinced that the will of the Belarusian Nation should be the main guideline for shaping the future of the Republic of Belarus.

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