



**Statement
of Belarusian national youth council “RADA”
against pressure on student movement and academics in Belarus**

Minsk

02/11/2020

We, the union of twenty eight democratic youth organizations of Belarus, being created with the purpose of consolidating of youth organizations and initiatives of Belarus for representation, promotion and defending common interests, exercising right to freedoms of association and other constitutional rights, represented by the Governing Body – the Board of “RADA”, make the following statement:

We express concern about the approach chosen by administrations of educational institutions of expelling and intimidation of students — participants of peaceful assemblies. Rudeness, refusals to talk, psychological pressure, blackmail by the payment of scholarships and awards and calls of riot police against peaceful student actions — this is what we have been observing in the actions of the administrations of educational institutions for the last two months. In recent days about 200 students have been detained and expelled throughout the country and even more are on the exclusion lists.

We are concerned with new facts of refusals to cross the border to Belarus for Belarusian students. This is a huge violation by the State Border Committee of the domestic legislation, including the Law on the procedure for the exit and entry of Belarusian citizens, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

We cannot put up with cases of law enforcement officers entering the territory of educational institutions to detain students — this is a violation of academic freedoms and the principles of the Magna Carta of Universities. This is exactly how the BSUIR student Zmitser Mazura was detained in the university building, who was subsequently arrested for a total of 38 days and is still behind bars.



We consider the cases of beating of students after detention as flagrant. Student injuries have been documented and we hope they will form the basis for investigating and punishing perpetrators.

We are especially saddened by the detention and expulsion of Sofia Terentyeva, a member of the Board of RADA, a student of the “Vitebsk State Technological College” BSTU branch, who was detained during a single picket in the building of the educational institution, and then expelled.

We also consider unacceptable mass layoffs at least of 20 teachers of educational institutions due to their civic activism and articulated solidarity with students. We believe that this approach of the administrations of educational institutions is contradicting with the spirit of the university and will lead to a rapid collapse of the educational process.

Considering the accession of Belarus to the Bologna Process, the Great Charter of European Universities and the roadmap for Belarus to enter the international academic community, we are extremely concerned about the statement of Lukashenko about non-recognition of diplomas of foreign educational institutions.

In this regard, we:

- Demand an end to violence, expulsions and violations of civil and political rights against students of educational institutions by the administrations of these educational institutions and representatives of the internal affairs bodies;
- Demand that representatives of the internal affairs bodies are denied access to educational institutions, since the functions of law enforcement are performed by internal services;
- Demand the cancellation of all orders for the expulsion of students due to civic activity and participation in student movement and restore them;
- Demand to cancel all orders to dismiss teachers for their civic position and solidarity with students and reinstate them in their positions;
- Demand that the State Border Committee of Belarus immediately allow all students, as all other citizens of Belarus, to cross the border to enter Belarus without restrictions;



- Express our support and solidarity to the entire student community and call on them for universal solidarity and joint non-violent defense of their demands;
- Call upon alumni, as well as teachers to explicitly support Belarusian student movement;
- Call upon university administrations to change their approach towards students from repression to dialogue;
- Call upon international student and youth organizations to express solidarity with Belarusian students;
- Appeal to the Bologna Committee to call on Belarusian universities and the Ministry of Education to put an end to violence and administrative repression against students and teachers;
- Call upon the Ministry of Education and the Secretariat of the Bologna Process to comment on the statement of Lukashenko about non-recognition of international diplomas in Belarus and about the consequences that this will bring to the academic sphere of Belarus;
- Call upon international funds and programs, including the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to stop cooperation with the Ministry of Education of Belarus and the administrations of Belarusian educational institutions until the demands of the student movement are met, the pressure of administrations ends and, at the same time, to expand cooperation and exchange programs for students and teachers.