



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

Minsk

17/11/2020

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:

Since August 9, there were more than 20,000 detained people among those who took to the streets of Belarusian cities to exercise their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, guaranteed by the Constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These violations are large-scale, and we drew attention to this in our last statement, dated [November 2](#), but during the last two weeks we have observed a new wave of pressure directed against youth organizations and initiatives.

So, on the night of November 1, riot police officers broke into a private event in a private house where representatives of the LGBTQ + community were present, searched and intimidated the participants of the event. All participants were detained for 7 hours, tested for drugs, drawn up protocols on drug use and drug trafficking, and unreasonably threatened to initiate a criminal case on drug trafficking, that were not found in the house and during the tests. At the moment, all detainees are free.

On November 12, 7 members of the “Belarusian Students’ Association” had searches at their living places, as well as in their office. For 5 people - Ksenia Syramalot, Alana Gebremariam, Yegor Kanetsky, Yana Arabeyko and Kasya Budko - the searches ended with the arrest and placement in the KGB detention center as suspects in a criminal case (Art. 342 of the Criminal Code). Lawyers were allowed to visit them only the next day.

On November 16, after knocking out the doors of the apartment where Viktor Klimus - member of Brest organization “Grunt” lives, representatives of the Investigative Committee conducted a search. At the moment when the door was knocked out, Viktor was not in the apartment, but his wife and small child were there. 2 flags and a computer were confiscated.

All these cases occurred within a short span of time and indicate that members of youth organizations have become targets of persecution.

We are outraged by these events and regard them as deliberate persecution of representatives of youth organizations for their active civil position, which is a violation of the Constitution and the International covenant on civil and political rights. We view this situation



as an aggressive, one-sided, unconstructive and failed attempt by the state authorities to respond to the civil activism of young people caused by election fraud, violence in the actions of law enforcement agencies and politically motivated repressions.

In this regard, we:

- Express our support and solidarity to all young people who have been subjected to pressure and repression by government agencies;
- Call on the administrations of educational institutions and the Ministry of Education to put an end to violence and repression against students, to help restore the expelled and to facilitate the release of detainees;
- Demand from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Security Committee the immediate release of the detained activists and activists of youth organizations who have become victims of politically motivated persecution;
- Demand that the Investigative Committee and the State Security Committee stop persecuting representatives and representatives of youth organizations and other civil society organizations for political reasons;
- Demand from all state structures of Belarus to stop violence and other forms of pressure and violations of the Constitution, civil and political rights against the youth and people of Belarus;
- Call upon Belarusian youth for solidarity and joint non-violent defense of their demands;
- Call upon international community to express solidarity with the Belarusian youth and people against violence and persecution by state bodies;
- Appeal to the Bologna Committee to demand from the Ministry of Education of Belarus to stop violence and repression against students and recover expelled.