

## CIVIL SOLIDARITY PLATFORM CALLS FOR THE RELEASE OF ANDREI ALIAKSANDRAU

20 January 2020

The undersigned organisations, members of the Civic Solidarity Platform, express their alarm at the arrest of our friend and colleague, journalist Andrei Aliaksandrau. He was arrested in Minsk on 13 January 2021 along with his partner, Irina Zlobina. They are both being held in Minsk detention centres. Andrei Aliaksandrau is [a suspect in a criminal case](#) started by the Minsk city department of the Investigative Committee under Art. 342 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus, "Organization and preparation of actions that grossly violate public order, or active participation in them."

Aliaksandrau is a long-standing champion of human rights in his native Belarus and across the OSCE region, through his activities on the board of the Belarusian Association of Journalists, in freedom of expression NGOs Index on Censorship and Article 19, and in managing communications at the Civic Solidarity Platform.

The day after his arrest police raided the offices of the independent BelaPAN news agency claiming they were looking for evidence related to the criminal case against Aliaksandrau. Several pieces of equipment were confiscated from BelaPAN's offices, including personal computers.

Hundreds of cases of repression of journalists who peacefully exercised their profession [have been documented](#) in Belarus in 2020, and the repression continues in 2021. Aliaksandrau is one of nine journalists in the list of currently [187 political prisoners](#), maintained by Belarusian human rights NGOs.

The undersigned members of the Civic Solidarity Platform express their solidarity with Andrei Aliaksandrau and Irina Zlobina. We condemn their arrests in the strongest possible terms and call on the Belarusian authorities to immediately release them and unconditionally drop all charges against them. Moreover, we condemn the subsequent raid on BelaPAN's office. We remind the Belarusian authorities that repressive measures taken as a reaction to the voicing of critical opinions about the government are incompatible with the right to freedom of expression and a clear violation of Belarus' obligations under international law.

We urge the Belarusian government to cease all further interference with the core human rights of those who are peacefully and legitimately exercising their right to freedom of expression. We call on the government to release everyone, including Andrei Aliaksandrau and Irina Zlobina, who are imprisoned in violation of the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

We welcome the [attention paid to Aliaksandrau's arrest](#) by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. We urge follow-up steps by other OSCE bodies, the Chairpersonship and other OSCE participating States to promote the ending of the detention of Aliaksandrau, Zlobina and others imprisoned for expressing their opinion or for peaceful civic action, and to end new similar detentions. We refer to the [Agenda for International Support of a Human Rights and Democracy Transition in Belarus](#) that we issued in early December 2020.

**List of organisations supporting the statement:**

1. Vostok SOS (Ukraine)
2. Human rights center "Postup" (Ukraine)
3. Public Foundation Notabene (Tajikistan)
4. Center for Participation and Development (Georgia)
5. Center for Civil Liberties (Ukraine)
6. Association UMDPL (Ukraine)
7. DRA Berlin (Germany)
8. Index on Censorship (United Kingdom)
9. Human Rights Center of Azerbaijan (Azerbaijan)
10. Human Rights Club (Azerbaijan)
11. Article 19 (United Kingdom)
12. KRF Public Alternative (Ukraine)
13. Libereco Partnership for Human Rights (Germany)
14. Foundation of Regional Initiatives (Ukraine)
15. Human Rights Initiative (Ukraine)
16. The Georgian Centre for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims- GCRT (Georgia)
17. Norwegian Helsinki Committee (Norway)
18. Helsinki Committee for Human Rights (Republic of North Macedonia)
19. Legal Policy Research Center (Kazakhstan)
20. The Swedish OSCE-network (Sweden)
21. Public Verdict Foundation (Russia)
22. Social Action Centre NGO (Ukraine)
23. Legal Transformation Center (Belarus)
24. Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (Poland)
25. The Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House (Belarus/Lithuania)
26. Truth Hounds (Ukraine/Georgia)
27. Promo LEX Association (Moldova)
28. SOVA Center for Information and Analysis (Russia)
29. Centre for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights (Russia)
30. Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF) (Norway)
31. Crude Accountability (USA)
32. Human Rights Group "Citizen.Army.Law" (Russia)
33. International Partnership for Human Rights (Belgium)
34. Netherlands Helsinki Committee (Netherlands)
35. Public Association "Dignity" (Kazakhstan)
36. Bir Duino (Kyrgyzstan)
37. Human Rights Center ZMINA (Ukraine)
38. Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (Bulgaria)
39. Human Rights Center Viasna (Belarus)
40. Citizens' Watch (Russia)
41. Public foundation "Golos svobody" (Kyrgyzstan)
42. Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law (Kazakhstan)
43. Human Rights Monitoring Institute (Lithuania)
44. Helsinki Citizens' Assembly - Vanadzor (Armenia)

- 45. Women of the Don (Russia)
- 46. Human Rights Center (Georgia)
- 47. Belarusian Helsinki Committee (Belarus)
- 48. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)