



## BELARUS PLATFORM'S MANDATE EXTENDED AS HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN BELARUS REMAINS CRITICAL

**8 July 2022** – The mandate of the International Accountability Platform for Belarus (IAPB) will be extended for further 15 months, with solid backing so far from 14 states and the European Union, as the human rights situation in Belarus remains critical, the IAPB announced today.

Pursuant to its mandate, the IAPB will continue to collect, preserve and analyze information and evidence of crimes under international law committed by Belarusian authorities in the run-up to, during and after the 2020 presidential election. The aim is to contribute to accountability efforts that will provide justice to survivors and their communities while holding to account those individuals responsible.

The IAPB is an NGO Consortium comprising 18 Belarusian and international human rights organisations, led by DIGNITY (Danish Institute Against Torture), the Human Rights Centre “Viasna”, the International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus and REDRESS.

“The continued operation of the Platform is critically important. Unlike Ukraine, we do not have the support of our state, where the national authorities document war crimes and crimes against humanity and initiate criminal cases, or an International Criminal Court investigation,” said Victoria Federova, a Representative of IAPB co-lead, the International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus. “When the law does not work within the country, documentation of human rights violations and international crimes and preservation of evidence is important tool for bringing the perpetrators to justice in the future.”

In April, the [IAPB announced](#) that since its launch in March 2021, it has gathered over 20,000 documents, including victim and witness statements, and 500,000 items from open sources on gross human rights violations committed in Belarus. During the last year, an IAPB team of legal, medical and technical experts has been working to set up the necessary infrastructure to store, process and verify securely the vast amount of data collected so far.

The extended mandate will allow the IAPB to continue working on the verification, consolidation, and analysis of this data and the production of analytical products to support ongoing and future investigations and prosecutions. It will also allow the IAPB to respond to increasing requests from support from criminal justice authorities in several countries to progress prosecutions under the principle of universal jurisdiction, and to continue providing

support to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)'s Examination on the Human Rights Situation in Belarus, whose mandate was extended in April.

Our organization is excited and grateful for the opportunity to continue the full-scale work of collecting, systematizing and preserving evidence of gross human rights violations committed in Belarus; it is our common obligation to the victims of crimes," said Pavel Sapelko, Representative and Lawyer of IAPB co-lead, Belarusian NGO Human Rights Centre "Viasna."

The IAPB also plans to increase cooperation with UN mandate holders and civil society organizations to advance accountability efforts and justice for victims and survivors in Belarus, while maintaining a survivor-centred approach.

States supporting the extension of the IAPB's mandate so far include Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the USA, as well as the European Union.

"The IAPB has established the tools necessary to ensure information and evidence is preserved and accessible to investigators and prosecutors in a comparably short time and started the complex work of analysing its collection applying criminal justice standards," Kate Vigneswaran, Head of the IAPB said. "In extending our work for another 15 months, States have recognized the significant contribution we can now make to supporting accountability actors to hold the perpetrators of gross human rights violations committed in Belarus to account and advance justice for victims."

**For more information**, please visit [iapbelarus.org](http://iapbelarus.org) or contact:

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