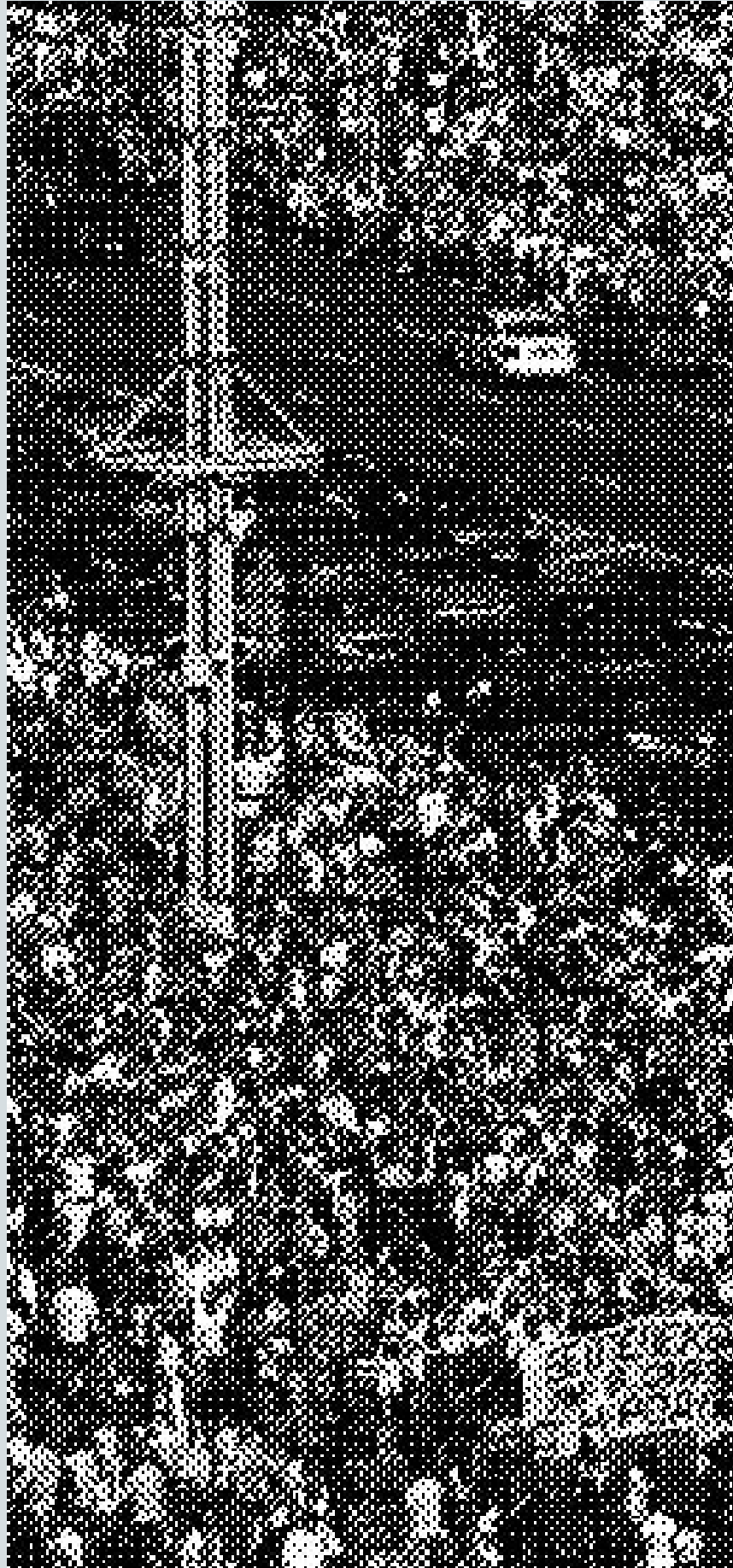


Fourth progress report to supporting States

October 2022 to March 2023

Public



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About the International Accountability Platform for Belarus

The IAPB is a coalition of independent non-government organisations that have joined forces to collect, consolidate, verify, and preserve information and evidence of gross human rights violations constituting crimes under international law allegedly committed by Belarusian authorities and others in the run-up to the 2020 presidential election and its aftermath. To this end, the IAPB builds on the ongoing efforts of Belarusian human rights organisations to collect information about human rights violations committed in Belarus. The information and evidence collected by the IAPB will assist independent and fair criminal investigations and prosecutions, carried out in accordance with international law and standards, in national or international courts or tribunals that have or may have jurisdiction over those crimes. The information and evidence will also support other mechanisms aiming to ensure accountability for crimes under international law allegedly committed in Belarus, including the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights examination of the human rights situation in Belarus.

The IAPB is composed of a Steering Committee, responsible for leading the IAPB's work, a secretariat, and an Advisory Council. The Steering Committee is composed of DIGNITY – Danish Institute against Torture (lead), Human Rights Centre “Viasna” (Viasna) (co-lead), International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus (co-lead) and REDRESS (co-lead). In addition to a number of Belarusian organisations that do not wish to be publicly listed for security reasons, the Advisory Council is composed of the following organisations: European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR); International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH); International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT); Norwegian Helsinki Committee; Physicians for Human Rights (PHR); Reporters Without Borders (RSF); and World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT). The work of the IAPB is carried out by a Secretariat composed of legal and medical practitioners with expertise and experience in international criminal investigations and prosecutions.

The IAPB was launched on 24 March 2021 in response to the OSCE Moscow Mechanism rapporteur's report to the OSCE Permanent Council on 5 November 2020. Among other things, the report calls on States to hold perpetrators of torture and inhumane treatment, including sexual violence, and other gross human rights violations committed in the context of the 9 August 2020 presidential elections in Belarus to account.

The IAPB is or has been supported by a wide range of States, notably Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Lichtenstein, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, as well as the European Union.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Situation on the ground

Belarusian authorities continue to target human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, trade union leaders, politicians and others. By 31 March 2023, the number of political prisoners had reportedly increased to 1,474 persons; over 3,000 persons have been convicted in politically motivated criminal cases.¹ There were over 614 arrests in March alone, with judges ordering at least 166 terms of administrative imprisonment and 36 fines.² On 3 March 2023, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Viasna chairman Ales Bialatski, member of Viasna's Board and Vice-President of the International Federation for Human Rights Valiantsin Stefanovic, lawyer and coordinator the Human Rights Defenders for Free Elections campaign Uladzimir Labkovich, and Viasna's board member Dzmitry Salauyou (convicted *in absentia*), were sentenced from seven to 10 years' imprisonment.³ On 6 March 2023, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and Pavel Latushka were sentenced to 15 and 18 year terms respectively.⁴

At least 823 non-profit organizations are in the process of forced liquidation, with 456 additional organisations being forced to self-liquidate.⁵ More than 90 lawyers have been disbarred since the summer of 2020, while 7 lawyers have been imprisoned for political reasons.⁶ Impunity for human rights violations committed in Belarus continues, with Belarus' withdrawal from the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights coming into effect from 8 February 2023.

Collection of information and evidence

Since 1 April 2021, Viasna and the International Committee have collected information and evidence from 1,030 victims and other witnesses (684 men and 346 women) regarding alleged crimes under international law, including relevant documentary evidence such as medical and court records. Since April 2021, the IAPB has also collected over 772,768 items from 418 open sources, including 102,740 videos, 318,589 images and 351,439 text items.

Consolidation, preservation and analysis of information and evidence

As of 31 March 2023, approximately 20,000 documents relating to 2,270 survivor-victims and witnesses, including transcribed interviews, medical reports and court records, and related translations into English, had been restructured and uploaded to the IAPB's digital archives. Of these, approximately 60% of the files had been reviewed and tagged according to the IAPB's survivor-victim/witness file review strategy and custom-made coding layout. The IAPB also preserved its collection of open-source intelligence, and tagged 3,104 open-source files in discrete data collection sets organised by thematic groups on state policy, chain of command and underlying crimes.

Support to the OHCHR Examination on the human rights situation in Belarus

Over the August to November 2022 period, IAPB Belarusian co-leads facilitated OEB access to 159 potential interviewees and provided logistical support to interview selected persons. Pursuant to the OEB's request in October 2022 for access to information and evidence on three priority areas, the IAPB submitted a detailed list of over 1,300 open and closed-source materials with a related methodology, and created a dedicated disclosure space in its digital archives for access by OEB investigators to the underlying closed-source material. The IAPB also participated in an OEB consultation of experts on accountability needs, in which the IAPB encouraged the OEB to make recommendations to states on the referral of the situation in Belarus to the International Criminal Court, the use of universal jurisdiction frameworks and cross-border cooperation and the impact of sanctions (namely travel bans) on states' ability to access perpetrators.

In his report to the UN Human Rights Council, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that the OEB interviewed 207 victims and witnesses and reviewed more than 2,500 items of information and evidence.⁷ The High Commissioner also found that, in addition to the 100 cases of sexual and gender-based crimes (SGBC) it

documented, the OEB “reviewed over 180 additional cases documented by reputable civil society organizations, whose analysis OHCHR found to be credible.”⁸ The IAPB understands that many if not all of these cases were provided according to the OEB’s request outlined above. Accordingly, in addition to the large number of survivor-victims and witnesses and items of information and evidence to which the IAPB provided access, IAPB support constituted a significant contribution to the OEB’s work, and its finding that the human rights violations committed in Belarus may constitute crimes against humanity.⁹

The OEB and IAPB have also coordinated in other areas, including in an internal IAPB workshop, in briefing states in Geneva and Brussels and through numerous meetings and discussions with a view to sharing knowledge and facilitating the IAPB’s provision of information and evidence to the OEB.

Support to criminal justice authorities

As of 31 March 2023, the IAPB has received requests for access to information and evidence and analytical briefs from criminal justice authorities in four European states. In the reporting period, the IAPB processed a request from a domestic criminal justice authority, submitting an 81-page analytical report to the criminal justice authority based on interviewee transcripts from 23 survivor-victims and witnesses, official documents in the IAPB collection and hundreds of relevant open-source intelligence files. Over the next reporting period, the IAPB will finalise submissions to three other criminal justice authorities.

Governance and knowledge sharing

The IAPB Steering Committee and operational teams continued to meet weekly to make policy, strategic and operational decisions. Workshops and training carried out with the support of experts addressed topics including the development of submissions, documenting human rights violations and conducting interviews and SGBC. The IAPB also met with the Advisory Council to share information about group members’ work and

facilitate coordination and collaboration around key thematic areas.

The IAPB continued to implement referral pathways for evidence-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). In the reporting period, 120 survivors (87 women and 33 men) received MHPSS services. The IAPB also ensures its teams have access to referral pathways to MHPSS provided by Russian/Belarusian and English language specialists, which are utilized regularly.

A. The situation on the ground

Belarusian authorities continue to target human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, trade union leaders, politicians and activists. By 31 March 2023, the number of political prisoners has reportedly increased to 1,474 persons,¹⁰ excluding 650 former political prisoners already released because they served their sentence or because of a change in the preventive measure or issuance of a pardon.¹¹ Those released continue to allege they were tortured and subjected to other forms of mistreatment.

The authorities continue to routinely arrest individuals for exercising their civil rights. In March alone, Viasna became aware of 614 arrests, which resulted in 433 cases in which politically motivated administrative charges were filed. At least 166 terms of administrative imprisonment and 36 fines were imposed.¹² Many representatives of civil society organizations were charged with administrative and criminal offences¹³ and placed on lists of persons involved in terrorist and/or extremist activities when convicted.¹⁴

On 3 March 2023, four members of the Human Rights Center “Viasna” were convicted and sentenced from seven to 10 years’ imprisonment: Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Viasna Chairman, Ales Bialatski; Valiantsin Stefanovic, member of Viasna’s Board and Vice-President of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH); Uladzimir Labkovich, lawyer and coordinator the Human Rights Defenders for Free Elections campaign; and Dzmitry Salauyou, member of Viasna’s board (convicted *in absentia*).¹⁵ Since 1 January 2023, several other high-profile persons were convicted: Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya was sentenced *in absentia* to 15 years’ imprisonment; Pavel Latushka *in absentia* to 18 years;¹⁶ experts Tatsiana Kuzina and Valeria Kastsiuhova to 10 years; and chief editor of the independent news portal TUT.by, Maryna Zolatava, and its general director, Ludmila Chekina, to 12 years each.¹⁷

In March 2023, legislative amendments expanding the application of the death penalty to high treason committed by a state official or member of the armed forces,¹⁸ criminalising terrorist propaganda and the discrediting of the Armed Forces, and adding a fine of up to 50,000 basic units (658,000 euros) for “a number of crimes of anti-state character,” were made to the Criminal Code.¹⁹

The authorities continued to prevent civil society organisations, lawyers, journalists and others from reporting on human rights violations or operating independently. According to Lawtrend, at least 823 non-profit organizations are in the process of forced liquidation, with 456 additional organisations being forced to self-liquidate.²⁰ Civil society organizations liquidated or subjected to pressure from the authorities have either stopped their activities or continue them from outside Belarus. On 28 February 2023, the KGB included the Belarusian Association of Journalists in the list of “extremist formations,”²¹ specifying that “a group of citizens from among the representatives of the non-governmental public organization ‘Belarusian Association of Journalists’ carries out extremist activities.” More than 90 lawyers have been disbarred since the summer of 2020, while 7 lawyers have been imprisoned for political reasons.²²

Impunity for human rights violations committed in Belarus continues, with Belarus’ withdrawal from the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on 8 November 2022 coming into effect from 8 February 2023, preventing Belarusian citizens from reporting violations of the Covenant to the UN Human Rights Committee.

B. Fulfilling Core IAPB objectives

The IAPB continued to meet its objectives to collect, consolidate, preserve and analyse information and evidence of crimes under international law allegedly committed in the context of the August 2020 presidential election and its aftermath and support accountability bodies by making information and evidence and related analytical products available to them, while ensuring a survivor-centred and trauma-informed approach.

a. Collection of information and evidence

The IAPB aims to consolidate and preserve information and evidence to support factual and legal research and analysis on three pillars relevant to the alleged commission of crimes in Belarus:

- a. The **crime base**, namely underlying acts of crimes against humanity such as torture, sexual and gender-based violence, deportation, imprisonment, murder/extrajudicial killings and persecution;
- b. The **contextual elements of crimes against humanity**, namely the existence of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, pursuant to or in furtherance of Belarusian state policy; and
- c. Perpetrator **linkage** to the underlying criminal acts, including physical perpetrators as well as those otherwise responsible due to their roles in the commission of crimes.

The IAPB continued to collect information and evidence from survivor-victims and witnesses and open sources that may provide evidence of crimes under international law committed by Belarusian State authorities.

i. Collection of information from survivor-victims and other witnesses

Since 1 April 2021, Viasna and the International Committee have collected information and evidence from 1,030 victims and other witnesses (684 men and 346 women) regarding alleged crimes under international law, including relevant documentary evidence such as medical and court records. These continue to be structured for preservation and analysis (discussed in Part B.c.i below), with a selection of witness interviews and documentary material translated from Russian/Belarusian to English and preserved along with the original language material.

ii. Collection of open-source information

Parallel to the collection and preservation of survivor-victim/witness-related material, the IAPB continued to collect open-source intelligence. Since April 2021, the IAPB has collected over 772,768 items from open sources, including 102,740 videos, 318,589 images and 351,439 text items from 418 sources, which is being preserved and analysed (discussed in Part B.b.ii below).

b. Consolidation, preservation, verification and analysis of information and evidence

To preserve the information and evidence collected, verify its authenticity (where

appropriate) and analyse it, the IAPB relies on two tailor-made digital archives. In the reporting period, the IAPB continued to structure, upload and analyse large quantities of materials to meet its objectives to tag all material in the collection by the end of Phase II (September 2023) and finalise responses to requests for assistance from the criminal justice authorities in four states, along with additional requests from the OEB and other bodies as they arise.

i. Survivor-victim/witness closed source material

The structure for the upload of material was developed by the IAPB secretariat in November and December 2021. From January 2022, the process of restructuring and uploading information and evidence collected to the IAPB's digital archives commenced. As of 31 March 2023, approximately 20,000 documents relating to 2,270 survivor-victims and witnesses, including transcribed interviews, medical reports and court records, and related translations into English, had been restructured and uploaded to the IAPB's digital archives.

According to the IAPB's review strategy, after upload, documents are reviewed and tagged according to identified facts (such as *inter alia* location, time/date, incident, context and potentially responsible state actors) according to context-specific coding layouts developed by the IAPB, and then further analysed for the development of analytical briefs. By April 2023, 60% of the total number of documents had been reviewed and tagged by a team of dedicated bilingual (Russian-English) reviewers, some of which were then incorporated in an analytical brief submitted to the criminal justice authorities of one state (see Part B.c.iii).

ii. Open-source material

The preservation of original open-source intelligence ensures it is available to accountability bodies and others in years to come, even where Belarusian authorities have imposed restrictions on access to independent media (e.g. by removing media licenses) or hosting sites or individuals posting data have removed it. For example, GUBOPiK's Telegram channel, which was deleted by Telegram for "publishing the personal data of Belarusians who disagreed with the regime,"²³ would have been permanently lost had the IAPB not archived it.

To review open-source material and tag it, the IAPB uses various search terms and techniques to identify relevant materials, which are then organized into thematic groups such as state policy, chain of command and underlying crimes, which accord with its investigative and analytical goals. As of 31 March 2023, the IAPB had reviewed and tagged 3,104 open-source files falling within these thematic groups.

iii. Sexual and gender-based crimes

In the reporting period, the IAPB commenced research to strengthen its capacity to analyse information and evidence relating to sexual and gender-based crimes (SGBC) and provide support to criminal justice authorities and other accountability bodies to investigate them. An SGBC expert assisted the IAPB by reviewing IAPB material and coding structures, consulting with experts on gender in Belarus and facilitating a workshop with the IAPB and other experts (including from the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria (IIIM), Washington University in St. Louis and the OEB) (see Parts B.c.i and C.a). As a result of this work, the IAPB implemented tools to assist with identifying SGBC and changes to its coding structures to ensure data reviewers and analysts can identify such crimes in their coding and analytical

work. As a follow-up to this research, in the coming months, the IAPB will work on the development of a “primer” on SGBC in Belarus, to be provided to criminal justice authorities to assist them to understand the relevance and impact of gender norms in the commission of SGBC in Belarus, as well as barriers to collecting information and evidence of SGBC in the Belarus context and how to overcome them. The IAPB will also conduct training to increase capacity to identify and collect information about SGBC from survivor-victims and witnesses and analyse it.

c. Assistance to accountability bodies

The IAPB continued to engage with and support accountability bodies, including the OEB, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus and numerous national criminal justice authorities.

i. OHCHR examination on the human rights situation in Belarus

The IAPB is dedicated to supporting the OEB in its mandate to monitor and report on the human rights situation and to carry out a comprehensive examination of all alleged human rights violations committed in Belarus. Until the conclusion of the OEB’s Human Rights Council mandate on 31 March 2023, the IAPB and OEB engaged in numerous meetings and discussions with a view to sharing knowledge and facilitating the IAPB’s provision of information and evidence to the OEB.

Pursuant to these engagements, the OEB submitted requests to the IAPB for access to victims and witnesses in August 2022 and to information and evidence on priority areas in October 2022. Pursuant to the OEB’s request for access to victims and witnesses, IAPB Belarusian co-leads provided the OEB with lists of 159 potential interviewees who had consented to speak to them. From that list, the OEB identified persons it wished to interview and IAPB co-leads facilitated the logistical arrangements necessary for those interviews to be conducted. Pursuant to the OEB’s request for access to information and evidence, the IAPB reviewed its data collection to identify materials relevant to the OEB’s priority areas. Based on that review, the IAPB submitted a detailed list of over 1,300 open and closed-source materials, with an overview of the methodology used to identify them, and created a dedicated disclosure space in its digital archives for OEB investigators to access the closed-source material.

The OEB also requested that the IAPB participate in a consultation of experts, including OEB experts and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, to discuss how to ensure survivors’ access to remedies and reparations. Among other things, the IAPB encouraged the OEB to make recommendations to states on the referral of the situation in Belarus to the International Criminal Court, on the use of universal jurisdiction framework and cross-border cooperation, and on the impact of sanctions (namely travel bans) on states’ ability to access perpetrators.

In the OEB report to the UN Human Rights Council, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that it interviewed 207 victims and witnesses and reviewed more than 2,500 items of information and evidence.²⁴ The High Commissioner also found that, in addition to the 100 cases of SGBC it documented, it “reviewed over 180 additional cases documented by reputable civil society organizations, whose analysis OHCHR found to be credible.”²⁵ The IAPB understands that many if not all of these cases were provided according to the OEB’s request outlined above. Accordingly, in addition to the large number of survivor-victims and witnesses to whom the IAPB

provided access and the provision of over 1,300 items of information and evidence, the support provided by the IAPB constituted a significant contribution to the OEB's work, and its finding that the human rights violations committed in Belarus may constitute crimes against humanity.²⁶

The OEB and IAPB have also coordinated in other areas, including internal workshops (see Parts B.b.iii and C.a) and in briefings of states and other stakeholders held by the IAPB in Geneva and Brussels following the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' dialogue on Belarus in the UN Human Rights Council (see Part E.b). Along with an IAPB Advisory Council member, the IAPB also met with the OEB experts and team members on the day of the High Commissioner's dialogue to discuss their respective work and future collaboration should the OEB's mandate be renewed.

ii. Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus

During the reporting period, in addition to jointly participating in the OEB consultation referred to above and a civil society coordination event (Part C.a), the IAPB met with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus to discuss her ongoing work and share knowledge on a range of matters.

iii. Criminal justice authorities

As of 31 March 2023, the IAPB has received requests for access to information and evidence and analytical briefs from criminal justice authorities in four European states. These include requests for access to survivor-victims/witnesses who may provide information on identified incidents and information and evidence relating to the contextual elements of crimes against humanity and state security structures.

Between 22 November 2022 and 27 February 2023, the IAPB processed a request from a European domestic criminal authority seeking information regarding crimes committed in the context of the 9 August presidential election and its aftermath. Following the identification and analysis of information and evidence and open-source intelligence in its collection, the IAPB submitted an 81-page analytical report to the criminal justice authority, based on interviewee transcripts from 23 survivor-victims and witnesses (subject to informed consent being provided), other documents provided by interviewees, official documents, and hundreds of relevant open-source materials from Telegram Channels, YouTube Channels and websites (for example, Telegra.ph). As the IAPB was not fully apprised of the current scope of the authority's investigation, its searches for material were necessarily general in nature. The information was provided as investigative leads and the IAPB did not express any view of its legality or veracity.

Over the coming months, the IAPB will finalise its submissions to three other criminal justice authorities, once the analysis of the majority of the closed-source material and a selection of open-source material is completed. Work to prepare the legal overview in the submissions, relevant to the analysis of information and evidence, and to incorporate public reporting on the situation, was completed in the last months.

In addition to ongoing tagging, analysis and submission drafting, the IAPB is using closed and open-source materials to build a timeline and mapping of events, which will be provided to criminal justice authorities along with information and evidence and related analytical products and will serve as a building block for the creation of the IAPB's website visualisation, should its mandate be extended.

C. Knowledge sharing and capacity building

a. Secretariat, lead and co-lead teams

The IAPB's structure ensures close collaboration among the lead, co-lead and secretariat teams. The Steering Committee continued to meet on a weekly and *ad hoc* basis to make decisions regarding policy and the strategic direction of the IAPB's work, and jointly participated in events and stakeholder meetings, both public and confidential, throughout the reporting period. The IAPB secretariat continued to work in close collaboration with the lead and co-leads' documentation teams, including through bi-weekly meetings on operational matters and regular in-person workshops and integration in various analytical work. This unique structure enables the exchange of knowledge on matters relevant to the work, including international criminal law and standards and the Belarusian context, as well as to identify needs or gaps in capacity.

As part of this engagement, the IAPB holds dedicated workshops and training on relevant topics, which are carried out with the support of the IAPB's expert advisors (discussed in Part F.c below). In the reporting period, these included:

- A workshop on collaboration on the development of submissions and engagement with criminal justice authorities (November 2022);
- A consultation on survivor-centred approaches to IAPB work (December 2022);
- A consultation with Partners in Justice International to discuss questions arising out of the September 2022 workshop on documenting human rights violations (December 2022);
- A workshop hosted by a Belarusian Advisory Council member on preservation of information and evidence (January 2023);
- A workshop on collecting information and evidence of SGBC, with expert participants from the IIM, Washington University in St. Louis and the OEB (January 2023); and
- A training by Partners in Justice International on investigative interviewing (February 2023).

b. Advisory Council

The IAPB implemented its strategy to strengthen its engagement with the Advisory Council with respect to the coordination of accountability related work. In addition to ongoing bilateral meetings between the IAPB and Advisory Council members, the Advisory Council met in November 2022 and February 2023 on thematic issues. Advisory Council members also jointly participate in events, including meeting with the OEB and those listed in Parts C.a and E.b.

c. Other Belarusian and international organisations

Where possible, the IAPB engages in forums with other NGOs and international organisations with a view to sharing information about its work and facilitating collaboration where appropriate. In the reporting period, the IAPB participated in: a workshop organised by a Belarusian Advisory Council member on the preservation of data; a civil society coordination meeting, attended by Belarusian and international NGOs; and a workshop organised by its expert partner, Mnemonic.

D. Facilitating access to mental health and psychosocial support

As part of its survivor-centered, trauma-informed approach to pursuing accountability for crimes under international law committed in Belarus, the IAPB is committed to ensuring that survivors receive evidence-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). Since 1 October 2022, 120 survivors (87 women and 33 men) have received MHPSS services. The IAPB, in cooperation with Advisory Council member Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), is preparing training on suicide prevention and response for teams engaging with survivor-victims and witnesses and conducting interviews with them. The IAPB also ensures its teams have access to MHPSS referral pathways provided by Russian/Belarusian and English language specialists, which are utilized regularly.

E. Public relations and advocacy

The IAPB has maintained a cautious communications and advocacy policy to preserve the independence and impartiality, and perceived independence and impartiality, of its investigative and advisory work. Nevertheless, the IAPB regularly engaged at the political level in bilateral discussions with policy makers and other key stakeholders, and at times public forums. Such events and engagements included:

- Participation in a Eurojust briefing on the International Criminal Court's Guidelines on the documentation of international crimes and human rights violations for accountability purposes (6 October 2022);
- A presentation in a high-level side event to the 29th OSCE Ministerial Council in Łódź on the *Deteriorating political and human rights situation in Belarus and its implications for the OSCE region*, organised by Estonia (1 December 2022);
- A presentation in a side event at the UN Human Rights Council on *Accountability for international crimes and serious human rights violations in Belarus*, hosted by multiple states and NGOs (2 March 2023);
- A briefing of state representatives in Geneva on the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' report to the UN Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in Belarus (23 March 2023), organised by the IAPB and the Netherlands Mission in Geneva and in which the OEB participated; and
- A briefing of state representatives in Brussels on the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' report to the UN Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in Belarus and on IAPB work to date (28 March 2023), organised by the IAPB and the Danish Embassy in Brussels and in which IAPB Advisory Council member World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and the OEB participated.

The IAPB has maintained its cautious public communications policy, however, continues to publish information about its work on its twitter account (@IAPBelarus) and website (www.iapbelarus.org).

F. IAPB infrastructure

a. Funding

In Phase I, the IAPB was supported by a wide range of states, notably Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, as well as the European Union.

In Phase II, and to date, the IAPB has been supported by Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as the European Union. Four other states have indicated that they will or may provide funding in 2023.

As previously reported, the IAPB received funding from pledging States on a rolling basis throughout the reporting period. Only eight states contributed funding through the European Endowment for Democracy (EED), with some of the remaining donors requiring DIGNITY to conform to each state's financial reporting requirements. Accordingly, the IAPB's Head and Program Manager and DIGNITY's finance and management team directed a considerable amount of time towards developing funding applications and preparing financial and narrative reports for donors. In addition to the semi-annual progress and financial reports the IAPB committed to preparing at its inception, this has included quarterly financial and progress reports and an onerous financial audit at the end of each phase based on the overall budget, as well as reporting on dedicated budgets which the IAPB has been required to develop for specific donors. These processes have overburdened the organisational set-up, and constitute a significant cost driver, if not addressed.

b. Staffing

In addition to its existing IAPB secretariat team, composed of the Head, Project Manager, Senior Legal Advisor, Analyst, Open-Source Investigator, Data Systems Manager and seven data reviewers, the IAPB hired four junior analysts, two expert consultants and a Project Officer in the reporting period.

c. Expert advice

The IAPB continued to obtain the advice and support of expert organisations, including PJI, Mnemonic and FORCYD.

Endnotes

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