



EASTERN PARTNERSHIP
Civil Society Forum

Мы адзін народ!



About the situation in the country after 19 December 2010

RESOLUTION*

Conference on the basis of the National Platform
of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

“The role and place of civil society in the strategy of the future”

Minsk, 11-12 April 2011

We, participants of the Conference organized on the basis of the National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, representatives of the wide public, having discussed the situation which has developed in the country within the latest four months, **CONSTATE:**

1. After 19 December 2010, in the country, the state of emergency was actually established:

- Hundreds of people have been committed to custody, arrested, searched, prosecuted in other forms and pressurized;
- Tens of people have been exposed to tortures, torments, psychological pressure, and intimidation;
- There have been outrageous and beyond any understanding attempts to pressure minors;
- There have been interferences in the activity of human rights defenders, national and international human rights organizations;
- Lawyers have been exposed to pressure on the part of investigatory bodies and Office of Public Prosecutor, their licenses to practice their profession have been annulled; the Bar is demoralized and works against the interests of its members, fulfilling requirements of the bodies from which it is supposed to protect its members and their clients;
- The state-run mass media spread extrajudicial indictments and verdicts concerning the qualification of the happened events and concerning the citizens' fault which has not been proved in a judicial order;
- Citizens of Belarus are deprived of the fundamental rights and freedoms: freedom of speech and freedom of assembly; the obstacles we have faced during organizing and holding this conference, only prove that.

2. The public authorities which are supposed to protect legality in the country, do not react to appeals of citizens and civil society organizations concerning the facts to be solved immediately.

3. The trials of the participants of the events on 19 December 2010 are not trusted at all by the Belarusian public. Their tendentiousness and custom-made character of the sentences are obvious.

4. The 2010 election campaign which gave occasion to the events on 19 December 2010, has not received a due legal and ethical estimation that makes possible various speculations concerning the qualification of both events and general situation in the country.

Thus, in the country, there is an extremely unhealthy situation which does not correspond to the international norms and treaties signed by the Republic of Belarus, and do not meet expectations and requirements of Belarusian citizens.

It is only possible to solve the developed situation by achieving public consent which, in its turn, is only possible if all the errors, corrupt practices, and non-legal actions made during the latest 4 months, are corrected.

In this connection, we as participants of the National Platform of the EaP Civil Society Forum and wide public, **DEMAND:**

1. To free immediately all the political prisoners, including those who are still on remand, and those who have been rendered the sentences which raise doubts in their legitimacy among the public. Nobody - neither persons under investigation, nor those who are already convicted - are not terrorists or non compos, none of them constitutes any public danger, and therefore they can wait for their trials or new trials out of prison.

2. To immediately stop tortures, torments, and any forms of pressure upon political opponents of the authorities. If this practice continues, it becomes impossible to stay in the country even for those who are already freed or whose measure of restraint is changed.

3. To react adequately and legally (it would be desirable to have simply a humane attitude, but when the practice of tortures exists, it is impossible) to extreme forms of protest of citizens against the authorities' arbitrariness such as hunger-strikes. In particular, we pay attention to Dmitry Galko's hunger-strike which has been going on for more than 12 days already with a demand to revise the unfair sentence against Nikita Likhovid.

4. To remove obstacles in the activity of human rights defending and other civil society organizations, both national and international.

5. To immediately stop pressing judges and lawyers.

6. To bring the imposed sentences to courts of the first instance, and to conduct legal proceedings according to the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus and procedural provisions.

- 7.** To bring to responsibility the judges, employees of organs of inquiry and militia, suspected of tortures, torments, and indignities of arrested persons and prisoners, as well as the persons who perjured during the trials.
- 8.** To grant a possibility to express the position of civil society concerning all the facts the public is interested in, as well as the developed situation as a whole, in the state-run mass media.
- 9.** To stop the authorities' practice of pressurizing private enterprises which are forced to refuse to sell their services concerning granting of premises for meetings of citizens.
- 10.** To stop the practice of manipulating threats to deprive organizations of their legal addresses and to unreasonably cancel their rent contracts. In particular, the authorities of Minsk have not continued the contract of rent of premises for the headquarters of the Belarusian People's Front party in Minsk and, thus, have threatened one of the major centers of public life of the Belarusian capital. We urge to reconsider the previous decision of the Minsk City Executive Committee and to conclude a new rent agreement with tenants of the headquarters of the BPF party in Minsk, Masherov Ave., 8.
- 11.** To create joint public-state commissions to consider all the negative tendencies, events, and facts, which have taken place during the latest 4 months, as well as the election campaign which became the reason of all that. To carry out the work of these commissions with participation and under supervision of international human rights organizations and the organizations which member is the Republic of Belarus (in particular - OSCE) or which it is going to join (in particular - the Council of Europe).
- 12.** To terminate the actually introduced state of emergency in the country and to return to conditions of normal functioning of all public and state institutions.

* The resolution is accepted by all participants of the Conference, except Valentina A. Matusevich (Belarusian party of women "Nadzieya"). V. Matusevich thinks that the provisions of the resolution implicitly admit that A. Lukashenka is a legitimate president, and she cannot share this opinion.