

Meeting of the Council of the Socialist International  
United Nations, Geneva, 1-2 July 2016

**Declaration on Belarus**

The Council of the Socialist International reaffirms its support and solidarity with the democratic opposition in Belarus, in particular its member party the Belarusian Social Democratic Party-People's Assembly (BSDP-NH) and its leader Mikalai Statkevich. It condemns the ongoing suppression and criminalisation of opposition to the president and his regime, which have further diminished the space for public debate and discussion in the country.

The Council welcomes long overdue release of Statkevich from prison after four years and eight months of arbitrary incarceration, during which the SI campaigned for his release, and salutes his courage returning to a leading role among democrats and opposition forces in Belarus, despite threats to his life and liberty.

Though the forthcoming legislative elections show every sign of being as farcical as previous polls, the SI nonetheless once more urges the government of Belarus to allow a free and fair electoral process and the expression of democratic opposition to the regime. It remains committed to mobilising its member parties, governments and international organisations in the hope of bringing about real change in Belarus.

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