Permanent Mission
of Austria to the
United Nations in Geneva

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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
60th Regular Session

Interactive Dialogue with the group of independent experts on human rights in Belarus
19 September 2025

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President,

Austria aligns with the EU statement and welcomes the update by the Group of Independent Experts.

We are troubled by the persecution, criminalization and arbitrary detention of persons expressing dissenting opinions and those perceived as having opposing views. While we welcome recent releases of political prisoners, we continue to urge Belarus to halt the repressions against all sectors of civil society, independent media, independent trade unions, lawyers and opposition groups, and cease harassment and reprisals against individuals exercising their human rights.

Austria is particularly concerned about the appalling conditions of detention of political prisoners and the continued reports of deaths, torture and ill-treatment or denial of access to adequate medical treatment in detention. We reiterate our call for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners.

Austria is also deeply concerned by systematic violations of due process and the right to a fair trial of persons perceived as opponents of the Government. We call on Belarus to ensure fair trial and due process, including access to legal assistance without interference.

Austria urges Belarus to respect, protect and fulfil human rights in compliance with its obligations under international human rights law and to cooperate with the Group of Independent Experts and all relevant human rights mechanisms and investigations.

Madam Chair,
Before closing, let me reiterate our full support for your mandate and your important work in documenting the human rights situation in Belarus.

Thank you.