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Statement of Ireland

52nd session of the Human Rights Council

Interactive Dialogue with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on Belarus

22 March 2023

Thank you Mr. President,

Ireland aligns with the statement of the EU and thanks the Deputy High Commissioner for her update and the experts for their work.

Ireland condemns the recent sentencing of Belarusian civil society and opposition figures to prison sentences in politically motivated trials. All political prisoners must be released unconditionally and without delay.

We are disturbed by cases of sexual and gender-based violence by authorities, particularly in detention. We are also concerned by ongoing discrimination against LGBTI+ persons, including instances of public outing and hate speech by authorities. Ireland underscores the need for prompt, independent, impartial, effective and transparent investigations into all human rights violations.

Ireland deplores the ongoing complicity of Belarus in Russia's unjustified and illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Belarus has played a key role in Russia's invasion of Ukraine, hosting thousands of Russian troops and allowing missile strikes from its territory. We call on Belarus to end its complicity in Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

We urge Belarus to fully cooperate with UN human rights mechanisms, including by re-acceding to the First Optional Protocol of the ICCPR.

Deputy High Commissioner, what concrete steps can the international community take to prevent torture and sexual and gender based violence in detention?