



**"SECURITY COUNCIL ARRIA FORMULA MEETING: HUMAN RIGHTS IN
BULARUS"**

**Statement by H.E. Mark Zellenrath
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the
Netherlands to the United Nations**

NEW YORK, 4 September 2020

On behalf of my Minister, Stef Blok, let me thank Estonia and minister Urmas Reinsalu for taking the initiative for this meeting.

A timely meeting – already four weeks now we have seen images that both impress and shock.

Hundreds of thousands of people asking for their voices to be heard.

Especially empowering have been the images of the thousands of women stepping up.

I am incredibly impressed...

- by the courage of the people that go out on the streets.
- by the bravery you, Mrs Tikhanovskaya, have showed together with others.
- by the work the human rights organizations and journalists do in very difficult circumstances.

Yet, I was also shocked.

Shocked by the large-scale electoral fraud, the police brutality, the intimidation against peaceful protesters, the violence that costed lives, the images of torture, the arrests of protesters and journalists.

Let me be clear: the Netherlands stands with the people of Belarus.

Therefore we call upon the Belarus government to immediately

- put an end to the violence and harassment,
- free the political prisoners,
- let the journalists do their jobs,
- and start an inclusive political dialogue that does justice to the legitimate wish of the Belarus people for peaceful political transition.

The people of Belarus, and only the people of Belarus, should decide about the future of the country.

The Coordination Council has reached out to the government. We urge the Belarussian government to engage with them.

In this regard, The Netherlands supports the proposal of Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE to help facilitate a political dialogue within Belarus.