

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1111

Supporting the people of Belarus and their democratic aspirations and condemning the election rigging and subsequent violent crackdowns on peaceful protestors by the Government of the Republic of Belarus.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

Mr. KEATING (for himself, Mr. KINZINGER, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. RASKIN, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. COHEN, Mr. TRONE, Mr. COSTA, and Mr. CICILLINE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Supporting the people of Belarus and their democratic aspirations and condemning the election rigging and subsequent violent crackdowns on peaceful protestors by the Government of the Republic of Belarus.

Whereas the Republic of Belarus held a presidential election on August 9, 2020, that was widely considered to be neither free nor fair;

Whereas official election results released by Belarusian government officials and the unofficial exit polls conducted by domestic observers and members of civil society presented substantially divergent data;

Whereas in the months leading up to the election, Belarusian authorities had arbitrarily detained over 1,300 people, including activists and journalists participating in peaceful protests;

Whereas within the first 5 days of the protests following the August 9th election, nearly 7,000 peaceful protestors and journalists had been detained in Belarus;

Whereas, as of September 1, 2020, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had received 450 documented cases of torture and ill-treatment by detainees;

Whereas these peaceful demonstrations were met with violence from security services that employed barricades, stun grenades, tear gas, rubber bullets, and, at times, live ammunition;

Whereas Amnesty International and local human rights groups said they have “collected horrifying testimonies from protesters in Belarus who describe being tortured or subjected to other ill-treatment in detention centers, including being stripped naked, beaten, and threatened with rape”;

Whereas, as of August 25, 2020, dozens of protestors remained missing and at least 4 Belarusians had been killed in violence related to the demonstrations;

Whereas Belarusians continue to share real-time videos and other content documenting the brutal crackdown on peaceful demonstrations through social media;

Whereas, on August 30, 2020, the Government of Belarus revoked the accreditation of 19 international journalists and deported 2 others;

Whereas in the days and weeks that followed, a grassroots movement of Belarusians has demonstrated against the official electoral results and demanded new elections;

Whereas demonstrators have included people from all parts of Belarusian society, including men, women, and children, students and workers, the young and the old, and police officers who quit their service in the wake of the protests;

Whereas women have played a critical role in the protest movement in Belarus as demonstrators rallied behind 3 key female opposition leaders and women have gathered and marched together across the country;

Whereas across the Republic of Belarus, workers from state-owned companies and factories have gone on strike in solidarity with the demonstrators;

Whereas, on August 23, 2020, it is estimated that nearly 200,000 protestors gathered in Minsk, making it the largest protest in Belarusian history;

Whereas the constitution of Belarus provides that the people of Belarus recognize themselves as “a full-fledged subject of the international community” and believe in their “inalienable right to self-determination”; and

Whereas daily peaceful protests continue across the country as demonstrators can be heard chanting the lyrics of the demonstrators’ unofficial campaign song: “Our hearts are longing for changes; Our eyes are longing for changes; It’s in our laugh and in our tears; And it’s pulsing through our veins; Changes, we are longing for changes.”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

1 (1) finds that the August 9, 2020, presidential
2 election in Belarus was neither free nor fair and,
3 therefore, does not recognize the government-an-
4 nounced results;

5 (2) affirms that the people of Belarus have the
6 right to determine the future of Belarus without
7 intervention from outside actors;

8 (3) condemns the human rights violations com-
9 mitted by Belarusian authorities, including against
10 peaceful demonstrators, activists, opposition leaders,
11 medical personnel, and journalists;

12 (4) calls for the Government of Belarus to im-
13 mediately release all those detained in connection
14 with the demonstrations or others unlawfully de-
15 tained for reporting on or protesting abuses by the
16 Belarusian government and halt any further acts of
17 violence against civilians, including peaceful dem-
18 onstrators, activists, opposition leaders, medical per-
19 sonnel, and journalists;

20 (5) calls for the protection of civil society actors
21 and members of the opposition against arbitrary ar-
22 rest and violence while conducting peaceful discus-
23 sion relating to political transitions;

24 (6) recognizes the sacrifices and bravery of the
25 Belarusian people and the incredible organization by

1 Belarusian women to peacefully demand a free and
2 fair democratic process while enduring the state-
3 sponsored violence that followed the August 9, 2020,
4 election;

5 (7) calls on the Government of Belarus to en-
6 gage in an open and constructive dialogue with the
7 people of Belarus and individuals representing their
8 interests;

9 (8) calls for targeted sanctions against Belaru-
10 sian authorities who committed human rights viola-
11 tions and authorities from the electoral commission
12 who engaged in activities that resulted in the fal-
13 sification of the August 9, 2020, election results;

14 (9) urges United States sanctions and other ef-
15 forts in continued close coordination with the Euro-
16 pean Union and European Union member states to
17 respond to the ongoing events in Belarus;

18 (10) calls for an international investigation into
19 the human rights abuses committed during and after
20 the August 9, 2020, presidential election;

21 (11) continues to support the aspirations of the
22 people of Belarus for democracy, human rights, and
23 the rule of law and reaffirms that the fulfillment of
24 such aspirations is the only way to ensure the con-

1 tinued strength of Belarusian sovereignty and terri-
2 torial integrity;

3 (12) affirms that the people of Belarus must be
4 provided the self-determination to choose their own
5 leaders through a truly free and fair election under
6 independent observation; and

7 (13) emphasizes that only a peaceful and demo-
8 cratic process will provide sustainable solutions for
9 the people of Belarus.

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