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## **Statement at the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council**

### **Agenda item 4: Interactive dialogue on the oral update of the Group of Independent experts on Belarus**

**23. September 2024**

**H.E. Ambassador Frank Büchel**

**Permanent Representative of the Principality of Liechtenstein**

Thank you, Mister President,

First, we would like to welcome the independent experts to their new role and thank them for their oral update on the situation in Belarus.

Liechtenstein remains concerned about the troubled and continued dire human rights situation in Belarus, particularly regarding the treatment of political prisoners and vulnerable populations, including migrants and minorities.

A vibrant and active civic space is one of the backbones of a democratic society. The continuous shrinking of civic space in Belarus has led to the forced shutdown of civil society organizations, while human rights defenders, journalists and lawyers face arrest and incommunicado detention, and often are subjected to torture and ill-treatment. Many are imprisoned solely for their personal engagement upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Belarussian authorities need to stop labeling of human rights organizations, such as the NGO Human Rights Centre Viasna, as extremist, and to refrain from retaliation for cooperation with the United Nations.

We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all individuals unjustly detained for exercising their rights.

We urge Belarus to fully cooperate with international human rights mechanisms, ensuring that all allegations of abuse are investigated transparently. Accountability is essential for restoring trust and upholding the rule of law in Belarus.

I thank you, Mister President.