

## **BELARUS: SIX HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS SUBMIT EVIDENCE OF CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY TO THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

**On 20 March 2025, six Belarusian and international civil society organizations – the Center for Global Justice and Human Rights “M.A.R.A.”, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Human Rights Center “Viasna”, the International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus, the Belarusian Helsinki Committee, and Human Constanta – submitted evidence of potential crimes against humanity committed by the Belarusian authorities to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.**

Following Lithuania’s referral of the Belarus situation to the ICC Office of the Prosecutor on 30 September 2024 and the opening of a preliminary examination by the ICC Office of the Prosecutor, six Belarusian and international human rights organizations have submitted an Article 15 Communication that provides evidence of potential crimes against humanity committed by the Belarusian authorities since May 2020. This includes evidence of deportation and persecution committed against a part of the Belarusian civilian population, including citizens of Belarus residing abroad.

In particular, this Communication demonstrates that the Belarusian authorities created an atmosphere of fear, terror and persecution to “cleanse” the population of “disloyal” individuals, forcing up to 6,4% of the Belarusian population as of 2020 to flee the country. Furthermore, the Belarusian authorities continued to persecute Belarusians forced into exile and those residing abroad through systematic judicial harassment, including *in absentia* trials, as well as intimidation and threats against those in exile and their relatives remaining in Belarus, publicly disseminated hate speech, unjustified searches, the seizure of property, and total deprivation of access to public services, including the inability to obtain identification documents, leading to *de facto* statelessness

The Communication draws on interviews with witnesses and victims of alleged crimes, complemented by an extensive analysis of publicly available sources, including public statements of Belarusian high-ranking officials, proving that the alleged crimes were committed as part of a widespread and systematic attack directed against the part of the Belarusian civilian population perceived by the authorities as “disloyal”. They also demonstrate that the Belarusian authorities implement a State policy to intimidate and punish those deemed “disloyal”, in a campaign officials have repeatedly described as a “cleansing of society”.

Although the Republic of Belarus is not a party to the Rome Statute, this Communication provides legal analysis demonstrating that the International Criminal Court can exercise its jurisdiction, since at least one element of these alleged crimes was committed on the territory of countries which are States parties to the Rome Statute.

With regard to the Belarus situation, the International Accountability Platform for Belarus (IAPB) and Reporters Without Borders (RSF) previously submitted two Article 15 Communications to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.