



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION



COMMON STATEMENT OF CONCERN

The Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

1. *Remain deeply concerned* at the findings of the Rapporteur of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, as set out in his report on disappearances for allegedly political reasons in Belarus;
2. *Consider* that the serious shortcomings in the investigation of such cases, as revealed in his report, and the evidence produced, including that related to the possible involvement of high state officials, cannot be ignored by the Belarusian authorities; *recall* that, as in any other State, the authorities have a duty to elucidate the circumstances of these disappearances and to establish the fate of the disappeared persons;
3. *Express therefore deep concern* that the authorities have so far taken no steps to investigate the well-founded allegations put forward in the Rapporteur's report and to remedy the serious shortcomings in the investigation that he revealed;
4. *Urge* therefore the competent Belarusian authorities to take the necessary steps to ensure that an independent and effective investigation is conducted into these cases; *emphasise* that this presupposes an investigation into the role state officials may have played, and *consider* in particular that the strong doubts cast on the role that the current Prosecutor General may have played disqualify him from continuing to lead the investigation in this case, and should prompt the competent authorities to suspend him immediately from any responsibility in these investigations;
5. *Urge* in particular the Belarusian parliament to make use of its oversight function to ensure that these measures are indeed taken;
6. *Point out* that as long as the Belarusian authorities do not investigate the evidence revealed in the report, the suspicion will remain fully justified as to the role the state officials mentioned in the report may have played in the disappearance of the persons concerned;
7. *Decide* to follow closely whatever action the Belarusian authorities may take to ensure that a truly independent investigation is indeed conducted.