



Committee on international control over the situation with Human Rights in Belarus

MEMORANDUM on the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on 19 December 2010 events

The Committee of International Control over the Human Rights Situation in Belarus announces an appointment of a Special Rapporteur to investigate the events related to the opposition protests on 19 December 2010 in Belarus.

The Committee of International Control over the Human Rights Situation in Belarus (<http://hrwatch-by.org>) is a coalition of NGOs from OSCE countries, created for the goals of permanent monitoring and control of the fundamental rights situation and the situation with human rights defenders and NGOs in Belarus as well as developing recommendations for the government of Belarus and international actors. Established by the Committee, the International Observatory Mission has been present in Minsk since 27 December 2010 (<http://hrwatch-by.org/o-missii>). A Special Rapporteur for 19 December 2010 events will become a separate body of the Committee, independent of the Mission.

The opposition rallies in Minsk on 19 December last year, as well as a wave of detentions and arrests of citizens that followed, caused a variety of reactions in the Belarusian society and international community. An objective impartial assessment of these events and, primarily, the public gathering on the Independence Square, would be a task of the Rapporteur. The Special Rapporteur would evaluate whether the assembly on 19 December was peaceful from the perspective of international standards, whether the use of force by the law enforcement agencies was proportional and well-reasoned, as well as the further steps of the authorities to prosecute the participants. First of all, the assessment will be guided by the domestic legislation, and also by international fundamental human rights obligations undertaken by the Republic of Belarus.

Neil Jarman, an independent international expert, a Director of the UK-based Institute for Conflict Research and the Chairman of the OSCE/ODIHR Panel of Experts on Freedom of Assembly, has been appointed a Special Rapporteur. He will be assisted by a group of experts on freedom of assembly and police response measures from OSCE countries, chaired by Michael Hamilton, Jarman's colleague and the professor of the Central European University.

Video records, statements by observers, witnesses and officials, media materials and public materials of criminal cases will be used for conclusions.

The Committee is addressing the public and political associations of Belarus, journalists, media, embassies of OSCE countries in Belarus, as well as the authorities of Belarus, with a request to provide all the information available on the actions of the 19 December protest participants and measures taken by the law enforcement agencies, to ensure a non-partisan and unbiased assessment of the events.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions regarding the handover of materials or the activities of the Special Rapporteur in Russian or English via Email: BYC-SR@hrgroups.org

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