

17 February 2021

## STATEMENT

The Steering Committee of the Ukrainian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum supported Emergency Statement of Coordinating Committee of the Belarusian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum and appealed to the international community on the situation with human rights defenders and independent journalists in Belarus.

On February 16, 2021, more than 30 human rights defenders and journalists in Belarus have been detained or searched, including EaP CSF members from human rights center Viasna and the public association Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ).

The Steering Committee of the Ukrainian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum feels compelled to express its unequivocal condemnation of the human rights situation in the Belarus:

- We demand to end to the persecution and pressure on human rights defenders and journalists in Belarus.
- We call on the international community to use all possible means to stop the human rights violations in Belarus.
- We appeal to the international community and ask for the maximum dissemination of information about the human rights situation, the situation of human rights defenders and journalists.
- We call the UN (UN Human Rights Council, United Nations Human Rights) to issue an immediate response for the protection of human rights defenders and journalists.

[Members of the Steering Committee](#) Ukrainian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

Secretariat

Ukrainian National Platform

of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

Contact person: Marina Gutgarts, UNP Secretary

[unp.eap@gmail.com](mailto:unp.eap@gmail.com)

**EMERGENCY STATEMENT** of Coordinating Committee of the Belarusian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Human rights defenders and independent journalists in Belarus under attack Minsk 16.02.2021

From morning of Tuesday, February 16, 2021, in Belarus began searches and detentions of human rights defenders and journalists.

Searches took place in the human rights center Viasna, the public association Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ), the independent trade union REP and member of the BNP Coordination Committee Nikolai Kvantaliani. At the moment, there are more than 40 human rights defenders and journalists in Minsk, Mogilev, Brest, Vitebsk and Gomel on the lists of those who have been or have been searched.

According to the information available at the moment, the searches were carried out as part of a criminal case under Art. 342 of the Criminal Code of Belarus (Organization and preparation of actions that grossly violate public order, or active participation in them).

In connection with the foregoing and based on the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms:

- We demand an end to the persecution and pressure on human rights defenders and journalists in Belarus;
- We appeal to the UN structures and urge to take immediate response measures, in accordance with all special procedures to protect human rights defenders and journalists;
- We appeal to the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum and ask for the maximum dissemination of information about the human rights situation, the situation of human rights defenders and journalists, and take measures to comprehensively support the democratic structures of the Belarusian civil society.

We call on representatives of embassies and international organizations to publicly express their condemnation of the most recent episode of repressions against Belarusian human rights defenders and civic activists, and to use all possible means to stop the persecutions and violations of human rights.

The Ukrainian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (<http://eap-csf.org.ua/>) is a network of more than 140 non-governmental organizations in Ukraine that advocates Ukrainian interests within the framework of the Eastern Partnership. The platform is part of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF). The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum is unique multi-layered regional civil society platform aimed at promoting European integration, facilitating reforms and democratic transformations in the six Eastern Partnership countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Serving as the civil society and people-to-people dimension of the Eastern Partnership, the EaP CSF strives to strengthen civil society in the region, boost pluralism in public discourse and policy making by promoting participatory democracy and fundamental freedoms. The EaP CSF is a non-partisan bona fide non-governmental organisation

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[unp.eap@gmail.com](mailto:unp.eap@gmail.com)