51\textsuperscript{st} session of the UN Human Rights Council  
Oral Statement  
Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner’s interim oral update on the situation of Human Rights in Belarus

Mr. President

Right Livelihood and Human Rights Center “Viasna” thank the office of the high commissioner for their update on the situation of Human Rights in Belarus.

For the past two years, the authorities have been systematically detaining anyone who exercises their civil rights, including those taking part in anti-war protests: 387 such arrests were recorded in the last month only.

Once arrested, numerous political prisoners are held in pre-trial detention for prolonged periods. It is the case of human rights defenders Marfa Rabkova and Andrei Chapiuk, sentenced on September 6th to 15 and 6 years respectively on trumped-up charges, almost two years after their arrests.

This trend is all the more worrying given the intentional inhumane detention conditions of political prisoners, which could amount to torture: from overcrowded cells to beatings - detainees have also been prevented from showering regularly and receiving family visits. Ales Bialiatski, founder of Human Rights Center Viasna is being held in the “special corridor,” a semi-basement floor with poor access to light and has been severely restricted in his correspondence. It is appalling that he will spend his 60th birthday, this coming Sunday, in such conditions.

Given the blatant disregard of the Belarusian authorities for their international human rights obligations, it is fundamental for the Council to keep the matter under scrutiny including through full support for the OHCHR examination and to continue urging Belarus to release immediately and unconditionally all its political prisoners, including the members of Viasna.

Thank you.