

National Security Bureau

<https://en.bbn.gov.pl/en/news/788,Address-at-the-46th-session-of-the-UN-Human-Rights-Council.html>

2021-05-15, 04:56

22.02.2021

Address at the 46th session of the UN Human Rights Council

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address the Human Rights Council.

Let me begin by congratulating Her Excellency Ambassador Nazhat Shameem Khan of Fiji on her appointment as President of the Human Rights Council. I wish you every success in steering the Council.

I would also like to commend the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Madam Michelle Bachelet and her Office, for their dedication to advance the human rights standards. Let me assure you, Madame High Commissioner, that in Poland you have a strong ally and a dedicated partner.

Excellencies,

The times we are navigating through are challenging. The situation of human rights is not getting better. On the contrary: a lot needs to be done.

The spread of COVID-19 and our attempts to contain the virus is the most pressing challenge to the international community. The pandemic has shown that no society or country – poor or rich – and no part of the world is immune to its negative impact and spill-over effects.

But the consequences of the pandemic are even more serious.

First, COVID-19 has raised the issue of health care, public health and health security to the level of basic human rights.

Second, we cannot allow for the pandemic to contribute to an even greater exclusions in the world; to a division between rich and poor.

And last but not least, the fact that for more than a year now most of the attention has been paid to combating COVID-19 does not mean that other problems have magically disappeared. Quite the opposite: the situation in many parts of the world keeps worsening as we speak.

Today I would like to concentrate on a few most urgent issues.

As a head of the state located in Central Europe, I want to draw your attention to the situation in countries that border my country Poland: Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine. It must be underlined that following presidential elections in their homeland, thousands of Belarussians took to the streets to exercise their basic democratic rights. The scale of repressions of the Belarussian regime that followed was more than alarming. In that regard, the international community cannot remain silent. Every country has to fulfill its obligations under the international human rights law. I call on the Belarussian authorities to move away from the policy of oppression to the policy of dialogue.

Sadly, Belarus is not the only country in our region whose authorities follow a path of political repression against its society. This has been clearly presented by the Russian Federation in massive detentions of peaceful protesters, who had gathered to express their support for Alexei Navalny and his co-workers. They are not known by their names; and their fate remains unknown in many cases, but we can judge from experience that it might be tragic.

Restoration of the „business-as-usual” approach to Russia, and expecting it would influence the Kremlin’s behavior, is naive. It is not what proper dialogue means. Proper dialogue implies that certain standards have to be upheld. And in case of Russia, these standards are not improving – they are deteriorating. I call upon the Russian authorities to realize their international obligations and therefore release Alexei Navalny and his detained supporters.

The international community should also continue paying close attention to the dire situation of human rights in the territories of Ukraine being under control of Russian occupation forces or Russia-backed separatists. Poland clearly reconfirms its support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine within the internationally recognized borders.

Esteemed colleagues,

Turning to religious persecution, it has to be stressed that freedom of religion or belief is one of the basic human rights and needs to be protected worldwide. The violation of this fundamental right should be addressed by the international community more efficiently.

Poland has been particularly concerned by the increasing phenomenon of discrimination against and religious persecution of Christians and other religious minorities. As a result, on August 22nd, 2019, on Poland’s initiative the General Assembly adopted the resolution titled “International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief”.

Poland also remains committed to protecting vulnerable groups, including children, older persons, and persons with disabilities. We must stand up for those, who will not be able to stand up for themselves. We must strive for Solidarity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Freedom of expression is the last issue I would like to highlight today. Being referred to as the „first freedom”, we must make sure that in the era of digital revolution, it remains so. Therefore, the task ahead of us is to build an open public sphere in the digital domain.

Excellencies,

To conclude, I want to assure you that as a member of the Human Rights Council, Poland will continue the mission it started during the membership in the UN Security Council. We seek a world based on “the force of law,” and not “the law of force” and we will engage with all stakeholders who share our vision.

Thank you.

[Tweetnij](#)