

**Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus**

Ref.: UA BLR 10/2025  
(Please use this reference in your reply)

3 October 2025

Excellency,

I have the honour to address you in my capacity as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 58/19.

In this connection, I would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information I have received concerning **the alleged prevention of Ms. Iryna Levina from accessing a life-saving surgery scheduled for 10 October 2025.**

According to the information received:

Ms. Iryna Levina, [REDACTED] under criminal prosecution in Belarus, is forbidden to leave Mazyr under a travel ban. She urgently needs [REDACTED] [REDACTED] scheduled for 10 October 2025 in Minsk, but the investigator refuses to authorize her travel, putting her life at serious risk.

Without prejudging the accuracy of these allegations, I would like to express my **utmost concern about the alleged denial to Ms. Iryna Levina of access to a life-saving surgery required for her health condition.**

I would like to refer to article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Belarus on 12 November 1973, which state that **every human being has the right to life**. According to the Human Rights Committee, States parties to ICCPR '*have a heightened duty of care to take any necessary measures to protect the lives of individuals deprived of their liberty by the State. (...) The duty to protect the life of all detained individuals includes providing them with the necessary medical care and appropriate regular monitoring of their health*' (general comment No. 36, [CCPR/C/GC/36](#), para. 25).

I would like to recall that **torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment are prohibited** under article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 7 of ICCPR, and articles 1, 2 and 16 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, ratified by Belarus on 13 March 1987. Under article 10 of the ICCPR, all persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated humanely and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person. Articles 7 and 10 of ICCPR require that '*persons deprived of their liberty must not be subjected to any hardship or constraint other than that resulting from the deprivation of liberty*', such as lack of access to appropriate and timely medical care (Human Rights Committee, *Dafnis v. Greece*, Views of 19 July 2022, [CCPR/C/135/D/3740/2020](#), para. 8.5; Human Rights Committee, *Pichugina v. Belarus*, Views of 7 July 2021, [CCPR/C/132/D/2711/2015](#), para. 6.3).

Furthermore, I would like to draw attention to Belarus's obligations under article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, ratified by Belarus on 12 November 1973, which guarantees **the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health**. According to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, '*States are under the obligation to respect the right to health by, inter alia, refraining from denying or limiting equal access for all persons, including prisoners (...), to preventive, curative and palliative health services*' (CESCR, general comment No. 14, [E/C.12/2000/4](#), para. 34).

In addition, I would like to refer to the **UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Mandela Rules)** ([A/RES/70/175](#)), which establish States' responsibility to treat all prisoners with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings (rule 1), without any discrimination, including on the grounds of political or other opinion (rule 2); to provide prisoners with accommodation which meets all requirements of health (rule 13); and to provide prisoners with appropriate healthcare services (rules 24 to 35). We would also like to recall **the Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners**, adopted by the General Assembly resolution 45/111 on 14 December 1990, provide that all prisoners shall be treated with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings (principle 1) and shall have access to health services available in the country without discrimination on the grounds of their legal situation (principle 9).

Finally, I would like to remind that the Human Rights Committee has recommended that Belarus strengthens its efforts to improve conditions of detention and the provision of adequate and timely medical care ([CCPR/C/BLR/CO/5](#), para. 36(b)) and that the Committee against Torture has recommended that Belarus '[i]mprove access to and the quality of health care, including psychiatric care, for prisoners in all places of deprivation of liberty' ([CAT/C/BLR/CO/5](#), para. 22(f)) and that Belarus accepted the same recommendation under its last Universal Periodic Review ([A/HRC/46/5](#), [A/HRC/46/5/Add.1](#), 138.228).

The full texts of the human rights instruments and standards recalled above are available on [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org) or can be provided upon request.

In view of the urgency of the matter, I would appreciate a response as soon as possible on the initial steps taken by your Excellency's Government to safeguard the rights of the above-mentioned person in compliance with international instruments.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, I would also be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and any comment you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please provide information about the legal and factual reasons for the criminal prosecution of Ms. Iryna Levina and for the refusal by the investigative authorities to allow her to travel to Minsk to undergo the

surgery scheduled for 10 October 2025.

This communication and any response received from your Excellency's Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) within 60 days. They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, I urge that Ms. Iryna Levina is given timely access to adequate medical assistance, including by granting an exception to her travel ban in order to allow her to undergo the planned surgery.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Nils Muižnieks  
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus