



CANADIAN POLISH CONGRESS
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March 25, 2021

Hon. Marc Garneau, PC, MP
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Global Affairs Canada
Lester B. Pearson Building
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2

Dear Minister:

I am writing on behalf of the Canadian Polish Congress to express our profound concern with mounting human rights violations being perpetrated by the government of the Republic of Belarus.

Canada's Polish community is troubled by the arbitrary arrests of Anna Paniszewa, the Director of the Romuald Traugutt Polish Scout Social School in Brest, her deputy, and more recently Andżelika Borys, the leader of the Association of Poles in Belarus. The arrests of these women are clearly intended to intimidate the Polish ethnic minority in Belarus. Their brutal treatment at the hands of the Belarussian security services only underscores that reality.

The persecution of the Polish minority in Belarus has been a long-standing concern. The Lukashenko regime's latest arbitrary arrests and acts of intimidation reveal an agenda to marginalize minorities even further. We join with other non-governmental organizations condemning these most recent human rights violations and calling for the immediate release of Ms. Paniszewa, her deputy, and Ms. Borys.

Canada has a proud history of defending democracy, human rights, and the rule of law around the world. We implore your government to continue that vital work and both publicly condemn the ongoing human rights violations in Belarus and voice support for the democratic aspirations of the Belarussian people.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

John J. Tomczak
President
Canadian Polish Congress

cc: Evgeny Russak, Minister-Counsellor & Chargé d'affaires, Embassy of the Republic of Belarus