**UN Human Rights Council**

**49th Session**

**Item 4 – Interactive Dialogue on the HC’s report on Belarus**

*17 March 2022*

**Statement of the Czech Republic**

Mr. President,

I wish to thank the High Commissioner for her report and for her work; *we fully share the OHCHR findings regarding the bleak human rights situation in Belarus.*

We are deeply concerned about systematic human rights violation, massive repression and intimidation campaign against civil society and independent media in the country. *The lawlessness has prevailed in the country;* authorities continue to actively apply criminal prosecution for political reasons. We note cases of widespread and systematic ill-treatment and torture of political prisoners and detained citizens. Authorities are shielding perpetrators of all those crimes.

Space for civil society, non-governmental organizations and independent media has been shrinking throughout the last years with a clear aim to muzzle all independent voices in the country. We support independent international investigation of all atrocities by appropriate mechanisms.

We call on Belarusian authorities to release immediately and unconditionally all citizens detained or sentenced on political grounds *for exercising their legitimate human rights*, to ensure their full rehabilitation and also to refrain from any engagement in the Russian unlawful military aggression against Ukraine.

Madam High Commissioner, could you give as an idea of the impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine on civil society in Belarus?

I thank you.