**46th Session of the Human Rights Council**

**Item 4 – General Debate**

*12 March 2021*

**Statement by the Czech Republic**

Thank you, (Madame President),

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the EU statement.

We are concerned over chronic patterns of systemic violations of human rights and impunity in **Belarus.** The widespread violations have been committed in the context of the fraudulent presidential elections and consequent peaceful protests. They included the mass arbitrary arrests, well documented torture and ill-treatment of detained people, harassment and intimidation targeting opposition members, journalists and human rights defenders. State policy of repressions and impunity has created a climate of fear in general public. This is not acceptable. All arbitrarily detained persons, such as Ihar Losik, Viktor Babaryko, Andrej Popov, Ihnat Sidorčyk, must be released.

Several **Russian** legislative initiatives, recently signed into law, have contributed to targeting independent voices, NGOs and individuals. We urge the Russian authorities to repeal the legislation on “undesirable organisation”. We are deeply dismayed by the sentencing of Russian opposition figure Aleksei Navalny that disregards the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruling. Equally, we are concerned by attempts of Russian authorities to silence Mr. Yuri Dmitriev by attacking his personal integrity as well as the legitimacy of his historical work.

We are concerned about the detention of pro-democracy activists in **Hong Kong,** including Joshua Wong, Agnes Chow and Ivan Lam. **Chinese** authorities are bound to respect and implement Hong Kong’s autonomy and all political freedoms and democratic principles. Immediate release of all human rights defenders, journalists and lawyers, such as Yu Wensheng, Sakharov Prize laureate Ilham Tohti, Tiyip Tashpolat, Li Yuhan is essential. We call for a meaningful response to the credible reports of human rights violations against minorities in Tibet and Xinjiang and closure of re-education facilities.

Recent illegitimate elections in **Venezuela** and gradually closing space for the opposition are worrisome. We are deeply concerned over the continuous harassment and persecution of human rights and humanitarian organizations, the attacks against media freedom and civil society or criminalization of the humanitarian work. Raids against “Convite” and “Azul Positive” are examples of such harassment.

We strongly condemn the military coup in **Myanmar**. We call on military authorities to respect election result, return power to civilian control and immediately release all individuals arbitrarily detained.

We are concerned about the non-improving humanitarian situation of civilians in Tigray, **Ethiopia** andcall on all parties to the conflict for a complete cessation of hostilities. We remain worried also by developments in **Syria** which have a serious impact on civilians.

With regard to **Iran and the DPRK** we refer to our statements in the respective interactive dialogues.