



August 27, 2014

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

With the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the enforced disappearances of prominent Belarusians Viktor Hanchar and Anatoli Krasouski, please find the attached statement of the Belarusian-American Association (BAZA) and the We Remember Foundation. We respectfully ask the United States to request that the Belarusian executive authorities: 1) properly and thoroughly investigate the disappearances of Messrs. Hanchar and Krasouski, as well as the disappearances of Yuri Zakharenka and Dmitri Zavadski, 2) issue a public report with the findings from such investigation, and 3) comply with the United Nations Human Rights Committee decision on the case of the enforced disappearance of Anatoli Krasouski.

Thank you for your attention and anticipated action.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alice A. Kipel".

Alice A. Kipel

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Irina Krasovskaya".

Irina Krasovskaya

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cc: Assistant Secretary Tom Malinowski
Assistant Secretary Victoria Nuland



Statement and Request of the Belarusian-American Association (BAZA) and the We Remember Foundation on the Occasion of the 15th Anniversary of the Involuntary Disappearances of Anatoli Krasouski and Viktor Hanchar

On September 16, 1999, businessman Anatoli Krasouski disappeared, together with his friend, the prominent politician Viktor Hanchar. They were kidnapped by unidentified persons, from a sauna while they were together that evening. Despite the fact that the Belarusian KGB had both men under constant surveillance, the official investigation of the disappearances announced that the case could not be solved. After the men disappeared, the Belarusian KGB issued a statement claiming that the surveillance was suspended precisely on September 16. The official investigation of two similar cases, the disappearances of Yuri Zakharenka, former Belarusian Minister of the Interior (disappeared on May 7, 1999), and Dmitri Zavadski, a cameraman for the Russian TV channel ORT (disappeared on July 7, 2000), has also yielded no results. The fate of the four men remains unknown.

The apparent failure of the Belarusian authorities to investigate the whereabouts of the four prominent Belarusian disappeared men has drawn sustained international criticism from institutions such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the United Nations Committee against Torture, the United Nations Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances, and others.

Although the official investigations into the disappearances have yielded no results, Belarusian authorities have nonetheless consistently refuted the conclusions of a report by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe ([Disappeared Persons in Belarus](#), author Christos Pourgourides), which linked senior Belarusian officials to the disappearances. The evidence collected by Mr. Pourgourides includes a handwritten document from the then police chief, General Lapatik (the authenticity of which the Belarusian authorities have acknowledged), in which General Lapatik accuses Mr. V. Sheyman, then Secretary of the Belarusian Security Council, of having ordered the killing of Mr. Zakharenka, and states that the order was carried out by a special task force (SOBR unit) commanded by Colonel Paulishenka, with the assistance of the then Minister of the Interior, Mr. Sivakou, who provided Colonel Paulishenka with an official pistol, temporarily removed from the SIZO-1 prison, for the execution; the same method was reportedly used in the executions of Messrs. Hanchar and Krasouski.

During its 104th Session in March 2012, the United Nations Human Rights Committee adopted a decision on the case of the enforced disappearance of Anatoli Krasouski. The Committee concluded that Belarus failed to properly investigate and take adequate remedial actions regarding the disappearance of Mr. Krasouski. The Committee obliged Belarus to provide the victims of the disappearance of Mr. Krasouski with an effective remedy, including a thorough and diligent investigation of the disappearance, and prosecution and punishment of the perpetrators. Further, the Committee obliged Belarus to provide adequate information concerning the results of the inquiries to the authors of the complaint — Mrs. Irina Krasouskaya and Ms. Valeriya Krasouskaya. Finally, it obliged Belarus to provide the authors with

adequate compensation. The state of Belarus had 180 days to take action. The state of Belarus has completely ignored the United Nations Human Rights Committee decision.

As a result of the above and other violations of human rights by Belarusian authorities, the European Union and the United States have imposed a variety of sanctions on Belarusian individuals and entities.

The EU first imposed restrictive measures on Belarus' president Alexander Lukashenka and certain Belarusian officials in May 2006, through Regulation [765/2006](#). The sanctions were extended in 2012 and 2013, and consist of an arms embargo, travel ban and asset freeze on individuals and entities said to be responsible for serious human rights violations, whose activities seriously undermine democracy or the rule of law in Belarus, or who benefit from or support the Lukashenka regime. The EU travel ban list for Belarusian individuals has evolved around the original list of 2004 (Position 2004/661/CFSP), which included only four persons who were responsible for, but failed to initiate, an independent investigation and prosecution of the alleged crimes and those who are considered by the Pourgourides Report to be key actors in the disappearances of 1999/2000 and the following cover-up, in view of their apparent obstruction of justice. The original list included Messrs. Sivakou, Sheyman, Naumou and Paulichenka. On July 9, 2014, the EU removed eight people from and added one person to its Belarus sanctions list.

The last major action taken by the United States with respect to sanctions for human rights abuses in Belarus was in January of 2012, when President Obama signed into law the Belarus Democracy and Human Rights Act of 2011, which amends and reauthorizes the Belarus Democracy Act of 2004. The Belarus Democracy Act of 2004 recognized that former Belarus government officials have come forward with credible allegations and evidence that top officials of the Lukashenka regime were involved in the disappearances and presumed deaths of Viktor Hanchar, Anatoli Krasouski, and Yuri Zakharenka, who had been leaders and supporters of democratic forces in Belarus, and Dmitri Zavadski, a journalist known for his critical reporting in Belarus. U.S. sanctions continue to remain in place and include travel restrictions and financial sanctions directed to Belarusian individuals and enterprises.

BAZA and We Remember condemn the behavior of Belarusian authorities regarding the cases of the involuntary disappearances, which qualify as crimes against humanity.

BAZA and We Remember also appeal to the U.S. Department of State to use all available mechanisms to request that the Belarusian executive authorities:

1. Launch a truly independent and transparent investigation into the above-mentioned disappearances by the competent national authorities, with a view to clarifying, and punishing, as the case may be:
 - the alleged involvement in these disappearances by the former Head of the Security Council, former Prosecutor General, former Head of the Administration of the President of Belarus Mr. Sheyman; the former Minister of Sports Mr. Sivakou; the former minister of Interior Mr. Naumou; and the high-ranking officer of the special forces Mr. Paulichenka, and
 - the possible crime of perversion of the course of justice committed by certain other high-ranking Belarusian officials who have been involved in the investigations carried out so far and who have falsified, dissimulated or suppressed evidence in their possession in order to protect the true perpetrators of the crimes;
2. Provide relatives with information about the whereabouts of the disappeared persons; and
3. Respect and comply with the United Nations Human Rights Committee decision on the case of the enforced disappearance of Anatoli Krasouski.