

Factsheet UPR – 4th cycle



QR-code to the full report

The Belarusian National Youth Council «RADA» is a voluntary union of **44 youth associations**, established with the purpose of consolidating youth organizations in Belarus. RADA operates in the areas of representation, promotion and defending the common interests and freedoms of youth organizations and young people in Belarus.

Development since the last UPR

Since the last UPR, Belarus has made no meaningful progress in protecting youth rights. Restrictions on freedom of assembly and association, discrimination, and exclusion from decision-making persist. The situation has sharply deteriorated following the 2020 presidential election, with young people facing unprecedented repression:

- Students and youth activists have been expelled from universities.
- Young people have been dismissed from employment for political reasons.
- Arbitrary detentions and politically motivated arrests have increased.
- Independent youth organizations have been systematically dismantled.

At least 267 young people remain imprisoned as recognized political prisoners, and around 1,000 are former youth political prisoners.

During the 3rd UPR cycle, Belarus received no recommendations on higher education; we call on member states to prioritize this sector.

Freedom of Association and Assembly

Obstacles to the right to education are closely linked to broader human rights violations.

Young people continue to face coercion to join pro-government student and youth organizations.

Freedom of association is severely restricted, with independent student groups under constant surveillance and pressure.

Demonstrations on campuses are effectively banned, and students participating in them face harsh reprisals, including arrests and expulsions.

Right to Equality and Non-Discrimination

Persistent inequalities in higher education remain a serious concern.

Gender discrimination continues through quotas favoring male students in military, internal affairs, and emergency institutions, as well as in medical sub-internships.

Students with disabilities encounter barriers due to inadequate infrastructure, lack of communication support, and restrictive admission procedures.

The following recommendations are put forward to guide member states in addressing these critical issues:

- Guarantee students' rights to peaceful assembly and association by lifting restrictions on campus demonstrations, ending political persecution of students, and ceasing the forced involvement in pro-governmental organizations.
- Ensure full accessibility in higher education for students with disabilities through improved infrastructure, enhanced communication support, and modern assistive technologies.
- Abolish discriminatory quotas in admissions and medical training to secure equal, merit-based access for all students regardless of gender.

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