

Statement by Irina Krasovskaya  
President,  
We Remember Foundation  
December 19, 2011

It is hard to believe but 10 years ago **exactly** in this place we had a press conference. Then I was here together with other wives of disappeared politicians in Belarus. We wanted to warn US and the world about the criminal regime in Belarus and bloody-minded and illegitimate president Lukashenko. Today, I am here again – this time I am trying to save the life of my friends: Sannikov, Dashkevich, Bondarenko, Statkevich, Beliatsky, Severinets and others who have been sent to prison after 19 December crackdown.

I was on the **square** in Minsk one year ago with my friends when police beat and arrested the protestors. I was also in Minsk **one week** ago to meet with the families of political prisoners. The situation today is even worse than it is described in the press. The physical pressure on political prisoners is dramatically increasing, and I believe that now there is a **real** threat to the lives of political prisoners.

Presidential candidate **Andrei Sannikov** has been transferred for the third time from one colony to a harsher prison. For the last year he was moved between seven different prisons.. Family members and his lawyers have had no information from him for more than one month. His lawyer has been denied access to Andrei. He lacks warm clothing for the winter. He has no food parcels from home which are essential to survival in the Belarus Gulag. He is kept in solitary confinement and his family cannot be certain that he is still alive.

Another presidential candidate **Mikalai Statkevich** was placed in the penal cell and now his marriage (which was announced for December 20<sup>th</sup>) is not possible.

**Zmitser Bandarenka**, despite back pain after spine surgery, has been returned from the hospital to the prisoners' unit and if he follows the regime of the general prison (but he has to) he risks further injury and paralysis.

**Zmiter Dashkevich** after all provocations against him and being repeatedly put into penal cells in the previous prisons, has been confined to a one-man cell in the colony for three months already.

**Ales Beliatski** was sentenced to 4 1/2 years in a high security prison for the crime of helping political prisoners and their families. He is also at considerable risk.

Prisoners who were released with some conditions are under the big pressure as well. Presidential candidate **Uladzimir Niakliyaeu** and leader of the "Young Front" **Anastasiya Palazhanka**, given suspended sentence, have been issued the last warning and can be easily return to prison again .

Journalist **Irina Khalip**, the wife of presidential candidate Andrey Sannikov, is not allowed to leave the city; every Monday she has to check in police headquarter ; she has to be at home no later than 10 pm. And almost every day after 10 pm she is visited by officials from police at her apartment which scare her 4 years old son who usually hide from unpleasant visitors in the toilet and close all the doors.

I am asking USG, NGOs, journalists, people of US to do everything we can to save these people. Please do not allow Lukashenko to kill again (as happened in 1999 with political kidnapping and extrajudicial execution of his opponents).

The release and rehabilitation of all political prisoners can became the first step in the effort to save ten million people from dictatorship and create a new democratic and free Belarus.