



Human Rights Council Topic Update

Human Rights in Belarus

In late September, a meeting of European Union leaders led to the conclusion that there had not been sufficient progress in Belarusian human rights. Following a meeting with the Belarusian political opposition, German chancellor Angela Merkel called for an intensification of sanctions against Lukashenko's oppressive regime in Belarus. Merkel also called for the release of presidential candidates who were imprisoned last December following protests against the widely criticized re-election of Lukashenko. On September 14, Lukashenko pardoned 11 political prisoners from the protests while five continue to remain in prison. In response to the widespread criticism by EU leaders, Lukashenko announced through the official Belta news agency that he saw the meeting as meaningless "chatter" and had instructed his representative in Warsaw to withdraw. "We give too much attention to these European meetings. Some bureaucrat in Brussels who no one has ever heard of blathers away and we start to tremble," he said. However, Lukashenko's former Soviet republic is running out of options as his country's government is struggling with a balance-of-payments crisis resulting in a 36 drop in the value of the Belarusian ruble last May. Following the announcement by EU leaders that they were considering tightening sanctions, Dmitry Uss, a failed candidate in the December presidential election, was released following months of political imprisonment.

Links

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/belarus-opposition-candidate-freed-from-prison-after-presidential-pardon/2011/10/02/gIQAfueLFL_story.html

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-09-30/merkel-for-fresh-belarus-sanctions-after-meeting-opposition.html>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOfbyGqzXKw>

Human Trafficking

Today, more human beings live under the oppression of slavery around the world than during the heyday of colonial slave trade. The majority of these slaves are classified under human trafficking with 80 percent of the slaves being women and girls. In a report entitled "Trafficking in Persons Report" released in late June, the U.S. State Department continued to emphasize that human trafficking remains a major human rights concern around the world. And while the exact nature of slavery may differ in each country, it is clear that the common link is extreme poverty in the community and nation. Perhaps the most egregious form of human trafficking is that dealing with



children, who are being raised to be the world's future leaders. One nation that was highlighted for its cases of human trafficking is Brazil, which has had a rise in trafficking of children to record levels now placing behind world leader, Thailand. With the sudden economic boom in Brazil following the announcement of their selection as the hosts of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Summer Olympics, the promise of incoming lucrative business of sex tourists has made human trafficking an even more widespread problem. Human trafficking is one of the worst symptoms of poverty, and in order to solve it, leaders must make choices that address this core component.

Links

<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/>

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2011/09/15/new-slavery-human-trafficking/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7MJVQJnHcM>