



21 December 2010

HE Alexander Lukashenko
President of Belarus

Mr President:

The Socialist International, the worldwide organisation of social democratic, labour and socialist parties, is deeply concerned by the arrest and detention of opposition presidential candidates, a number of their supporters, journalists and human rights activists, following the presidential elections held in Belarus last Sunday, 19 December.

We are equally disturbed by the violence used to disperse the opposition's post election rally by special forces officers and the brutality perpetrated against those participating, including presidential candidates Mikalai Statkevich and Vladimir Neklyayev who were victims of the violence.

We call on you for the immediate and unconditional release of all those detained and an end to the use of violence against and abuse of those citizens exercising their democratic rights.

Our deep concern also extends to the existing reports of serious irregularities during the vote count which should be immediately investigated.

The Socialist International remains convinced that only through the holding of free and fair democratic elections, Belarus will be able to gain a government with the legitimacy and the respect that its citizens deserve and need within the international community.

We call on you, Mr President, to take urgent action on these matters.

Yours sincerely,

Luis Ayala
Secretary General