



AFL-CIO

AMERICA'S UNIONS

**American Federation
of Labor and
Congress of Industrial
Organizations**

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Mr. Igor Sergeyenko
**Head of the Administration of the President of
the Republic of Belarus**

Transmitted via Permanent Mission of the
Republic of Belarus to the United Nations Office
and other international organizations in Geneva
by e-mail: belarus.geneva@mfa.gov.by

Mr. Roman Golovchenko
Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus
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April 22, 2022

Dear Mr Igor Sergeyenko,

Dear Mr Roman Golovchenko,

I write to you on behalf of the AFL-CIO and our 12.5 million members. The AFL-CIO notes with considerable alarm the arrest and detention of 17 trade union leaders in Belarus in recent days. Among those detained are the top leaders of country's independent trade union movement including Aleksandr Yarashuk, President of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP) and Sergei Antusevich, Vice-President of the BKDP. The offices of the BKDP have been closed as have the offices of its four affiliated unions. Top elected leaders from among the BKDP's affiliates and other activists and legal experts are among the others arrested and detained.

This renewed repression follows the April 7, 2022, decision by your government to label the BKDP-affiliated Belarusian Trade Union of Radio-Electronic Industry Workers (REP) an extremist organization and ban its activities.

These leaders and the unions they represent make up the core of the independent trade union movement in Belarus. These unions have for decades sought to promote worker rights in the face of continual harassment and repression by the Belarus government. The government of Belarus has been repeatedly called out by the International Labor Organization (ILO) for its systematic [violations](#) of freedom of association and core labor standards.

These recent arrests represent a troubling increase in anti-union harassment in your country. The AFL-CIO joins with the international trade union movement in its [protest](#) of these arrests and stands in solidarity with our partner unions in Belarus. We call for the immediate release of all those detained and for resumption of the activities of the BKDP and its affiliate unions.

We anticipate your prompt reply and action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Cathy Feingold".

Cathy Feingold
International Director, AFL-CIO
Deputy President, International Trade Union Confederation