



СТАЧКАМ ААТ « БЕЛАРУСЬКАЛІЙ»

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We, the participants of the Belaruskali strike, are writing to you, Svein Tore Holsether, and to the management of Yara, represented by you, regarding the situation at our company.

You are no doubt aware that 33 countries have not recognised the elections in Belarus as legitimate, and that Norway, together with the Nordic Eight, has questioned the legitimacy of the elections and condemned the violence in Belarus. We are sure that you are aware in detail of the massive political repression taking place in Belarus in general and at our enterprise in particular. More than 10 people killed, nearly 300 political prisoners with sentences that will drag on for years, more than 40,000 detained and arrested, more than a thousand criminal cases and charges based on far-fetched and fabricated evidence, thousands expelled from the country, including some Belaruskali employees – this is how Lukashenko and his henchmen are trying to cling to power in the country.

On 14 August 2020, a spontaneous workers' meeting was held at lunchtime at the site of Belaruskali's 1st Mine Management Unit, where workers' demands were first formulated and handed over to General Director I.I. Golovaty on the same day.

On 17 August 2020, employees of Belaruskali went on strike. We demanded new elections, the release of political prisoners and punishment for those who had committed violence against protesters.

A few days later, KGB officers detained Dzmitry Kudzelevich, a member of the enterprise's strike committee. He is now outside Belarus.

On the morning of 10 September 2020, Belaruskali miner Yuri Korzun handcuffed himself at his workplace to the mining equipment in the mine at a depth of 305 metres and said he would not leave until his demands were met: an end to persecution of workers, the release of detained strike committee members and the stepping down of Lukashenko.

On 21 September 2020, Belaruskali miner Aleh Kudzelka refused to go to the surface until his demands were met: the dismissal of the Belaruskali director general, the release of the detained strikers, and an end to the lawlessness of the security forces.

On 15 October 2020, Master blaster Aliaksandr Kurban chained himself in a Belaruskali mine at a depth of 440 metres and refused to return to the surface.

On 24 November 2020, miner Aliaksandr Klezovich joined the strike and refused to come up from the pit as a sign of protest. The strike committee published Aliaksandr's appeal in which he stated that he was "not ready to put up with the legal mayhem taking

place in our country and refuses to feed the criminal regime with his labour". Note that Belaruskali is one of the largest suppliers of potash fertilizers in the world, and one of the most profitable enterprises in our country, which is owned by the state and is one of the main sources of income of Alexander Lukashenko's regime.

Andrei Prilutsky, a member of the Belaruskali strike committee, was detained at Pulkovo airport in St Petersburg on 29 December and arrested as part of the extradition process to Belarus. Already being in detention, he sought political asylum in Russia, as his criminal prosecution stemmed from his involvement in the strike movement. In Belarus, Andrei Prilutsky is accused of using violence against police officers on 9 August 2020 in Soligorsk. According to Andrei, that evening he shielded an elderly man who was being beaten by police officers. In response, he was beaten and detained.

Many of the protesters have been subjected to administrative prosecution for their participation in peaceful protests and to date have served a total of more than 800 days of administrative detention in the harshest conditions, where they have been subjected to torture.

Unfortunately, such stories are only the tip of the iceberg and many victims of regime violence prefer to keep quiet about their experiences, trying to heal their physical and mental wounds alone and worrying about the safety of their relatives. We can only guess what all those who have undergone torture at the hands of the police have really had to endure.

Dear Svein Tore Holsether, we are grateful to you for contacting us after our appeal in September 2020 and for always being interested in the developments. We openly state that the management of Belaruskali is deliberately misleading you.

Mr Golovaty, the General Director of Belaruskali, has repeatedly stated in his communication with you that none of the workers involved in the strike have been or will be dismissed, despite numerous testimonies from the strike committee confirming the contrary. The true situation was clarified by the information about the dismissal of a large number of participants in the strike published on the official channel by the ideologists of the enterprise. Moreover, after saying that the striking miners had not been fired, at your meeting in Minsk on 10 December 2020, the director of Belaruskali cynically stated that he was ready to re-hire those very "non-fired" workers.

We know that you often hear calls from trade unions, some of whom call themselves independent. They claim that your presence in our company helps protect workers' rights and contributes to the economic independence of the country. Unfortunately, nothing could be further from the truth than this claim, as there is systematic pressure on workers who are in truly independent unions, and those who want to leave a pro-government union are simply not allowed to sign resignation forms. During your negotiations, hundreds of our colleagues have been subjected to repression, arrested, tortured in prisons, fined, dismissed and some, fearing for their lives, have been forced to flee the country. The repression continues unabated. In an attempt to intimidate or bribe workers, the leadership has resorted to increasingly sophisticated methods, which always have only one basis: a mixture of lies and threats.



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In a press release following your December meeting in Minsk, management is proud to report that numerous video conferences with Yara have shown a significant improvement in worker safety and health protection. The press release also mentions the improved ventilation system in the mines. The strike committee is forced to state that the general director of Belaruskali is once again deceiving his partners. Nothing has been done in the field of occupational safety and health, as the specialists of this service are now engaged only in identifying undesirable symbols and suppressing protest moods among the workers. It is impossible to improve the ventilation system in the mines and the workplaces in the mine in such a short time! The mines at Belaruskali have insufficient ventilation and this is a long-standing and systemic problem which cannot be solved without serious design solutions and considerable investment.

This document also states that prevention and additional measures against the COVID-19 pandemic are carried out in the company. In reality, when there are not enough workers in the workplace, sick workers are not allowed to go on sick leave and are in close proximity to healthy workers in the workplace.

On 10 December 2020, in addition to meeting with the general director of Belaruskali, you also met with representatives of the independent trade unions of Belarus. The representatives of the strike committee were not notified of this meeting. Nevertheless, the representatives of the independent trade unions, in communicating with you and defending the striking workers, delivered a point of view that differed from the position of the strike committee of Belaruskali.

The strike committee, as the legal representative of over 6,000 workers in the company, declares: the words and opinions that are allegedly expressed in our name do not represent our position! The position of the strike committee, as expressed in our letters and in our last meeting with you, is unchanged and cannot be subject to any double interpretation! This position is also supported by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, leader of the Belarusian people, and by NAU (National Anti-Crisis Management).

This position stems directly from the tragic events in our country: Fascism in its purest form has reared its head on the soil of our homeland. It is no secret that the idol of our illegitimate ruler is Adolf Hitler and his inhuman methods of government.

The main goal of every company is to run a successful business and, as a result, to make a profit. We fully understand your desire to remain a businessman and your reluctance to get involved in politics. However, when Yara adopted the Code of Conduct, it declared its commitment to the values of human and worker's rights. There is no doubt that an ethical way of doing business is the future, but it is also a direct statement of a political stance. When you negotiate with the management of a company that grossly and cynically violates workers' rights, you are engaging in politics. When the funding received from you is used to build camps for dissenters, you are also participating in politics.

We are determined to continue our fight for our rights. We are only demanding something that is familiar to every Norwegian: the right to freedom, the right to work, freedom of

assembly and in the end, simply the right to live. Our struggle has the support of people all over the world. Tens of thousands of people have signed a petition addressed to you, which supports the position of the strike committee and urges you not to finance the punishers in the service of the dictator. No matter how you present what is happening in Belarus, any cooperation with state-owned companies in Belarus is a direct financing of the dictatorial regime.

We ask you to ask yourself simple questions.

Do you want to pay for the construction and operation of camps for dissenters, the first in Europe since Hitler and Stalin?

Do you want to pay for the luxurious lives of people who in black masks and unmarked cars kidnap civilians from the streets?

Are you prepared to live with the knowledge that you helped murderers and rapists to do their despicable deeds?

Is the Code of Conduct a smokescreen for profit, squeezed from the tears and blood of the innocent, or the founding document of your company?

WE ONCE AGAIN CALL UPON YOU TO BREAK THE CONTRACT WITH BELARUSKALI!

Respectfully,
The strike committee of Belaruskali.