

Poland intervention
Human Rights Council Forum on Minority Issues Fifteenth session
Item 5. Open dialogue: urgent situations faced by minorities
Geneva, 1 and 2 December 2022

Mr. Chairperson,

The 30th anniversary of the Declaration on the Rights of the Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the UN efforts on how to strengthen the protection of these persons' rights, in particular what measures can the international community use to effectively protect minorities rights in the situations of internal or external conflicts and to prevent use of minorities issues as a pretext to justify violence or even war, what we witness in Europe today.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are deeply concerned with the ongoing persecution of the persons belonging to the **Polish national minority in Belarus**. Despite numerous calls on the Belarusian authorities to stop these repressions, Polish language is being eliminated from education system for ethnic minority, Polish memorials and cemeteries are being destroyed and a large scale attack on leaders of the Union of Poles in Minsk and Grodno, and Polish national minority cultural associations has been carried out.

Sadly, attacks against all social groups and professional categories of national minorities have accelerated following **Belarus'** involvement in the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, leading to the constant deterioration of human rights situation in the country.

We call on Belarusian authorities to grant access to the country both the dedicated OHCHR mechanism and the Special Rapporteur.

Thank you.