

**To the Ambassador of Belarus in the
Netherlands
His Excellency Mr. Andrei Yevdochenko
Groot Hertoginnelaan 26
2517 EG 's-Gravenhage**

Subject: Demand to release 29 journalists in Belarus

June 5th 2021

Dear Mr. Yevdochenko,

As the formal representative of the Dutch Association of Journalists (NVJ), we write you to express our deepest concern about the intensification of repression against journalists in Belarus.

Today, the 5th of June, we have gathered in front of your Embassy to make a clear statement on behalf of our 8000 members, all professional journalists, working in the Netherlands.

We would like Belarus to be a free country, where our fellow Belarusian journalists can report and work freely, without risking state violence or arrest.

In Belarus today, there are over 400 political prisoners in the country, including 29 journalists.

And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Since the fraudulent presidential elections of 9 August 2020, more than 30,000 people (including 480 journalists) have been detained, with many of them subjected to torture and ill-treatment, and over 1,000 people targeted by criminal prosecution.

We urge you to ask your government to immediately release Roman Pratasevich and [the 28 other journalists currently detained in Belarus](#).

Furthermore we ask your government to withdraw the administrative and criminal proceedings against Belarusian journalists, and the reopening of the Minsk press club.

We sincerely believe that a democracy can only thrive in a climate where journalists can do their work in freedom.

Journalism is not a crime.

Yours sincerely,

Renske Heddema, President

Thomas Bruning, General Secretary

Dutch association of Journalists, (NVJ)