



8<sup>TH</sup> SESSION

MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE AARHUS CONVENTION

5<sup>TH</sup> SESSION

MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE PROTOCOL ON PRTRs

17-21 NOVEMBER 2025 | PALAIS DES NATIONS | GENEVA

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# BELARUS

## Defending the Defenders

*Side event of non-governmental organizations*

**19 November 2025**

# Intro

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At the 7th Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention in October 2021, Decision VII/8c was adopted on Belarus' compliance with its obligations under the Convention. The liquidation of Ecohome NGO was identified as a form of persecution of environmental activists and NGOs. In addition, the restoration of the Ecohome's legal status was demanded. As the decision on liquidation remains in force since 1 February 2022, Belarus has been subject to the most severe sanction within the Aarhus Convention, namely the deprivation of rights and privileges. The Belarusian authorities have decided to withdraw from the Aarhus Convention due to their disagreement with the application of these measures and on 24 October 2022 withdrawal came into force.

## Pre-history

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While being a Party of Aarhus Convention Belarus was a well-known because it's persecution practice to environmental activists and defenders, including journalists, bloggers and human rights defenders, exercised their rights under Convention.

(MoP decision VI/8c,  
Communication ACCC/C/2014/102)

## **Current situation**

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- liquidated more than 110 environmental NGOs
- pressure, temporary detention, searches applied to activists exercised their env. rights
- 8 political prisoners (of 1255) are env. activists
- public scared to run any activity

## **NGO shut down**

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In addition to NGOs liquidation, 2 of them are declared as “extremist formation”, and using or sharing any information of their resources (webpages, social media etc) will be punished (fine, 2 weeks detention).

Acting in capacity of such organizations (for example, making publication or presentation) is subject to criminal persecution.

As a result providing any kind of assistance for public meet a lot of obstacles.

# Thank you for attention ! :)

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Some good news happens too – in September a 52 person group of political prisoners was released (and then expelled to Lithuania), one of released was Dmitry Kuchuk – a Chair of Belarusian Green Party