



CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNCIL IN CANADA

## **Central and Eastern European Council in Canada Supports IIHF Decision to Move World Hockey Championships from Belarus**

February 2, 2021

TORONTO - The Central and Eastern European Council in Canada, representing the interests of 4.5 million Canadians of Central and Eastern European heritage, supports the IIHF's decision to move the 2021 World Hockey Championship tournament away from Belarus.

The CEEC condemns the ongoing violent crackdown on peaceful protestors in Belarus and the mass electoral fraud committed by the Lukashenka regime in August 2020.

Over the past 6 months, thousands of brave Belarusian protestors have been detained, many viciously beaten, tortured and even killed.

Regimes that engage in widespread human rights abuses should never be legitimized or their behavior normalized by being allowed to host important international sporting events like the IIHF world championships.

"As a nation that supports international human rights and holds the sport of hockey as an important part of our national identity, the 4.5 million Canadians of Central and Eastern European heritage applaud the IIHF and Hockey Canada, for putting human rights first," said CEEC President Marcus Kolga.

The CEEC urges the Government of Canada to:

- Continue calling out and hold the Lukashenka regime to account for its mass repression of protestors, opposition leaders and media;
- Work with our allies to apply coordinated Magnitsky sanctions against corrupt Belarusian officials who have abused the rights of their people beginning with Lidia Yarmoshyna, the head of Belarus' Central Election Commission;
- Work with our allies to support Belarusians and civil society groups who seek change, freedom and democracy for their people.

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