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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Letter dated 11 October 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you a copy of the non-paper on misuse by the staff of the United Nations Office in Belarus of financial resources intended to provide legal assistance to people with disabilities and victims of domestic violence (see annex).

I would appreciate if you could kindly circulate the letter as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 74 (c).

(Signed) Valentin **Rybakov**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Belarus
to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 11 October 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

On misuse by the staff of the United Nations Office in Belarus of financial resources intended to provide legal assistance to people with disabilities and victims of domestic violence

Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution [12/2](#), every year, the Secretary-General issues a report on cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights. The report prepared for the forty-eighth session of the Human Rights Council (13 September–8 October 2021) ([A/HRC/48/28](#)) contained inaccurate information about Mr. Drozdovskiy, the head of the Office for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, a Belarusian non-governmental organization, as was pointed out to the Secretariat during the drafting stage.

Long before the report contained in document [A/HRC/48/28](#) was prepared, the United Nations had in its possession detailed information from the Republic of Belarus regarding the reasons why a criminal investigation had been opened into Mr. Drozdovskiy and was well aware that he was a casualty of unacceptable, unprofessional and politically motivated actions by staff members of the United Nations Office in Belarus.

Appointed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to the United Nations Office of the resident coordinator in Belarus to advise on human rights matters, Mr. Drozdovskiy had initiated the misuse of OHCHR funds intended to provide legal assistance to persons with disabilities and victims of domestic violence.

In August 2020, in the wake of the externally organized mass disturbances in Belarus that followed the announcement of election results, at the initiative and with the support of this United Nations official, two employees of the United Nations Office in Belarus, with full knowledge of the illegality of their actions, conceived and carried out an illegal scheme to pay for legal assistance provided to Belarusian citizens who were neither people with disabilities nor victims of domestic violence. The persons in question had participated in illegal protests aimed at undermining the State and overthrowing the current Government. Funding was provided for the legal defence of 23 protesters.

The payments were processed in secret, bypassing officially sanctioned procedures, with the knowledge of the director of the Office for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Mr. Drozdovskiy, who was himself complicit in this illegal activity, and with the direct involvement of that organization's legal counsel.

Mr. Drozdovskiy and his organization's legal counsel, at the instigation of and with the participation of several staff members of the United Nations Office in Belarus, committed financial fraud using United Nations funds allocated to State authorities for the provision of assistance to persons with disabilities and victims of domestic violence. This constitutes a criminal offence.

Mr. Drozdovskiy and his employee were charged with a criminal offence under article 209, part 2, of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus (fraud committed repeatedly or by a group of persons). Both were taken into custody as a preventive measure. Mr. Drozdovskiy was subject to house arrest in view of his disability. Both individuals were released on 30 July 2021, following a change to the preventive

measure in place. Accordingly, the allegations of ill-treatment of Mr. Drozdovskiy are blatant lies, as is all the other information provided in report [A/HRC/48/28](#).

As a bone fide partner of the United Nations, the Republic of Belarus has not made public the fact of misuse of funds by the Organization's staff, even though the discovery has been extremely damaging to the relationship characterized by trust and stability that existed between Belarus and the United Nations.

The inclusion of information in report [A/HRC/48/28](#) describing Mr. Drozdovskiy as being persecuted for working for the United Nations can only be explained by a desire to please Western donors, who have launched an aggressive anti-Belarusian campaign in the United Nations.

Certain United Nations officials, seeking to use Belarus to score career points, are twisting the facts and misleading the international community, on the apparent assumption that unflattering and inexcusable information about the United Nations will not be revealed.

Yet, the facts speak for themselves: an international civil servant at the United Nations, who served as an adviser on human rights at the United Nations Office in Belarus, demonstrated political bias and incited citizens of Belarus to violate national laws, in gross violation of the principles of conduct of United Nations staff as set out in the Staff Regulations of the United Nations. This, however, has had no effect on his career. He was subsequently employed by OHCHR.

Rules 1.4, 1.5 and 1.8 of the Staff Regulations of the United Nations, approved by General Assembly resolution [590 \(VI\)](#) of 2 February 1952, provide that staff members of the United Nations may not engage in activities incompatible with the proper discharge of their duties, shall refrain from all acts that may adversely reflect on their status, and shall exercise the utmost discretion with regard to all matters of official business. The immunities and privileges accorded to the United Nations under Article 105 of its Charter cannot be invoked by officials who take advantage of them to shirk their duties or to flout the laws and law enforcement procedures of the host State.

Sadly, the Secretariat is ready to rubber-stamp reports that advance the political goals of the West and to disregard the views of other States, to the detriment of facts and even its own image. The Secretariat is thus becoming a conduit for a biased, one-sided and divisive agenda.

The United Nations must keep a united front. Dividing States into "good" and "bad" States at the behest of the West will spell the end of the Organization and the collapse of multilateral diplomacy.