

Press Release
For immediate release

International and European Publishers Condemn Violent Crackdown in Belarus

The International Publishers Association (IPA) and the Federation of European Publishers (FEP) call on Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko to cease his brutal campaign of violence and intimidation against peaceful protests. The IPA and FEP call on the international publishers of Nobel Literature Prize laureate, Svetlana Alexievich, to demonstrate their support for the author as she faces interrogation at the hands of the Lukashenko regime.

IPA President, Hugo Setzer said: *We stand in solidarity with all those in Belarus who are using their freedom of expression to achieve change through peaceful, constructive dialogue. The repression we are seeing in Belarus is despicable and must stop.*

Rudy Vanschoonbeek, President of the FEP said: *We call on all the international publishers of Svetlana Alexievich's books to make their voices heard. We need you to raise international awareness of the horrific situation in Belarus and help bring about a diplomatic, peaceful end to this crisis.*

Following the contested results of the 9 August election in Belarus, three weeks of demonstrations have been met by Belarusian police violently cracking down on demonstrators and journalists. As well as resorting to physical violence, authorities have reportedly suppressed freedom of expression by interfering with mobile communications, blacking out websites, shutting down printing presses, and preventing international journalists' access to Belarus.

Now they have accused Svetlana Alexievich of being part of an 'illegal power grab' and have threatened her with prosecution and jail. The IPA and FEP call on the Belarusian government to drop all such charges immediately as a first step in paving the way for free, democratic processes to unfold.

IPA and the FEP stand behind the statement [issued](#) on 25 August by the European Writers' Council.

Kristenn Einarsson, Chair of the IPA's Freedom to Publish Committee said: *There is a long history of repression of freedom of expression in Belarus. In 2014, the IPA awarded its Prix Voltaire — for bravery in upholding Freedom to Publish in the face of intimidation and harassment — to Belarusian publisher Ihar Lohvinau. After receiving the award, Lohvinau had his license to publish cancelled and was forced to publish in exile from Lithuania.*