



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/2005/G/27
24 March 2005

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sixty-first session
Agenda item 9

**QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND
FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD**

**Note verbale dated 24 March 2005 from the Permanent Mission of Belarus
to the United Nations Office at Geneva
addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human
Rights**

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and, referring to the report on the situation of human rights in Belarus submitted by Adrian Severin, Special Rapporteur, in accordance with resolution 2004/14, has the honour to submit information on the contribution of Belarus to strengthening international security, arms control and disarmament.

The Mission requests the Office to distribute this information* as an official document of the sixty-first session of the Commission of Human Rights.

* Reproduced in the annex as received, in the language of submission only.

Annex**On contribution of Belarus to strengthening of international security, arms control and disarmament**

The Republic of Belarus pursues consistent and responsible policies in the field of international security, arms control and disarmament.

WMD disarmament and non-proliferation regimes

Belarus is a Party of Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Belarus was first among the former USSR nuclear successor states to adhere to the NPT and to ratify the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START-1) and Lisbon Protocol. In 1995 Belarus signed the Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA. In 1996 Belarus established the state system on accounting, control and physical protection of nuclear materials. Belarus voluntarily rejected an opportunity to continue to possess nuclear weapons and completed their withdrawal by the end of 1996.

Belarus continues to fully observe its international obligations under agreements in the field of nuclear disarmament. Particularly, under the Treaty on the Elimination of the Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, Belarus eliminated 584 intermediate and shorter range nuclear missiles, as well as their launchers and related auxiliary equipment.

Among the first steps of Belarus on international arena, as a newly independent state was proclamation of initiative on creation of nuclear weapons free zone in the Central and Eastern Europe.

The Republic of Belarus pursues responsible policies in the area of export control. The admission of our country to the Nuclear Suppliers Group in 2000 is a proof of full compliance by Belarus with internationally recognised norms of export controls.

Within the framework of UN General Assembly Committee on International Security and Disarmament Belarus is an initiator of a draft resolution «Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons».

Since 1975 Belarus is a member of Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. The Republic is a supporter of the restarting of the negotiation on the Verification Annex to the Convention.

In 1993 the Republic of Belarus was one of the first countries to sign the Convention On the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and On Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention, CWC).

According to OPCW experts, Belarus is among those states with the most effective national legal law with regard to the Convention. The OPCW inspections on the Belarusian dual-use industrial facilities confirmed total commitments of Belarus to the requirements of the Convention.

Belarus is ready to provide necessary medical and technical assistance in cases of use or alleged use of chemical weapons against State Parties to the Convention. To that purposes Belarus declared about its readiness to give into disposal of the OPCW a number of transportation aircrafts to deliver humanitarian cargos.

Belarus supports the existing regimes and initiatives aimed at preventing the proliferation of missiles and missile technologies, including Missile Technology Control Regime and a Global Control System for Preventing Missiles and Missile Technologies. In November 2002 Belarus became one of the founding members of the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.

Conventional weapons: arms control and disarmament

In 1992 just after declaration of its independence Belarus possesses a huge army of some half of million soldiers. This number was gradually and carefully reduced. Up to beginning of 2005 the Belarusian Armed Forces consists of 50 000 military personnel and some 15 000 civil servants.

Under the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty the Republic of Belarus has eliminated, despite economic and financial hardships, nearly 10% of heavy military equipment, destroyed under the Treaty provisions by all its 30 state-parties. According to the Treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe (CFE) the Republic of Belarus eliminated 1773 combat tanks, 1341 armoured combat vehicles and 130 combat aircrafts. It comprised more than 10 % of all weapons and military equipment, envisaged for elimination in accordance with the CFE provisions. It is almost 3 times as large as USA, Great Britain and France eliminated, taken together. Belarus had to eliminate arms and military equipment under serious economic difficulties , aggravated by the consequences of Chernobyl disaster. Belarus was the first member-state to have ratified the CFE Adaptation Agreement in 2000.

Belarus took an active part in working out the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons which was adopted at the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation in November 2000. Belarus was also among the active advocates of the adoption of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Since 1993 Belarus on regular basis voluntarily submits information on export and import of conventional arms to the UN Register on Conventional Arms as well as to the SIPRI contributing to the transparency in arms transfers.

Belarus attaches a great importance to the developments and elaboration of additional bilateral confidence-building measures (CBM) on the basis of Vienna Document 1999 of the negotiations on the confidence – and security-building measures. Political arrangements on additional CBMs was reached with Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine.

In 2001 Belarus ratified the Treaty on Open Skies and deposited its instruments of ratification thereby playing an important role in the establishment of a new European security architecture from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

Since 1980 Belarus is a State Party to the Convention on Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. the Republic of Belarus also has joined to all existing Protocols to the above-mentioned Convention.

September 3, 2003 Belarus has deposited its Instrument of Accession to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction .

By the beginning of 2005 Belarusian Engineering Forces were destroyed more than 200 000 APM's.

In 1995 the Republic of Belarus signed a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines.

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