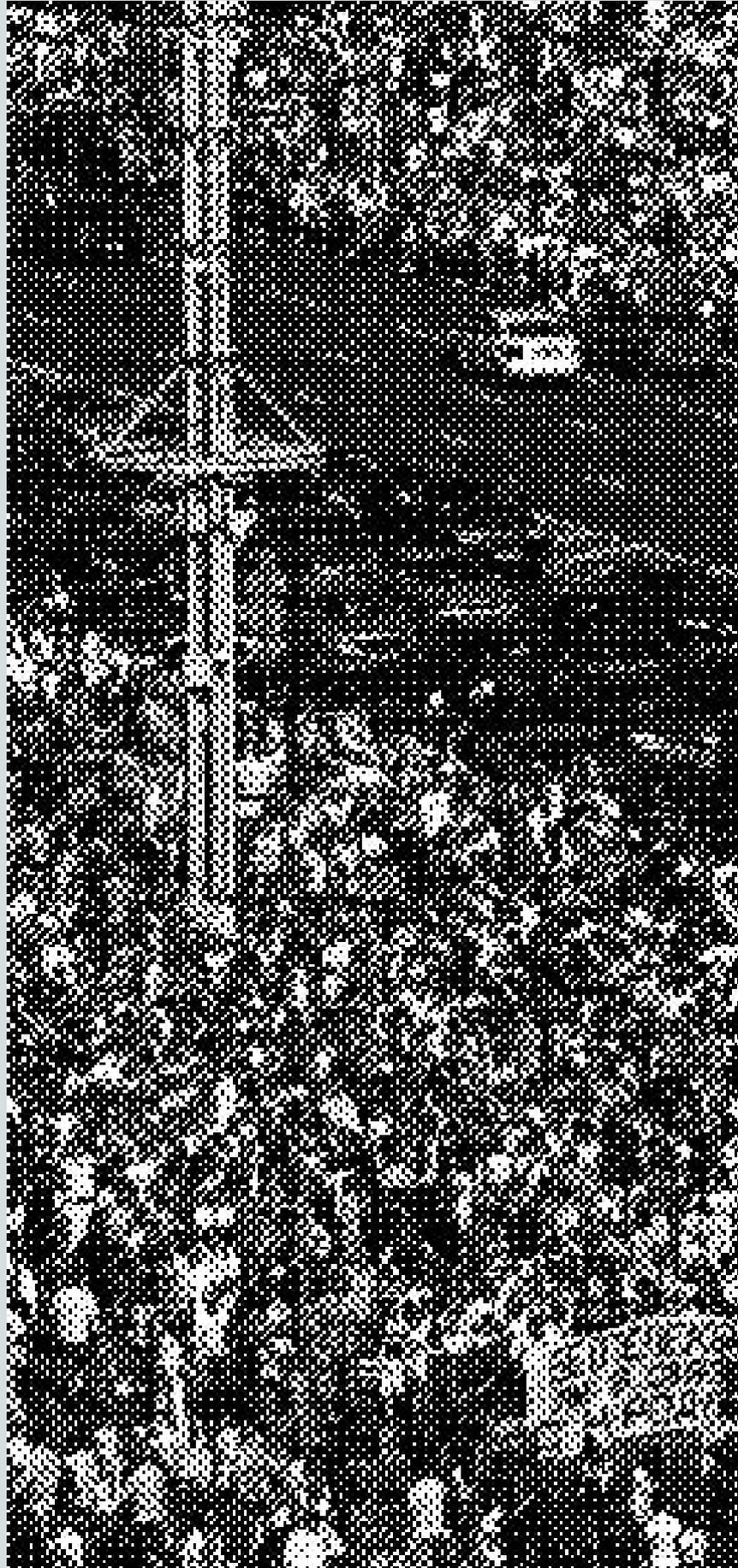


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Executive Summary

Despite the worsening security situation in Belarus and increasing risks posed to the International Accountability Platform for Belarus' (IAPB) co-leads—Human Rights Centre “Viasna” (Viasna) and International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus (International Committee)—during the reporting period, the IAPB made substantial strides towards meeting its objectives to collect, consolidate, verify and preserve information and evidence of crimes under international law allegedly committed in Belarus and assist fair and independent criminal proceedings and other accountability bodies and processes, including the UN Office of the High Commissioner’s examination on the human rights situation in Belarus (OEB).

1. Funding and staffing

By September 2022, the IAPB had received the majority of promised funds from donors and was able to appoint a fully staffed secretariat. Since then, the IAPB secretariat, Viasna (IAPB co-lead), International Committee (IAPB co-lead), REDRESS (IAPB co-lead), and DIGNITY – Danish Institute Against Torture (IAPB lead), have undertaken the considerable work involved in establishing institutional structures necessary to meet the IAPB’s objectives in accordance with international best practice standards and carried out substantial work according to the project plans.

2. Investigations

The IAPB developed a comprehensive investigation plan, which is guiding the IAPB’s ongoing investigation and collection of testimonial and documentary evidence from victims and witnesses and open-source information; a living document that is continually updated as the investigation and analysis progresses. To preserve such information and evidence, verify its authenticity, analyse it and to ensure its admissibility in criminal proceedings, the IAPB secured access to two tailor-made encrypted digital platforms to store the information and evidence. These tools further enable the IAPB to submit the evidence collected to accountability bodies.

3. Support to the OHCHR Examination on the human rights situation in Belarus

To support the OEB in its mandate to monitor and report on the human rights situation and to carry out a comprehensive examination of all alleged human rights violations committed in Belarus, as of 22 February 2022, the IAPB had: (i) re-obtained informed consent from 152 victims and witnesses, shared their names and contact details with the OEB and facilitated the logistical setup of a substantial number of interviews; (ii) provided information on human rights defenders working with Steering Committee members that have been detained and/or convicted in Belarus; and (iii) provided the OEB with access to open-source information on 36 incidents occurring between May 2020 and September 2021 identified of interest by the OEB. The OEB also (iv) interviewed Viasna’s documentation team on their methodology, as well as to obtain qualitative and quantitative data on the violations documented in their interviews. Now that the secure infrastructure for providing online access is in place, the IAPB is also providing the OEB with access to its entire collection of information and evidence, as well as tailored support in response to requests by the OEB, until the end of the OEB’s current mandate and during any future mandate should it be extended. To ensure the protection of victims and witnesses and meet its legal obligations, the IAPB obtained related legal advice on the European Union General Data Protection Regulation and informed consent.

4. Support to criminal justice authorities

The IAPB made significant progress in its engagement with accountability bodies, in particular national criminal justice authorities and the OEB. The IAPB has engaged with the prosecutorial authorities of a number of European states that are investigating crimes under international law committed in Belarus or may exercise jurisdiction over them.

5. Production of analytical reports

The IAPB commenced preparing evidentiary and analytical briefs to be shared with national criminal justice authorities along with relevant evidence collected for use in their investigations and prosecutions. The briefs address the crime-base, linkage between the perpetrators and the crimes and the context in which the crimes were committed, and will correspond to the domestic legal requirements and evidentiary needs of national criminal justice authorities.

6. Collaboration with key stakeholders

To carry out such work, the IAPB secretariat and co-lead organisations engage in a collaborative equitable partnership, with Steering Committee meetings on strategic issues and meetings between IAPB secretariat and co-lead documentation teams on operational issues, as well as dedicated workshops on select topics. Periodic meetings are also held with the IAPB's Advisory Council, as well as meetings with other key stakeholders, to facilitate collaboration on overlapping areas of work and discuss accountability related matters. As part of its survivor-centred approach, the IAPB is providing survivors and all IAPB secretariat, lead and co-lead staff with access to mental health and psychosocial support.

Given the IAPB's unique positioning to engage with states on accountability for crimes under international law committed in Belarus and to coordinate efforts between the many entities with which it engages, the IAPB has contributed to numerous discussions on accountability in civil society and political forums.

7. Institutional infrastructure

In terms of its institutional infrastructure, the IAPB produced six comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures related guidance documents that guide its work and operations, and finalized the establishment of digital and other security infrastructure to ensure the work can be carried out securely. The IAPB also secured and benefited from the expert advice of several key organisations and lawyers, including the International Institute for Criminal Investigations, Partners in Justice International and Mnemonic.

8. Communications and advocacy policy

The IAPB has engaged actively in political forums, including a session of the European Parliament Sub-Committee on Human Rights focussing on the situation in Belarus in November 2021 and the OSCE ministerial meeting in Stockholm in December 2021. Coupled with an expanded communications policy, which is in the process of being implemented, these initiatives aim to ensure greater transparency in the IAPB's work and facilitate opportunities for victims, the Belarusian public more broadly and other key stakeholders to contribute to it.

A. Introduction

The IAPB is a coalition of independent non-government organisations that have joined forces to collect, consolidate, verify, and preserve evidence of gross human rights violations constituting crimes under international law allegedly committed by Belarusian authorities and others in the run-up to the 2020 presidential election and its aftermath. To this end, the IAPB builds on the ongoing efforts of Belarusian human rights organisations to collect information about human rights violations committed in Belarus.

The information and evidence collected by the IAPB will assist independent and fair criminal investigations and prosecutions, carried out in accordance with international law and standards, in national or international courts or tribunals that have or may have jurisdiction over those crimes. The information and evidence will also support other mechanisms aiming to ensure accountability for crimes under international law allegedly committed in Belarus, including the OEB.

The IAPB was launched on 24 March 2021 in response to the OSCE Moscow Mechanism rapporteur's report to the OSCE Permanent Council on 5 November 2020. Among other things, the report calls on States to hold perpetrators of torture and inhumane treatment, including sexual violence, and other gross human rights violations committed in the context of the 9 August 2020 presidential elections in Belarus to account.

The IAPB is supported by a wide range of States, notably Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland, Lichtenstein, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, as well as the European Union.

B. The situation on the ground

Since September 2021, the situation in Belarus has remained critical. Belarusian authorities have continued to persecute persons who, in their view, pose a threat to the government. Acts of persecution include arbitrary arrests, detention and prosecution on administrative and criminal charges, arbitrary searches of apartments and offices, and other acts aimed at intimidating civil society and the population of Belarus more broadly. With such acts, the authorities target, in particular, persons who participate in peaceful protests, display white-red-white symbols and express their critical opinion on social media, as well as those who are engaged in human rights work or political activism.

Arbitrary arrests and detention remain the most pressing issue in Belarus. According to the data collected by Viasna and the International Committee, as of 1 January 2022, there are over 1000 political prisoners in Belarus.¹ Among them are prominent human rights defenders, politicians, lawyers, journalists and political activists. Seven members of Viasna, including President Ales Bialiatski and board member Valiantsin Stefanovic, continue to be held in detention, either already sentenced to long terms of imprisonment or awaiting appeal hearings.² Two prominent opposition leaders and members of the Coordination Council of Belarus, Maria Kolesnikova and Maxim Znak, were convicted to 11 years in prison by a court in Minsk in September 2021.³ In December 2021, Siarhei Tikhonouski and other political activists, who were arrested in the run-up to the election, were convicted and sentenced to up to 18 years

in prison.⁴ By now, all prominent opposition figures and human rights defenders are either in detention or in exile.

In an effort to further silence civil society in Belarus, Belarusian authorities have liquidated the majority of civil society organisations. As of 1 January 2022, 309 non-profit organisations across Belarus were liquidated or in the process of forced liquidation, including through lawsuits, or being forcibly excluded from the Unified State Register of Legal Entities or Individual Entrepreneurs.⁵ The country's oldest human rights organisation, the Belarusian Helsinki Committee, was liquidated following a lawsuit by the Ministry of Justice, a decision which was upheld on appeal by the Supreme Court on 1 October 2021.⁶ On 5 October 2021, following similar lawsuits, the Supreme Court liquidated human rights organisation Legal Initiative⁷ and, on 17 January 2022, "Zvyano" (Chain).⁸ Belarusian authorities continue to block access to the websites of Belarusian human rights organisations, such as Human Constanta,⁹ Belarussian independent internet media like Tut.by,¹⁰ and other types of organizations such as the Union of Poles in Belarus (UPB).¹¹

On 22 January 2022, an amendment to the Criminal Code of Belarus, adding Article 193-1, titled "Unlawful organization of the activities of a public association, religious organization or foundation or participation in their activities," came into force.¹² According to this provision, any work with an NGO or public foundation that was liquidated by the authorities is punishable by a fine or imprisonment for up to two years.¹³ The amendment will put at significant risk the security and work of civil society in the country, in particular the work of journalists, human rights defenders and political activists.

In addition, the authorities have systematically applied Article 19.11 of the Administrative Code, which punishes the dissemination of "extremist materials," to repress any independent reporting. In December alone, the number of "extremist" Internet resources grew by 59.¹⁴ The list includes various local Telegram channels and groups on social media, the social media accounts and YouTube channel of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Belarus service, the Telegram channels of politicians Valery Tsapkala and Pavel Latushka and the Telegram account of the Coordination Council of Belarus, as well as Viasna's social media accounts.¹⁵

Since September 2021, the situation on the ground further escalated due to the intensification of the humanitarian crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border.¹⁶

Until now, the authorities have failed to conduct investigations into more than 4000 complaints of torture and ill-treatment in state detention facilities that have been filed since August 2020, as well as into the deaths of Aliaksandr Taraikouski, Henadz Shutau, Raman Bandarenka, Aliaksandr Vikhor, Vitold Ashurak and others who died as a result of the actions of state authorities or while in their custody.

C. Fulfilling Core IAPB objectives

The IAPB has made substantial strides towards meeting its core objectives of collecting, consolidating, verifying and preserving information and evidence of crimes under international law allegedly committed in Belarus and assisting fair and independent criminal proceedings and other accountability bodies and processes. In addition to the considerable work involved in establishing institutional structures necessary to meet the IAPB's objectives in accordance with international best practice standards (discussed in Part G below), the IAPB carried out substantial work on each workstream: (i) collecting and consolidating information and evidence; (ii) preserving,

verifying and analysing information and evidence; (iii) assisting the OEB and criminal justice authorities; and (iv) producing evidentiary and analytical briefs. To support this work, the IAPB also (v) carried out and engaged in knowledge sharing and capacity building activities; and (vi) supported access to mental health and psychosocial support.

a. Collection and consolidation of information and evidence

i. Investigation objectives and plan

Following the recruitment of the full IAPB secretariat in September 2021 (see Part G.b below), in partnership with the Belarusian co-leads, Viasna and the International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus (International Committee), the IAPB identified its initial investigative objectives with a view to defining the scope of its investigative targets and adopting the structures and methodologies necessary to meet them. In December and January 2021, a further comprehensive investigation plan was developed by the IAPB secretariat and co-leads, identifying in detail targeted investigative sources and the evidentiary and legal analytical briefs upon which such information and evidence will be based.

The main objectives of the investigation plan are to consolidate the material already collected by the IAPB's Belarusian co-leads by collecting additional information and evidence on the crimes committed in Belarus, including for the purposes of determining whether the contextual elements of crimes against humanity have been met and identifying individuals who may be responsible for them.

The plan will evolve throughout the project period as the investigation advances and new findings and investigative leads are identified.

ii. Ongoing investigations

In accordance with its investigative objectives and plan, the IAPB continued to carry out investigations, collecting new information and evidence from victims and witnesses as well as from open sources that corroborate crimes already documented or provide evidence of crimes under international law committed by Belarusian State authorities. Such information and evidence builds upon the significant volume of material collected by Viasna and the International Committee prior to the IAPB's establishment and provided to the IAPB secretariat.

Collecting information from victims and other witnesses

Since 1 April 2021, Viasna and International Committee collected more than 595 statements from victims and other witnesses (432 men and 163 women) regarding alleged crimes under international law, in addition to relevant documentary evidence such as medical and court records. The IAPB secretariat investigators took steps towards conducting complementary investigations, in accordance with the investigative targets identified in the investigation plan. These materials, along with the significant volume of material collected by Viasna and the International Committee prior to the IAPB's establishment, are being structured for preservation and analysis in an encrypted digital archive (discussed in Parts C.b.i and d below).

Collection of open-source information

Since September 2021, IAPB secretariat investigators and the Belarusian co-leads have collected open-source information that will support future criminal proceedings. The open-source information includes material that could be used as crime base and linkage evidence, as well as evidence to show the contextual elements of crimes against humanity have been committed. Open-source evidence will be uploaded to an encrypted digital archive (discussed in Part C.b.ii below) for the purposes of preparing analytical reports and supporting accountability processes (discussed in Parts C.c and C.d below).

b. Preservation, verification and analysis of information and evidence

To preserve the information and evidence collected by the IAPB, to verify its authenticity (where appropriate) and to analyse it, during the reporting period the IAPB secured access to two tailor-made encrypted digital archival platforms. The selection of these platforms was based on the types and volume of evidence collected, and the methodologies required to transcribe and translate materials collected and verify and preserve the evidence for criminal justice and other accountability purposes.

The first digital archive will be used to store, preserve and analyse information and evidence collected during investigations, including information provided by victims and other witnesses, documentary evidence and some open-source evidence. Upon upload, the material can be transcribed and/or translated as needed, tagged with search terms, and exported for use by accountability bodies.

The second digital archive provides a platform for collecting, preserving and analysing open-source information, and verifying it through methodology tailored to the specific requirements of accountability processes. This archive minimises the possibility that open-source information providing evidence of crimes committed in Belarus is lost due to the Belarusian authorities' imposition of restrictions on access to independent media or the removal of data by individuals posting it or hosting sites.

Importantly, analytical results from the first digital archive can be used to support the processes involved in preserving and verifying open-source information; conversely, open-source information preserved in the second archive and identified as probative of crimes committed in Belarus can be uploaded to the first archive to be analysed along with the evidence collection.

c. Assistance to criminal justice authorities and other accountability bodies

During the reporting period, the IAPB made significant progress in its engagement with accountability bodies, in particular the OEB and national criminal justice authorities. In the coming reporting period, in addition to the investigative and analytical work being conducted, expanding on existing collaborations is a priority for the IAPB.

i. OHCHR examination on the human rights situation in Belarus

The IAPB is dedicated to supporting the OEB in its mandate to monitor and report on the human rights situation and to carry out a comprehensive examination of all alleged human rights violations committed in Belarus. The IAPB have engaged in numerous meetings with OHCHR staff and the OEB team with a view to providing support.

To date, the IAPB has facilitated the OEB's access to 152 victims and witnesses, re-obtaining informed consent, sharing their names and contact details and facilitating the logistical setup of a substantial number of interviews. IAPB Belarusian co-leads provided information on human rights defenders working with them that have been detained and/or convicted in Belarus. The IAPB also analysed its open-source evidence collection to provide the Examination with access to open-source information on 36 incidents occurring between May 2020 and September 2021 identified of interest by the OEB. The OEB also interviewed Viasna's documentation team to obtain qualitative and quantitative data on the violations documented in their interviews and on their related methodology.

Now that the secure infrastructure for providing online access is in place, the IAPB is also providing the OEB with remote access to its entire collection of information and evidence, as well as tailored support upon the OEB's request, until the conclusion of the OEB's current mandate and during any future mandate should it be extended. The IAPB has also committed to compiling tailored dossiers of information and evidence on priority issues when identified by the OEB, and to facilitate access to further victims and witnesses on a needs basis, bearing in mind the obligation to avoid their re-traumatization.

When sharing information and evidence with the OEB, the IAPB is required to ensure it complies with its legal obligations under the European Union General Data Protection Regulation and international best practice standards governing informed consent. Prior to providing information and evidence to the OEB, and to ensure robust procedures and standards were in place to protect the confidentiality and security of victims and witnesses and meet its legal obligations, the IAPB requested entry into a data sharing arrangement, which was finalised in December 2021. The IAPB also obtained specialised legal advice on the European Union General Data Protection Regulation and informed consent.

ii. Domestic investigations and prosecutions

In November 2021, upon invitation, the IAPB participated in a Eurojust EU Genocide Network meeting in the Hague, Netherlands. The IAPB gave a presentation on the IAPB's work and objectives to investigators and prosecutors, highlighting the IAPB's availability to provide tailored support to domestic criminal investigations and prosecutions.

The IAPB has since established contact with prosecutorial authorities in a number of European states that either have an ongoing investigation into crimes under international law committed in Belarus or may exercise jurisdiction over those crimes, and met with some such states to discuss support needs.

The IAPB has engaged in other initiatives with a view to supporting criminal investigations and prosecutions in domestic jurisdictions.

d. Production of evidentiary and analytical briefs

While the infrastructure to support the analysis of information and evidence collected by the IAPB was being established, and based on discussions with criminal justice authorities, the IAPB commenced preparing evidentiary and analytical briefs to be shared with national prosecuting authorities for use in their investigations and prosecutions

Over the coming months, the briefs will continue to be expanded as the investigation progresses and information and evidence continues to be analysed. Further analytical products will also be identified and prepared in consultation with national criminal justice authorities and any other accountability bodies or processes with which the IAPB may engage.

D. Knowledge sharing and capacity building

A core component of the IAPB secretariat's work is to collaborate closely with and support the activities of its Belarusian co-leads through an equitable partnership. Such work includes regular meetings, workshops and trainings on key topics relevant to the work, the latter of which is carried out with the support of the IAPB's expert advisors (discussed in Part G.e below). In addition to collaboration at the Steering Committee level, IAPB secretariat staff work in close collaboration with the lead and co-leads' investigation, drafting and other teams.

The IAPB secretariat engages in a continuous process of dialogue and two-way knowledge sharing with IAPB lead and co-leads on a range of topics to effectively build capacity to undertake the work. The IAPB also evaluates and assesses trainings to improve their quality, including through follow up meetings to ensure new knowledge can be integrated into the working process effectively.

E. Supporting access to mental health and psychosocial support

As part of its survivor-centred approach to pursuing accountability for crimes under international law committed in Belarus, the IAPB is committed to ensuring that survivors receive evidence-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). The IAPB has expanded and strengthened referral pathways to provide survivors with access to mental health service providers that deliver MHPSS. The IAPB has taken steps to improve the capacity of the Belarussian co-lead staff to provide MHPSS to others, including torture survivors and their families. In addition, all IAPB secretariat and co-lead staff have access to MHPSS and training on self-care and prevention of burnout.

The IAPB is finalising Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) applicable to the referral mechanism for the provision of MHPSS to survivors to ensure coherent implementation, which will incorporate guidelines with respect to specific groups at risk (for example, victims of sexual violence, minors, LGBT+ individuals, victims with substance abuse) and be implemented through the training of co-lead organisations. The IAPB has also developed a unified clinical monitoring and evaluation system, including the collection of data on stress, depression, sleep and well-being.

F. Coordination and collaboration with key stakeholders

As reflected above, the IAPB is composed of a Steering Committee and an Advisory Council, in which Belarusian and international non-government organisations (NGOs) with particular expertise in the mandate of the IAPB are represented. In addition, the IAPB has engaged in several partnerships and other types of collaboration with other key stakeholders.

a. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is comprised of lead organisation, DIGNITY, and the three co-leads, namely Viasna, the International Committee and REDRESS. The Steering Committee is the main decision-making body of the IAPB, responsible for strategic direction. In addition to the IAPB Secretariat, Steering Committee members are also integrally involved in carrying out the work of the IAPB. Throughout the reporting period, the Steering Committee has met on a weekly basis, as well as in person where the need arose.

b. Advisory Council

The Advisory Council is composed of six Belarusian and eight international organizations, all with specialized expertise in fields relevant to the work of the IAPB. The IAPB meets with Advisory Council members periodically to share information about group members' work and facilitate coordination and collaboration, as well as bilaterally to discuss operational issues and strengthen coordination (see, for example, Part I below).

c. Other Belarusian and international organisations

The IAPB engages in other forums with other NGOs and state actors with a view to sharing information about its work and facilitating collaboration where appropriate. For example, during the reporting period, the IAPB participated in a webinar on universal jurisdiction hosted by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and a coordination meeting hosted by the Centre for Constitutionalism and Human Rights and Justice Hub. The IAPB is currently holding meetings with key stakeholders to discuss collaboration on overlapping areas of work.

G. IAPB infrastructure

a. Funding

The IAPB received further funding from states during the reporting period. The intention of establishing a joint funding mechanism was partially realised with the assistance of the European Endowment for Democracy (EED). Nine states have contributed via this mechanism, while the remaining states have used existing national funding mechanisms with different application, granting and reporting requirements. The preparatory work necessary to meet these requirements has been considerable and resulted in delays in the establishment of the IAPB, including in the recruitment of the IAPB secretariat.

b. Staffing

As of September 2021, the IAPB had a fully staffed secretariat comprised of its Head, Project Manager, Senior Prosecutor, Legal Advisor, Analyst, two investigators and a medical doctor. As of January 2022, the IAPB was strengthened through the recruitment of two legal officers by IAPB's co-lead REDRESS, who support legal research and investigations. In February 2022, the IAPB recruited a data systems manager

to support the management of data and another Russian-speaking open-source investigator.

c. Standard operating procedures

The IAPB has produced six comprehensive SOPs that guide its work and operations. The SOPs address the review and supplementation of victim-witness interview transcripts, collection of information by interviewing adult victim-witnesses, the collection of information through open-source investigations, security, internal work processes and the sharing and receipt of information. The SOPs informed the development of a further set of templates and guidance documents which ensure the implementation of the SOPs in the IAPB's day-to-day operations.

d. Information technology and security

Given the difficult political and security context in which the IAPB operates, the IAPB carries out its work in a remote digital environment, which requires a particularly stringent security procedures and protocols to protect all persons involved, including staff, victims and witnesses. Over the reporting period, the IAPB finalized the establishment of infrastructure to ensure the work and collaboration between all involved can be carried out securely.

The Center for Cybersecurity under the Danish Defence Intelligence Services provides advice to the IAPB to ensure the systems adopted meet necessary security standards.

e. Expert advice

To guide the work of the IAPB, the IAPB has contracted the Institute for International Criminal Investigations (IICI), Partners in Justice International (PJI) and Mnemonic. The IICI provides input on the IAPB's SOPs, as well as training on select topics. PJI provides advice on a range of topics relevant to the IAPB's investigation and support to criminal justice authorities and accountability bodies. Berlin-based organisation Mnemonic provides guidance on how to effectively use digital evidence of international crimes to support accountability processes.

The IAPB also obtained legal advice on its obligations under the European Union General Data Protection Regulation, which it implemented in its SOPs and through the development of guidance documents for the IAPB secretariat and co-leads.

H. Public relations and advocacy

a. Communications policy

The IAPB maintains a cautious policy for public communication of its activities and results. This is to further the security of people involved in the work as well as people who provide information to the IAPB, and to maintain its neutrality and independence. At the same time, it is important to ensure transparency in the IAPB's work to enable victims and the Belarusian public more broadly to be informed about IAPB's work and have the opportunity to contribute. Accordingly, the IAPB has developed a new communication strategy, including a redesigned and more informative website

and an expanded media engagement profile, which the IAPB is in the process of implementing.

b. Advocacy

The IAPB has also, to date, maintained a cautious advocacy policy to preserve the independence and impartiality, and perceived independence and impartiality, of its investigative and advisory work. Nevertheless, the IAPB regularly engages at the political level in bilateral discussions with policy makers and other key stakeholders, and at times public forums. Notably, on 29 November 2021, the IAPB presented at a session of the European Parliament Sub-Committee on Human Rights focussing on the situation in Belarus on the work of the IAPB and importance of coordination and cooperation between the various actors operating in the accountability space. On 2 December 2021, the IAPB also presented at the OSCE ministerial meeting in Stockholm on the work of the IAPB, urging states to continue to support Belarusian civil society and actively ensure accountability for crimes under international law committed in Belarus.

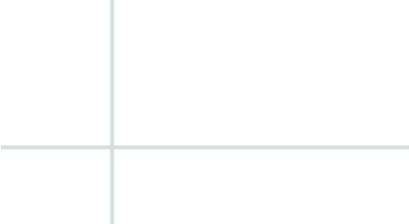
I. Supporting future accountability avenues

The IAPB is uniquely positioned to engage with states on accountability for human rights violations and crimes under international law committed in Belarus. In this respect, the IAPB strives to contribute to discussions on accountability in civil society and political forums to bridge the gap between the practical and political realities of accountability options, as well as to serve as a vehicle for informing political actors about survivor communities' accountability needs.

J. Planning ahead

The IAPB is well-placed to build on its significant achievements and successes by expanding its collection of information and evidence and broadening access to the IAPB's evidence repository. As outlined in the preceding sections in greater detail, the IAPB has: completed the work involved in establishing institutional structures necessary to securely collect and preserve information and evidence and share it with accountability bodies; built its evidence repository and relationships with criminal justice actors and the OEB; increased the IAPB secretariat, lead and co-leads' capacity to effectively work towards the IAPB's aims; and established referral pathways to provide effective psychosocial support to those involved in the IAPB's work.

In the coming months, the IAPB will work with Belarusian organisations beyond the co-leads involved in the documentation and investigation of crimes under international law committed in Belarus, including Advisory Council members and intermediaries, to expand its sources of information and evidence. Through this work, Belarusian Steering Committee members, supported by the IAPB secretariat, will work with Belarusian organisations to share the guidance and tools developed by the IAPB, with a view to building their capacity to apply best practice standards for the investigation of crimes under international law. Such work will contribute to centralising the information and evidence available on crimes committed in Belarus and ensure consistency in the standards applied to its collection. As a result, the OEB, national criminal justice authorities and other accountability actors, will have access to a



larger body of verified information and evidence which meets international criminal justice standards and can be relied upon in domestic criminal investigations and prosecutions and other accountability processes.

The IAPB will also expand the accountability actors with whom it engages, continuing to provide tailor-made support on identified needs. The IAPB will also engage directly with other international human rights mechanisms.

After having developed institutional frameworks, internal procedures, and IT capacities from the ground in the first project phase, the IAPB will be able to significantly increase its documentation and accountability impact in a possible second phase – to the direct benefit of victims and justice in Belarus.

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