

REPORT ON ACHIEVEMENT OF GOAL 3 OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN BELARUS

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PREFACE

Within the expert reports of recent years regarding the right to health in Belarus there are issues to be in no-progress. Thus, these issues include the quantity of the relevant medical institutions/products/services and their availability, the necessary quantity of medical workers and their level of qualification, lack of access to healthcare information, limitation of charity crowdfundings, violations of conditions set for detentions centers, absence of compliance with confidentiality principle and medical ethics, lack of equal and timely access to basic preventive, curative and rehabilitative services; ignorance of necessity to take reasonable measures for the coronavirus elimination.

Furthermore, the stated drawbacks in the healthcare system got worse after August 9, 2020, when Alexander Lukashenko seized power through manipulation of the results of the Presidential Election 2020 in Belarus.

Since that time, Belarusian people have been protesting manipulation of presidential elections' results and brutality of the law enforcement agencies. The authorities' response is to violently repress anyone who challenged the official election results. Belarusian doctors and medical specialists have also widely condemned the violence and severe human rights violations. As a result, the representatives of the healthcare system of Belarus did not become an exclusion and were also put under violent pressure.

In the light of the above, with this report we would like to provide the UN with detailed information regarding the following aspects of achievement of goal 3 of sustainable development:

(I) lack of necessary quantity of medical workers and their level of qualification, in particular grounded on violations of:

- (A) the right to work and to just and favorable conditions;
- (B) the right to trade unions;
- (C) the right to education;

(II) violations of sanitary-epidemiological standards set for detentions centers;

(III) lack of necessary quantity of the relevant medical institutions/products/services and their availability;

(IV) lack of access to healthcare information;

(V) general overview of the measures taken by the Belarusian authorities for the coronavirus elimination.

This Report was developed by the Belarusian Medical Solidarity Foundation, a non-governmental foundation aimed to help repressed Belarusian doctors. We started our work in response to the growing repressions and violence against medical workers in Belarus in

October 2020. Our mission is to advance human rights for medics and citizens in Belarus by publicizing accurate information, organizing medics and supporters, and demonstrating solidarity.

As for now, the Belarusian Medical Solidarity Foundation organized a community of more than 150 medics who have worked in the Belarusian healthcare system and possessed the knowledge about its insides. Furthermore, our foundation with all its aims has been supported by more than 4 500 healthcare workers who signed the Open Letter of Belarusian Medics.¹

We gather information about cases of repressions and violations in the healthcare system, provide financial and legal assistance, as well as assistance in finding work and places of study for dismissed doctors and expelled medical students. We are engaged in informational work, which allows people to learn about the legal and labor arbitrariness taking place in relation to medics who have not been afraid to express their civic position. Along with the financial, legal support of repressed medics, we strengthened the information campaign of informing people about the regime's misinformation and denial of COVID-pandemics.

Most regrettably, we have to additionally point out that now in Belarus there is legal default when internal national legal remedies cannot be exhausted since they are ineffective, biased and illusory.² Consequently, at the national level the Belarusian medical personnel have no opportunity to protect or restore their rights and, even more, under the threat of being arbitrarily detained they have to flee the country.

¹ Please find the Open Letter by the link: <https://bymedsol.org/english#rec253112247>

²The first Report of the International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus: <https://humanconstantia.by/en/torture-investigation-committee-first-report/>

The second Report of the International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus: http://www.legin.by/uploads/20201202_5fc739af6b825.pdf

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/HRC/RES/45/1>

The European Commission for democracy through law: Venice Commission: [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2021\)002-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2021)002-e)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With the Report on achievement of the goal 3 of the sustainable development, the Belarusian Medical Solidarity Foundation has developed the following key conclusions:

1. There are a range of the aspects of the goal 3 of the sustainable development with no-progress in Belarus, in particular the issues of quantity of the relevant medical institutions/products/services and their availability, the necessary quantity of medical workers and their level of qualification, lack of access to healthcare information, limitation of charity crowdfunding, violations of conditions set for detentions centers, absence of compliance with confidentiality principle and medical ethics, lack of equal and timely access to basic preventive, curative and rehabilitative services; ignorance of necessity to take reasonable measures for the coronavirus elimination.
2. In the last two years the Belarusian authorities have developed and executed a range of massive repression policies which have been targeted on the medical workers and specialists as well.
3. As a result of the stated purposely taken repressions, the following problems within the Belarusian healthcare system have worsened: quantity of medical workers and their level of qualification, quantity of the relevant medical institutions/products/services and their availability, the access to healthcare information, sanitary-epidemiological standards set for detentions centers and the coronavirus elimination measures taken.

With the Report on achievement of the goal 3 of the sustainable development, the Belarusian Medical Solidarity Foundation has developed the following recommendations:

1. The basic recommendation that can ensure adequate and effective access to medical care and change the situation in the healthcare system of Belarus to the way of its development and achievement of the goal 3 is the demand to stop repressions against medical workers, specialists and non-commercial organizations, including arbitrary detentions and arrests, politically motivated dismissals.
2. The further steps to be taken for the achievement of the goal 3 of the sustainable development is to create adequate working and rest conditions for the Belarusian medical workers and specialists, to establish and adhere to the adequate legal conditions for the work of non-commercial and non-governmental organizations.

I LACK OF NECESSARY QUANTITY OF MEDICAL WORKERS AND THEIR LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION

As it has been already mentioned, after August 2020, the representatives of the healthcare system of Belarus, including its medical workers, interns and students, condemned the violence committed by Belarusian law enforcement agencies against Belarusians.

Herewith, since the response of the Belarusian authorities has been suppression of any sign of disagreement, the stated representatives of the Belarusian healthcare system have met discrimination of their rights to (A) work and to just and favorable conditions; (B) the right to trade unions; (C) the right to education.

As a result of the stated violations, medical workers who have expressed their opposition to the current regime are not having their contracts renewed en masse. Moreover, the authorities have been filling the vacant positions with interns who are not yet experienced enough to lead the treatment themselves. At the same time, as it will be described below, the independent trade unions are banned.

A. VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHT TO WORK AND TO JUST AND FAVORABLE CONDITIONS

Since the Belarusian medical workers condemned the violence committed by the authorities and expressed their political opinion they have become subjects to discrimination and repressive measures of Belarusian authorities. Those who condemn violence, resist oppression and refuse to keep silence are being threatened, dismissed, detained.

As to figures, at least 200 healthcare workers were dismissed. It should be stressed that among them are well-known persons in professional circles, heads of the largest medical centers in Belarus, medical universities. For instance, Viktor Snezhitski, Anatol Sikorski and Anatol Lyzikov, rectors of medical universities, were dismissed.

Alexander Mrochek: cardiologist, doctor of medical sciences, professor, academician of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, director of the Republican Scientific Center for Cardiology. He was one of the first who has spoken out publicly against violence against civilians in August 2020. As a result, he was illegally fired by order of Mr Dmitry Pinevich, the Minister of Health.

Konoplya Natalia is an oncologist, doctor of medical sciences, professor, director of the Republican Scientific Center for Pediatric Oncology, Hematology and Immunology. She refused to fire employees who participated in peaceful protests. Consequently, she was illegally dismissed by the authorities.

Maksim Acheretny is an expert in infant resuscitation used to work as a chief doctor of Minsk Infant Hospital No 3. Acheretny was dismissed since he publicly criticized the authorities' ignorance of coronavirus disease, hired doctors previously fired on politically motivated reasons and within Belarusian Presidential Pre-Election Campaign he signed for Mr Babarika to be one of the candidates for presidency.³

It should be noted that the reasons for the stated dismissals are not related to direct professional activities, but based on an open statement of their position against violence towards civilians and their refusal to put pressure on employees for participating in peaceful protests.

Moreover, as in case of Maksim Acheretny as for now the Lukashenka's system has been dismissing medical workers on the grounds of signing for the other candidacy for presidency than Alexander Lukashenka within the Belarusian Presidential Pre-Election Campaign 2020; participation in interviews held by independent media; withdrawal from pro-government trade unions; refusal to donate to the organizations affiliated with Lukashenka's regime.

Herewith, it should be noted that according to the information we have been provided with, in main hospitals, the position of deputy chief security officer has been established. As a rule, such a position is occupied by former representatives of the Committee for State Security (KGB). Consequently, preventive conversations, intimidation, threatening for criminal cases opening, taking children away are the methods used by these deputy chief security officers towards medical workers in case of any disobedience of orders.

In the light of the described above, we have to state that all these violations of rights have been committed by the regime in conjunction with the usage of blacklist policy: those medical workers, who are politically motivated dismissed, are put under a work ban by the authorities.

Indeed, due to the stated ban on employment in Belarus set by the authorities, labour emigration of Belarusian medical specialists to neighboring countries has increased significantly. Thus, according to our data at least 80 doctors have already emigrated to Ukraine since August 2020.

Furthermore, more than 260 doctors and nurses were detained during peaceful protests. Some of them became victims of beatings, many were fined, sentenced to administrative arrest from 3 to 110-day periods. Under the Belarusian Medical Solidarity Foundation data, Belarusian doctors and nurses spent more than 5500 days in prison. Many of them fell ill with coronavirus disease while they were in prison.

Regarding the circumstances in which medical workers put within the situation of ignorance of coronavirus diseases, widespread discriminatory policies, arbitrary dismissals and detentions, it

³ Please find the relevant article by the link: <https://reform.by/221702-uvolen-glavvrach-minskoj-detskoj-bolnicy-maksim-ocheretnij>

is sufficient to state that the healthcare system faced lack of human resources and put on medical workers unbearable conditions within coronavirus pandemia circumstances.

Indeed, the arbitrary dismissals and detentions of medical workers led to the situation when according to the data of the Republican Bank of Vacancies of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Belarus, there are 3449 vacancies for doctors and 3449 vacancies for nurses.⁴

Furthermore, since the Belarusian authorities refused to set sufficient policies towards elimination of the coronavirus disease, the Belarusian medical workers were put under the risk to their lives. The numbers of infected persons are high; the medical workers are of lack of human resources as well as of necessary equipment, including basic one, such as, for instance, protective outerwear suits.

Indeed, there is no official statistics of deaths within medical personnel provided by the Ministry of Health of Belarus. However, according to statistics gathered by Ms Sviatlana Sorokina, a Belarusian doctor and doctor of medicine, in the beginning of the year 2021 it was already 145 cases of medical workers deaths.⁵ As for now, the Belarusian Medical Solidarity Foundation accounted for 193 cases of medical specialists deaths.

For the purpose to illustrate the horrible conditions of work set to the Belarusian medical workers within the pandemia, we would like to provide you with the case of Vasily Lipilin, 50-year-old ambulance paramedic from the city of Borisov (Minsk Region), who died of coronavirus disease on April 8, 2021. Lipilin's wife Natalia said:

*"In the beginning, no one in town talked about the coronavirus. Everything was and is being concealed so as not to worsen the statistics. **Accordingly, the medics had no personal protective equipment - only one mask was issued for a 12-hour shift, and there were no protective outerwear suits at all.** The ambulances were not treated either. Vasily told us that after the patients with fever they could take a pregnant woman right away. [...]*

Vasily felt unwell after another work shift, he began to feel chills and had a fever. There was a directive that health workers cannot go on sick leave like ordinary people. If you feel sick, you have to call an ambulance, the call must be registered, it must be recorded that, for example, your temperature is over 38. Only after that you can ask for sick leave.

⁴ Please find the statistics by the link: http://gsz.gov.by/registration/vacancy-search/?profession=медицинская+сестра&business_entity=®ion=&salary_min=&salary_max=&work_mode=&employment_nature=&education=&workplace_category=&search_period=0&paginate_by=&sort_by=&extended_search=True

⁵ Please find the relevant article by the link: <https://www.dw.com/ru/koronavirus-v-belarusi-istorii-medikov-pogibshih-vo-vremja-pandemii/a-56460215>

For several days Vasily did not get better, he called an ambulance and the next day he opened a sick note. At the same time no one offered him a coronavirus test or an X-ray. He went to the hospital on 4 April, when his condition was already critical. [...]"

In the light of the above, the right of the Belarusian medical workers to work was put under the discriminatory criterium of their political opinions. Those who are not in the line of the Lukashenka's regime have faced arbitrary dismissals, detentions and the necessity to flee the country. Furthermore, since Lukashenka's regime remains to refuse the seriousness of coronavirus diseases, the medical personnel have been dying for the reasons of absence of proper work conditions.

Consequently, the above described violations definitely should be recognised as one of the factors leading to the lack of necessary quantity of medical workers within the Belarusian healthcare system which turn the possibility of achievement of the goal 3 of the sustainable development to impossible.

B. VIOLATIONS OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS

Alongside the violations of medical workers' right to work and to just and favorable conditions, the deprivation of the medical specialists with the trade union rights make it impossible to defend the rights and to develop the issue of its adherence.

After the mentioned rigged Presidential Elections 2020 in Belarus, there was a mass withdrawal of workers from pro-government trade unions and the medical workers were no exception. In fact, Belarusian employees have been united in independent unions and faced reprisals from the Lukashenka's system.⁶

Thus, medical workers began to unite on the basis of the Free Trade Union,⁷ in particular within its branch named "Panacea".⁸ Thus, "Panacea" is based on primary organisations of the Republican Research and Practice and Practice Centre on oncology and medical radiology named after Aleksandrov; the Republican Research and Practice and Practice Centre on pediatric oncology and hematology; the Republican Research and Practice and Practice Centre on surgery, transplantology and hematology and the Healthcare Agency "3rd city clinical hospital named after Klumov".

It should be noted that since the establishment of Panacea, this free trade union has faced the following discrimination and violations of human rights of its members:

⁶ Please find information by the link: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/04/belarus-authorities-target-independent-trade-unions-to-oot-out-dissent/>

⁷ Please find the official site by the link: <https://profspb.by>

⁸ Please find the official site by the link: <https://profspb.by/panaceya>

1. denial of state registration of primary trade union cells;
2. illegal detentions of activists;
3. forced flee of activists from Belarus under threat of illegal criminal prosecution;
4. undermining of right to work: threats of dismissals, criminal and administrative prosecution;
5. illegal dismissal of activists;
6. threats and pressure on medical workers wishing to join the Free Trade Union;
7. transfer of personal data of Free Trade Union members by representatives of security agencies to chiefs of healthcare institutions for the purposes of targeted discrimination.

In the light of the above, without the adherence of the state to the trade union rights it is impossible to protect the rights to work and to just and favorable conditions violated by the authorities. Consequently, the violations of the stated rights by the Belarusian authorities by purpose cancel out the values of goal 3 of the sustainable development.

C. VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

As it has been already stated, the authorities have filled the vacant positions in the healthcare system with medical students and interns with lack of necessary experience and knowledge.

At the same time, within this issue, we would like to respectfully draw your attention to the fact that there are a lot of talented students who have been deprived of their right to education and further work as doctors in Belarus. Such deprivation has been carried out on politically motivated grounds and constitutes not only violation of the right to work, but also recognised to be a factor to the lack of necessary quantity of medical workers in Belarus so needed for the healthcare system.

Thus, more than 50 medical students were detained during peaceful protests. 21 medical students were expelled; 15 of them were later reinstated on condition that they would refuse to publicly express their civil position.

As an illustrative example, we would like to set the case of Stanislav Seniukovich, a student of the Belarusian State Medical University. Since September 2020, Stanislav Seniukovich participated in solidarity actions against violence and severe human rights violations in Belarus.

Consequently, in early October 2020, he took part in the creation of the Belarusian Free trade Union unit in the Belarusian State Medical University (“BSMU”) – Volny BSMU (‘Free BSMU’). The initial purpose of the union unit was to track the detention of medical students, monitor

their replacement from one temporary detention facility to another, and inform and advise their relatives. Later on, when the wave of detentions died down, the union unit focused on promoting student rights.

Due to his activity, Stanislav Seniukovich was under constant pressure from the university authorities – he was invited for so-called “preventive discussions” to the dean’s office. Furthermore, for participation in peaceful protests, he was subjected to administrative arrest three times – for 12, 15, and another 15 days. Because of his administrative arrest, he wasn’t able to attend classes, which is why he was firstly reprimanded by the university’s authorities.

On December 10, 2020, and March 25, 2021, he was reprimanded for absence from classes “without good reason” and was also deprived of his scholarship for absence from classes. It should be stated that the reason why Stanislav Seniukovich missed all these classes is administrative arrests imposed because of his civic position.

Consequently, Stanislav Seniukovich was deprived of his right to education based on discriminatory factor of his active civic stance. It worths to mention that alongside with the other cases of students discrimination, the case of Stanislav Seniukovich was submitted to the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Furthermore, there are cases when the Belarusian students of medical universities have been subjected to arbitrary imprisonment based on their active civic position. Thus, there is the case of Vladislav Martynovich, a former student of the Belarusian State Medical University who was imprisoned for four years on the fact of administration of Telegram Channel “Белые Халаты” (White Coats), the channel representing on the basis “as is” independent information on what is going on within Belarusian medical system. Vladislav Martynovich was recognised to be a political prisoner.⁹

That has been said, the deprivation of the Bealrusians of the right to education contributed to the lack of the specialists in the Belarusian healthcare system that contravenes to the sustainable development.

II VIOLATIONS OF SANITARY-EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STANDARDS SET FOR DETENTION CENTERS

The current Belarusian authorities in power set the practice of tortures and ill-treatment towards the Belarusians with the political opinion contrary to the Lukashenka’s regime. Consequently, the stated policy is based on discrimination and vanishes the possibility to achieve the goal 3 of sustainable development.

⁹ Please find the data by the link: <https://spring96.org/ru/news/105698>

Thus, the Belarusian legislation has restricted the sanitary-epidemiological standards for the detainees. Thus, the Regulation of the Council of the Ministries of the Republic of Belarus dated December 12, 2015 on enactment of the Rules on internal order at the places of the detainment for administrative arrests fulfillment.

The charter 12 “The procedure of the medical care fulfillment and assurance of the sanitary-epidemiological well-being” of the stated Rules on internal order at the places of the detainment for administrative arrests fulfillment sets the standards for the conditions and the order of the measures taken in cases of infectious diseases, including, for instance, adherence to sanitary treatment of washing in a bath (shower) with a mandatory change bed linen, disinfection, disinsection of personal clothing and bedding in the disinfection chamber.

The OSCE report on Belarus documented with testimonies, photographs and videos more than 500 cases of human rights violations, including tortures, illegal detention, excessive violence, ill-treatment of women and minors, sexual or gender-based violence, unbearable conditions in prisons.¹⁰

The stated report restricts that the law enforcement agencies have been continuously depriving citizens of water, food, sleep, and the possibility to obey natural functions. Moreover, the law enforcement agencies have been systematically violating the right to receive medical treatment: local medical officers within the law enforcement agencies failed to provide medical assistance to the detainees; the access of ambulance doctors to detainees were restricted as well.¹¹

Moreover, the massive witnesses’ statements evidence that the detainees have been deprived of any possibility to take elementary bathing and use personal washing compositions. The wards have been not only overloaded, but the detainees with the clear symptoms of inflectional diseases have been keeping with those who are of sound health condition.¹²

Thus, Valentina Sergeevna testified: *“Before the trial, in the detention centre we slept on beds without mattresses, beds with a wooden backing, in fact, we slept in jackets on wooden boards, it was cold in the cell. There were 10 people in the cell, designed for only 5 people. The girls washed themselves with bot- tles, there was hot water, those who didn’t have a bottle could*

¹⁰ Please find the OSCE report on Belarus by the link [OSCE Rapporteur’s Report under the Moscow Mechanism on Alleged Human Rights Violations related to the Presidential Elections of 9 August 2020 in Belarus | OSCE](#)

¹¹ Ibid p. 42-43.

¹²Please find the relevant information by the link: <https://www.iwpr.net/global-voices/belarus-authorities-accused-weaponising-covid-19-against-protesters>.

The second Report of the International Committee, p.8, p. 27: http://www.legin.by/uploads/20201202_5fc739af6b825.pdf

use the dishes after breakfast until it was taken away. They didn't give us a toothbrush or any toothpaste".¹³

The additional attention should be paid to special treatment to the needs of women: the deprivation of basic sanitary issues. Thus, the Bearusian women were deprived of access to pads. In some cells there was video surveillance, so femine detainees could not wash here since they were merely shy. Such cases of violations of the right to health should be recognised as undermined human dignity.

Galina Vasilyevna testified: "I just had my period. The police department refused to help me. When I entered the detention centre, I immediately made a request to the staff. At first, they said that they would give pads the next day. But then they found it and gave out 1 pad to those in need. There were 13 people in the cell, designed for 6 people".

Natasha testified: "In Zhodino there was only cold water, we heated it on batteries in plastic bottles. There were cameras with video surveillance, so we didn't wash here, we were shy. And the floor in some of the cells was wooden, but somewhere with tiles under the sink. Therefore, all hygiene pro- cedures and changing clothes took place in the toilet".¹⁴

Most recently, in December 2021, Ms Nadzezhda Hurmanchuk, the forensic doctor who had to flee the country, spoke out throughout the interview and confirmed severe bodily injuries committed by the Lukashenka's regime which constitutes tortures, including sexual abuse.¹⁵ Moreover, being illegally detained, accused and sentenced to an administrative term of imprisonment, Ms Hurmanchuk in her example confirmed the ongoing character of inhuman conditions set in detention centres: deprivation of food and water, refusal of healthcare delivery and set of anti-sanitary conditions.¹⁶

That being said, Belarus has been severely breaching the standards for sanitary treatment in detention centers that lead to the breach of goal 3 sustainable development achievement.

III LACK OF NECESSARY QUANTITY OF THE RELEVANT MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS

The lack of necessary quantity of the relevant medical institutions has already been the one of the issues in no-progress for a long time. With the repressions raised since 2020, this issue has got worse.

¹³ Please find relevant information by the link; <https://www.facebook.com/100003123649067/posts/3621272897986796/?extid=0&d=n>

¹⁴ Please find the relevant evidence by the link: <https://www.facebook.com/100003123649067/posts/3621272897986796/?extid=0&d=n>

¹⁵ Please find the interview by the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-x96DMNEhM>

¹⁶ Please find more information in Section B "Sanitary-epidemiological standards"

Thus, there are cases when Belarusian law-enforcement agencies have launched politically motivated investigations, including resulting in the license suspension and/or revocation. For the illustration, the case of medical centers LODE and Nordin could be described.

The Department of Finance Investigation of Belarus has conducted an investigation towards LODE and has suspended for several months its license in spring 2022. The official reasons - the list of violations committed by LODE within carrying out its medical services.

At the same time, the range of the representatives of the free medical society express their opinion on the factual reasons for such an investigation towards LODE. Thus, for instance, according to Rustam Aizatulin, former doctor of the National Scientific and Practical Center of Orthopedics and Surgery, the decision of the Ministry of Health to suspend the license may be due to several reasons:

“First. Probably the banal situation of demanding money. This is not the first time they come to the business with inspections, and then they demand finances. - We can't also exclude revenge for 2020, when LODE medical center provided free of charge services to those who left the Okrestina Detention Center.

The second reason is the desire to remove competitors of state clinics in the field of paid services and thus increase budget revenues.

After the work of large medical centers such as LODE is stopped, clients will not only be distributed among other medical centers but they will more often sign up for fee-based services at state institutions. And this is an opportunity to make money. If in a private medical center a doctor receives 30% of the client's fee, in a state institution this figure was 7.5% or so. The rest of the money went to the clinic and the clinic gave it to the state. I used to work in consulting centers, so I know.

Third, now there is an acute shortage of doctors in hospitals and polyclinics. - Doctors, as a rule, work part-time in state clinics and part-time at private clinics. When private doctors are taken away, they will have to go to state clinics. That way the problem of the shortage of doctors in state-run institutions will be solved.”¹⁷

With regard to the case of Nordin, the accusations announced by the State Control Committee are violations in tax payments. It should be noted that tax abuse is a rather wide-spread accusation used by the Belarusian authorities in politically motivated cases.

That being said, the stated suppression of the private sector in the healthcare system of Belarus eliminates the range of medical services and its accessibility that negatively affect the goal 3 of sustainable development.

¹⁷ Please find the relevant interview by the link: <https://news.zerkalo.io/life/13797.html?c>

IV LACK OF ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE INFORMATION

Within recent years the situation with the access to healthcare information in Belarus has not significantly changed: the accessibility level has been still low.

Herewith, taking into account mass repressions of the Belarusian medical workers stated above, the civic initiative Golos and the Belarusian Medical Solidarity Foundation launched the "eHealth" project: <https://okdoc.me>. The said project aims to provide quality medical care in the context of a shortage of medical care in Belarus due to the current political and epidemiological situation.

Within the eHealth project each patient receives the opportunity for comfortable, anonymous and safe remote consultations with real professionals since all doctors of the service are identified. Thus, each specialist provides medical diplomas and other types of documents confirming his/her professionalism. In addition, most doctors of the service get into the system by recommendation of other experienced doctors.

In the light of the above, due to the limited access to the healthcare information within the Belarusian system and repression developed after August 2020, the independent non-commercial organizations have tried to eliminate such a problem with the digital platforms. However, it should be noted that the Belarusian authorities uptake the restrictive measures to such a kind of initiative.

V GENERAL OVERVIEW THE POLICY OF THE BELARUSIAN AUTHORITIES REGARDING THE CORONAVIRUS ELIMINATION

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus disease, the Belarusian authorities have taken the decision to ignore the existence of the stated pandemic. We respectfully state that the consequences described below definitely impact achievement of the sustainable development goal 3 negatively.

With the recognition of coronavirus to be a pandemic, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has enacted the guidelines and regulations.

In April 2020, the WHO held the technical mission of the experts to Belarus. On the results of the mission, the WHO enacted the executive summary with the recommendations to Belarus.¹⁸

The stated above WHO recommendations to Belarus restricts the set of measures advised to take by the Belarusian authorities, in particular "*postponing or cancelling all mass gatherings of people including sporting, cultural and religious events*".

¹⁸ Please find the recommendation by link:

https://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/440608/Belarus-Mission-Report-Executive-Summary.pdf

Despite the stated recommendations. The Belarusian senior officials have decided to hold the celebration of the Easter and Victory Day Parade. No sufficient restrictions on gathering at cinemas, theatres, cafes or other public places were introduced in Belarus.

Moreover, in order to hide the consequences of the described violations of the WHO recommendations, Belarus has submitted to the WHO the national reports on coronavirus disease with the falsificated data.

The Belarusian Medical Solidarity Foundation has developed analyses of the data on coronavirus cases of infections and deaths.¹⁹ Thus, for instance, within the October period according to official statistics there were 114 peoples who died because of coronavirus disease within the whole state, at the same time under the data provided to the Belarusian Medical Solidarity Foundation by the medical workers there were at minimum 185 cases of deaths because of coronavirus infection just in one city – Minsk.²⁰

Consequently, Belarus has severely breached the WHO regulations and recommendations on coronavirus infection elimination that leads to increasing numbers of the infected and deceased persons that can not be recognised as a governmental policy on achievement of positive results in goal 3 of the sustainable development.

¹⁹ Please find the analyses attached to the stated Report.

²⁰ Please find more information by the link:
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)01703-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)01703-7/fulltext)