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## APPEAL


The information from Belarus about the sentence of 8 years in a heightened-security penal colony for the Polish journalist Andrzej Poczobut is shocking not only for journalists associated in the World Association of Polish Media Abroad, but also for all communities in democratic countries.

Andrzej Poczobut, a journalist cooperating with the Union of Poles in Belarus and writing for one of the major Polish newspaper, was groundlessly accused of "inciting hatred" and "calling to actions to the detriment of Belarus". He is a political prisoner of the 21st century, convicted in a trial held behind closed doors.

The shameful sentence issued against him has nothing to do with procedural justice. Instead, it is only a part of the anti-Polish campaign undertaken by the political establishment in Belarus, where Polish cultural centers and schools are closed, historical Polish cemeteries are destroyed, and Polish organizations promoting Polish language and Polish culture are described as extremists.

The World Association of Polish Media Abroad, which honored Andrzej Poczobut with the "Freedom of Speech" award in 2021, has appealed to many officials for his release, e.g. to the Chancellery of the President of Belarus and to Members of the European Parliament.

This time, we appeal to a broader range of political organizations around the world to stop the repression against representatives of the Polish minority in Belarus and to release Andrzej Poczobut unconditionally and other media representatives currently imprisoned in Belarus.

  
Teresa Sygnarek  
President of the Board

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