

Speech by Ms. Sviatlana Cichanouskaja,
Leader of the Democratic Belarus
at the sitting of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania
dedicated to the 30th anniversary of 13 January 1991
and the Freedom Prize 2021 award ceremony

Acceptance speech at Lietuvos Seimas on the 13th of January

Gerbiami ponios ir ponai,

On this day 30 years ago a young woman came to the Vilnius TV Tower. Together with thousands of Lithuanians, she came there to peacefully defend the freedom of her country. Several hours after she was crushed to death by a Soviet tank. Her name among the names of 13 other heroes will never be forgotten in Lithuania.

Same as Loreta Asanaviciute, this year Belarusians appeared in the streets to define the future of their country.

And unfortunately, same as Loreta, some of them were also killed for this peaceful desire.

Why did brave Lithuanians sacrifice their lives 30 years ago? And **why** are millions of Belarusians **risking** their lives **now**?

The reason is simple. They **dare** to seek **freedom**.

The regime may think that by crushing us with their repression machines they may crush our spirit of freedom and dignity. It did **not** happen to Lithuania, and it will **not** happen to Belarus. There is no way back.

But we still have struggles to overcome. And it's important to know that we're **not alone** in our fight for democracy.

We've felt Lithuania's neighboring shoulder for centuries. But **today** we are thankful for its support as never before because **a friend in need is a friend indeed**.

And today on behalf of all Belarusians I would like **to thank you** for that.

Dekui to Lithuanian authorities for your principled position and **tremendous support** for all Belarusians. We know that you're here for us, and rest assured that we will do the same for you in the future.

Дзякуй to all Lithuanian citizens for your incredible solidarity with us. All Belarusians remember the beautiful image of thousands of you standing in a **chain of friendship** from Vilnius to the border on the 31st Anniversary of the Baltic Way. **You** inspire and give us hope.

I am deeply grateful for being awarded the Freedom Prize 2020. It belongs to all Belarusians who peacefully fight against violence and lawlessness. It is a big honor, but also a reminder for all of us. That we need to stay focused and united. And **we will win**.

Už musu ir jusu laisvė!

Жыве Беларусь!