



**World Players Association**  
**#WorldPlayersUnited**

Yelena Leuchanka, Professional basketballer  
Okrestina Detention Centre, Minsk, Belarus  
c/o Belarusian Sport Solidarity Foundation

Nyon, Switzerland, 7 October 2020  
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Dear Yelena,

The World Players Association was alarmed and activated upon hearing of your arrest on 30 September at the Minsk airport minutes before you were due to depart to seek medical treatment and rehabilitation in Berlin. We followed the reports of the rushed and secretive court proceedings, which resulted in a maximum sentence of 15 days in the notorious Okrestina detention centre under the charges of violating rules of organizing or holding mass events and disobeying police. Any objective observer recognises these penalties as blatant reprisals for your public activism in Belarus and for using your platform to support protestors who have been beaten and jailed for exercising their human rights to freedom of assembly and expression.

World Players represents 85,000 players across professional sport through more than 100 player associations based in over 60 countries. These include many of your friends and former colleagues at the Women's National Basketball Players Association (WNBPA). Organised players worldwide are deeply committed to the very same principles which are underpinning the courageous activism, leadership and sacrifice that you and your compatriots in the Free Union of Athletes in Belarus are displaying on behalf of your country's future.

Many of your supporters, friends, former teammates, and fellow athlete activists have reached out to us and we are working with them and our affiliates and partners in the Sport and Rights Alliance to ensure that the powerful bodies that govern the world of sport—particularly the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Basketball Federation (FIBA)—exercise their authority to safeguard athletes who stand up for what is right and to ensure that any member of the Olympic Movement who targets them is held to account.

You are part of a proud history of athlete activists around the world who have led the way for social progress. The strength of our movement of organized players is with you and is committed to ensuring your rights, health and safety are respected, as well as your principles. If you are able to, please let us know if you would like us to join and support you in your historic effort.

Yours sincerely,

**Brendan Schwab**  
Executive Director