

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya is the leader of democratic Belarus and a human rights activist, who challenged and by many accounts beat the autocratic president Aliaksandr Lukashenka at the 2020 presidential election.

She stood in for her husband, Siarhei Tsikhanouski, in the presidential election after he was jailed for his political aspirations. The election was fraught with widespread fraud and followed by unjustified violence. Tsikhanouskaya has become the symbolic leader of Belarusian protests and has contributed greatly to promoting positive change in Belarus both through her domestic and international engagement. Following her forced relocation to Lithuania by Belarusian authorities, she met with global leaders to coordinate joint international efforts against the authoritarian regime to ensure the voices of Belarusians are heard.

The European Parliament recognized the fight of Belarusian people for democracy and freedom led by Tsikhanouskaya by awarding her, among other leaders, the prestigious annual Sakharov Prize. She has also received a series of international awards for her courageous struggle against the authoritarian regime of Lukashenka (GLOBSEC Freedom award; 2020 Prize of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience; Politiken Freedom Prize).