



## **Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya**

Office



**Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya** is a National Leader of Belarus and a Head of the United Transition Cabinet of whom independent observers agree won the presidential election on August 9, 2020, against the long-lasting dictator Aliaksandr Lukashenka.

After the start of Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 24th, 2022, Tsikhanouskaya reformatted the leadership of the movement by creating and chairing the United Transition Cabinet, the decision-making center of the movement. Led by Tsikhanouskaya, Belarusian anti-war activists conducted underground resistance in Belarus by sabotaging railway transportation of Russian troops as well as volunteering Belarusian-staffed units fighting for Ukraine.

As the leader of the Belarusian democratic movement, she has visited 28 countries, gathering support and advocating for the release of more than 1500 of political prisoners and a peaceful transition of power through free and fair elections. In meetings with President Biden, Chancellor Merkel, President Macron, President von der Leyen, President Charles Michel, Prime Minister Trudeau and other world leaders, Tsikhanouskaya emphasized the need for a braver response to the actions of the Belarusian dictatorship.

Tsikhanouskaya's story began when she entered the race after her husband Siarhei Tsikhanousky was arrested for voicing his presidential aspirations. Lukashenka publicly dismissed her as a "housewife," saying that a woman cannot become president. Nonetheless, Tsikhanouskaya united and successfully led the democratic coalition. Following her forced exile, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya inspired unprecedented peaceful protests in Belarus, with some rallies numbering hundreds of thousands people. When the war has started, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya announced the anti-war movement to prevent the participation of Belarus in the war against Ukraine. Mass campaign of disobedience and dozens acts of sabotage took place aimed to stop Russian troops from entering Ukraine from Belarus territory.

In 2020–2023, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya became a symbol of the peaceful struggle for democracy and strong female leadership. Among dozens of distinctions, she is a recipient of the Sakharov Prize awarded by the European Parliament, 2022 International Four Freedoms Award, and Charlemagne Prize. In 2021 and 2022, she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda and Members of the Norwegian Parliament respectively. Tsikhanouskaya has been recognized in Bloomberg's Top 50 Most Influential People, Financial Times' Top 12 Most Influential Women, and Politico's Top 28 Most Influential Europeans.