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*Représentation permanente de la Belgique auprès des Nations Unies et auprès des institutions spécialisées à Genève*

**WG UPR 43 – Cuba**

***Intervention of Belgium***

15 November 2023

President,

Belgium welcomes the progressive steps taken by the Cuban government in making its society more inclusive by adopting the new Family Code in 2022.

My country however notes that since the last UPR there has been a regression in the area of freedom of expression. Therefore, Belgium recommends to:

**R1.** Immediately and unconditionally release all those detained for exercising their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

**R2.** Amend or repeal provisions of the new Penal Code, which stand to further limit freedom of expression, such as Article 143 and Article 120.1.

**R3.** Establish legal frameworks fully guaranteeing the labor rights of journalists without restrictions, including the possibility of associating to create and work in independent media outlets.

In addition, Belgium recommends to:

**R4.** Enhance the capacity of protection and support services for women experiencing violence, by providing infrastructure, equipment and specialized personnel, and an adequate budget, and by enacting a comprehensive law on gender-based violence.

Thank you, President.