

The information is aggregated from open source online resources and our own practice. In these newsletters, we will update you in brief on everyday human rights violations in numbers and facts.

Summary: Saturday 14 November to Monday 16 November 2020

Peaceful protests against the presidential election results continued on Sunday 15 November, leading to arbitrary mass detentions. More than 1,100 people were detained in Minsk and other cities in Belarus. Most arrests took place in Minsk during the violent dispersal of a peaceful protest near Pushkinskaya (near the memorial to Aliaksandr Taraikouski, a protestor killed on 10 August) and Plošča pieramien neighbourhood (the memorial to Raman Bandarenka, beaten to death on 12 November).

Water cannons and non-lethal weapons were used to disperse peaceful protesters. Several people were reportedly injured after riot police used stun grenades without advance warning. Stun grenades were used at Plošča pieramien neighbourhood, a space between several blocks with a children's playground and a parking lot. Local residents reported that later on, people in plain clothes checked their passports for the registration stamp to let residents in or out of the neighbourhood.

Many protesters were brutally beaten despite not resisting arrest. One person was hit by a police mini-van. Two people were beaten by masked security officers inside a grocery store.¹

Witnesses report that they can hear people screaming at Frunzienski district's police department in Minsk.²

At least 24 journalists were among those arrested on 15 November.³ Tacciana Raviaka, a well-known human rights defender, was also detained but later released.

To date, the estimated number of people detained since August is more than 20,000.

Students and youth activists

Alana Hebramaryjam, a member of the Coordination Council and Svetlana Tikhanovskaya's representative for youth affairs, formally became a suspect in a criminal case (organisation of activities that breach the public order) and will be kept behind bars for two months. She is currently in a KGB prison. Eight more students have also been detained.⁴

¹ See TUT.by: <https://auto.tut.by/news/accidents/707913.html?c>

² See TUT.by online for 15 November: <https://news.tut.by/economics/707890.html>

³ See BAJ, 23 journalists detained on 15 November 15. Updated: <https://baj.by/en/content/23-journalists-detained-november-15-updated>

⁴ See Viasna <https://spring96.org/be/news/100419>

Digital rights

On 15 November, mobile companies “in accordance with the order of the authorized state bodies” reduced the Internet bandwidth of the mobile from 9.20am to 5.30pm. This led to a significant deterioration in data transmission quality and/or temporary unavailability of the service.⁵

Other news

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) called on the Belarusian authorities to end impunity for those responsible for human rights violations, up to and including deaths, and to hold them to account. ODIHR have again offered to provide expertise and tools to help strengthen human rights and democratic institutions in Belarus, for the future of all citizens.⁶

Amnesty International’s Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Marie Struthers, said that the Belarusian authorities “must immediately launch a prompt, thorough, impartial and independent investigation into Raman Bandarenka’s killing and bring the perpetrators to account in fair trials.”⁷

The spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights voiced “a call on the Belarusian authorities to conduct a thorough, transparent and independent investigation into this incident and to publicly share its results. If indeed, a crime has been committed, whoever is responsible for the death of Roman Bondarenko should be brought to justice.”⁸

⁵ See TUT.by: <https://42.tut.by/707886>

⁶ See the OSCE, Impunity for human rights abuses in Belarus must end, OSCE human rights office says: https://www.osce.org/odihr/470274?fbclid=IwAR1OUu4qyk7mfu1nKYMyOIBJordw8sq_bQAY04ke1ju9k2_DnaAe2fKx6vE

⁷ See Amnesty International, Belarus: Peaceful protester held by police after beating dies in hospital: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/11/belarus-peaceful-protester-held-by-police-after-beating-dies-in-hospital/>

⁸ See OHCHR, Press briefing notes on Belarus: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26503&LangID=E>