

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: Tuesday 24 November to Friday 27 November 2020

144 political prisoners in Belarus

There are 144 people on the list of political prisoners in Belarus as of 27 November 2020. This week Belarusian human rights organisations added 12 more people to the list. They are:

- **Siarhei Kryuchenia, Artsiom Miadzvedski, Yauhen Kurhanau, and Dzmitry Zheburtovich** under Art. 293 of the Criminal Code (Mass Riots); **Mikalai Dziadok, Aliaksei Samusenka, Kim Samusenka, and Pavel Drozd** under Art. 342 of the Criminal Code (Group Actions that Grossly Breach Public Order);¹
- Journalists who face criminal prosecution are **Katsiaryna Barysevich** (TUT.by), arrested on 19 November on suspicion of alleged disclosure of Raman Bandarenka's confidential medical information - he was beaten to death on 11 November (Part 3, Article 178 of the Criminal Code) - and **Katsiaryna Andreyeva** and **Darya Chultsova** (Belsat) were targeted in a criminal case for "organising actions that grossly violate public order" (Article 342 of the Criminal Code) after a live broadcast from the location of a violent police crackdown on a peaceful protest in the Square of Change in Minsk on 15 November;² and
- **Ihar Samusenka** was detained on 22 October for painting the phrase 'We Will Not Forget' on the pavement near the memorial to Aliaksandr Taraikouski, a protester who was reportedly killed by law enforcement officers. Samusenka was charged under Part 2 of Art. 339 (Hooliganism) and Part 2 of Art. 218 of the Criminal Code (Intentional Destruction or Damage to Property Committed in a Socially Dangerous Manner and Causing Damage on a Large Scale), and now faces up to 10 years in prison.³

Journalists and freedom of press

Ihar Ilyash, a political commentator for Belsat TV channel, is in a temporary detention centre. In the apartment where Ilyash lives, his brother found a copy of a confiscation report for a computer and a phone, which may indicate that the apartment was searched.⁴ Ihar Ilyash's wife Katsiaryna Andreyeva is in detention charged with "organising actions that grossly violate public order" (criminal case).

¹ See Viasna: <https://spring96.org/en/news/100610>

² See Viasna: <https://spring96.org/en/news/100613>

³ See Viasna: <https://spring96.org/be/news/100617>

⁴ See RFE: <https://www.svaboda.org/a/30967815.html>

Belarusian journalists face increasing pressure from the authorities. The United States Embassy released a statement stating that the United States is very concerned about the precarious status of Belarusian independent media, the arbitrary arrests of journalists over the past few months, and the Belarusian authorities' filing of criminal charges against journalists.⁵

Digital rights and security

The number of criminal cases for insulting police officers online is growing. This week, two people from Salihorsk and Viciebsk were sentenced to big fines and restriction of freedom for insulting comments about law enforcement officials on social media and a Telegram chat.⁶

Earlier, several Telegram chats were taken over by the authorities, mainly after their owners or administrators were arrested.⁷

Olga Khizhnikova, Miss Belarus 2008, to serve 3rd short-term arrest in a row

Miss Belarus 2008 and ex-press secretary of Brest 'Dynamo', Olga Khizhnikova, was sentenced to another 15 days arrest for participating in an unauthorised mass event. In total, this is the third trial for Khizhnikova under Art. 23.34 Administrative Code.⁸

Other news

On Thursday 26 November, the European Parliament adopted a resolution taking stock of the human rights situation in Belarus. Parliament condemns in the strongest possible terms the murder of Raman Bandarenka. MEPs demand prompt, thorough, and independent investigations into his death and the protest-related deaths of other Belarusian civilians.⁹

Good news

As part of the solidarity campaign #WeStandBYyou of Libereco, members of the German Bundestag Tabea Rößner (Alliance90/The Greens), Ulli Nissen (SPD), and Albert Stegemann (CDU) have taken over a godparenthood for Belarusian political prisoners Aliaksei Karatkou, Volha Klaskouskaya, and Siarhei Liazhenka.¹⁰ Karl Lamers (CDU), Matthias Bartke (SPD), Sandra Weeser (FDP), Mark Hauptmann (CDU), Detlef Müller (SPD), and Frank Müller-Rosentritt (FDP) have taken over a godparenthood for political prisoners in Belarus. They supported Dzmitry Ivashkou, Dzianis Dzemukh, Mikita Hancharou, Ihar Salavei, Yauhen Dzmitryeu, and Yauhen Prapolski.¹¹

⁵ See US Embassy to Belarus. Statement:

https://by.usembassy.gov/u-s-embassy-statement-2/?fbclid=IwAR1PFlmXsf_ouQFrw3Tgk5M20itFmfEniIDS2XZlnblpUMShStvGKoesgpl

⁶ See Viasna: <https://spring96.org/be/news/100649>

⁷ See TUT.by: <https://42.tut.by/709151?tg>

⁸ See TUT.by: <https://sport.tut.by/news/aboutsport/709332.html?tg>

⁹ See European Parliament: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20201120IPR92136/>

¹⁰ See Viasna: <https://spring96.org/en/news/100577>

¹¹ See Viasna: <https://spring96.org/en/news/100634>