

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

Summary Friday-Monday, September 17-21:

Massive peaceful protests continue in Belarus for six weeks.¹ During peaceful protests, detentions and use of force continue. According to human rights organizations, police have arrested almost 12,000 people since the protests began.²

Increasingly, civilians are subject to financial sanctions with disproportionately large fines instead of arrests.

On Saturday the Women's March took place. According to the official information of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, on September 19, 415 people were detained in Minsk (430 in the country) of which 385 were released from the police department.³

On Sunday the March of Justice took place, approximately 100,000 people joined the event in Minsk. The Human Rights Center "Viasna" collected data on about 170 detainees in Minsk and 70 in the regions on September 20.⁴

Pressure on civil society representatives and human rights defenders is increasing. On September 17, officers of the Interior Ministry's Main Directorate for Combating Organized Crime and Corruption (GUBAZIK) detained Marfa Rabkova, coordinator of the volunteer service of the Human Rights Center "Viasna".^{5 6}

Coordination Council

Six out of seven members of the Coordination Council Presidium are either in custody or have been forced to leave the country. Amnesty International recognized members of the Coordination Council and their associates as prisoners of conscience.

¹<https://www.rferl.org/a/thousands-gather-again-in-belarus-to-march-against-lukashenka/30848518.html>

² <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/bialacky-repression/30848502.html>

³<https://www.belta.by/incident/view/mvd-za-narushenie-zakonodatelstva-o-massovyh-meroprijatijah-19-sentjabrja-zaderzhany-430-chelovek-407476-2020/>

⁴ <http://spring96.org/be/news/99601>

⁵ The Human Rights Centre "Viasna" is a non-governmental human rights organization active since 1996. It is a nation-wide NGO with a central office in Minsk and a dozen local offices across the country. Viasna has about 200 members. In 2003, the Supreme Court groundlessly cancelled the registration of Viasna for its participation in the observation of the presidential election of 2001. On 6 March 2004, the Human Rights Centre "Viasna" became a member of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH).

⁶ <https://spring96.org/en/news/99587>

The board member of the Coordination Council Maksim Znak announced a hunger strike following charges under article 361, part 3 of the criminal code.⁷

Children and Family

Throughout the entire protest period, we observe the use of family ties to put pressure on activists, political leaders. Now we are seeing an increase in pressure on parents of minor children.

Elena Lazarchik, an activist and a mother, was detained on 17 September officially for a document check when she was leaving the human rights organisation Viasna. The police took away Lazarchik's telephone and kept her at the police station until the evening.

Because of that she was unable to collect her child from school by 6 p.m., the teachers called social services and six-year-old Artyom was sent to an orphanage. Fortunately, within 24 hours, Elena was able to get her son back.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has expressed indignation on that case. "I'm shocked and appalled by the news of Belarusian government using children as political hostages again".⁸

Identification of parents who took part in protests actions with young children, according to the city prosecutor's office reports has been started. According to the prosecutor's office, 140 official warnings have already been issued "in order to forestall possible violations of the legislation on public events and parents' failure to fulfill their responsibilities for raising their children."⁹

Moreover, "for the participation of minors in mass protests, they themselves and their parents will face administrative liability: from a fine to, in extreme cases, the removal of a child from the family", the head of the department for supervision over the implementation of the legislation on minors and youth of the General Prosecutor's Office of Belarus Aleksey Podvoisky told about this on the STV TV channel.¹⁰

⁷ <https://news.tut.by/economics/700999.html>

⁸ <https://news.tut.by/society/701068.html>;

<https://twitter.com/MorawieckiM/status/1307243810032955402>

⁹ <http://www.prokuratura.gov.by/ru/info/novosti/nadzor-za-ispolnieniem-zakonodatelstva/bezopasnost-zhi-znedeyatelnosti-naseleniya/prokuratura-goroda-minska-prinyat-kompleks-mer-po-stabilizatsii-obstanovki-i-v-stolitse/>

¹⁰ <https://news.tut.by/society/700348.html>

Trade Unions and Labour rights

Belarusian police have detained more than 20 people at a potash mine for supporting a second worker who has refused to return to the surface in protest against the state company's management and the government. The protesters were supporting Aleh Kudzyolka, who handed a protest note to his labor union co-workers at the Belaruskali mine at the end of his shift on September 21 saying he would remain hundreds of meters underground until his demands were met.¹¹

According to the miners' union, Kudzyolka's demands include the resignation of the company's director and the release of other miners who have been detained in recent weeks while joining the political protests that have roiled Belarus.¹²

Kudzyolka was the second miner at the Belaruskali potash mine in Salihorsk, 130 kilometers south of Minsk, to have staged a strike in solidarity with protesters. The other miner, Yury Korzun, was forcibly removed on September 10 after he spent more than four hours chained to a piece of machinery in the mine.¹³

Good news

Poland and Russia open borders for Belarusian citizens.

¹¹<https://www.rferl.org/a/more-than-20-detained-at-belarusian-potash-mine-for-backing-worker-s-political-demands/30850028.html>

¹² <https://t.me/stachkom/360>

¹³<https://www.rferl.org/a/belarusian-miner-chains-himself-demands-lukashenka-s-resignation/30831710.html>