

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 Thursday, August 20:

The Republican public association "Belarusian Helsinki Committee" has applied to the Investigation Committee seeking to open an investigation for mass torture, ill-treatment, and political violence.

Excerpts from the application:

“By now, the Investigative Committee has reliable and objective data that make it possible to immediately initiate a criminal case under Art. 128 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus (crimes against the safety of humanity) and take all possible measures for an effective and prompt investigation of the case. For these purposes, it is necessary to create an investigative team with operational support in all regional offices of the Investigative Committee, to demand and obtain and attach to the present case the test results on the declaration of citizens about the use of torture and ill-treatment”.¹

It stands to mention that the Investigation Committee published in its official telegram channel that: *“the information from Internet resources and Media about the forceful rape of women in temporary detention facilities and tortures has been checked. Currently, there are no officially reported statements on the circumstances indicated in the media. In addition, no such information was received from interrogated citizens on the ground of the events of August 9-12, none of the documents provided by medical institutions contains such information either”*.

Belarusian and foreign human rights organizations have created International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus, in order to investigate tortures and miss use of power against participants in peaceful assemblies. The Committee will work according to a common methodology and collect information into a single database.²

The Coordination Council formed by the opposition, held its first meeting on the 19th of August, based on the results of which called on the country's authorities to enter into urgent negotiations.

On August, 20th Prosecutor General of Belarus announced the initiation of a criminal investigation under art. 361 of the Criminal Code of Belarus, 'appeals to the actions directed to damnification of homeland security of the Republic of Belarus'. 'The creation and functioning

¹ <https://clc.am/sk128>

² If you want to join this initiative, or are interested in getting more information - contact belarus.torture@gmail.com

of the Coordination Council are directed at the seizure of the state power, as well as meant to damage the national security of the Republic of Belarus', he stated.

Strikes

While thousands of workers joined nationwide protests against Alexander Lukashenko, authorities in power started threatening workers with fines and potentially losing their jobs. Belarusian labor legislation does not provide for the possibility of a strike for political reasons. In this case, the absence of workers from the workplace is considered a violation of the employment contract by the management of enterprises. As management at the enterprises has turned up the pressure on workers, by midweek the strikes in Minsk decreased. Also, a number of workers say the lack of clear leaders for the protests is stopping many from joining strikes.

In the regions new enterprises continue to join the strike movement. The so-called Italian strike is in effect at other enterprises. Other workers take leave at their own expense in order not to go to work and to protest on the streets.

Today there are reports about detention of the chairman of the MAZ strike committee. The leader of the MTZ strike committee was also summoned to the Investigative Committee.