

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 Tuesday - Thursday, September 22-24:

At least three hundred protesters were detained on September, 23 as thousands of people protested the unannounced inauguration of Lukashenko.^{1 2}

Riot police and other security forces, including officers in civilian clothes, arrested demonstrators in Minsk, Hrodna, Homiel, Mahilioŭ, Polack, Barysaŭ, Baranavičy and other cities. Many detainees were beaten with truncheons, resulting in head injuries. Several protesters were hospitalized after their brutal detention. Riot gear was also used. In particular, in Minsk, peaceful protesters were dispersed with water cannons spraying colored liquid. Tear gas and stun grenades were also reportedly used in isolated cases.^{3 4} After motorists blocked several busy streets in Minsk, security forces attacked several vehicles, smashing the windows and violently detaining the drivers.⁵

According to the Interior Ministry's spokesperson, police detained 384 protesters in 59 protests held on September, 23, including 252 in Minsk. 320 reportedly remain in custody to face charges.

On September, 24 151 court hearings took place, 95 people received fines (total sum - 12606 USD), 43 people were arrested.

Since the announcement of the presidential election in early May, the authorities have opened over 250 criminal cases targeting presidential candidates, members of their campaign teams, and peaceful protesters. Sixty-eight persons recognized by Human Rights defenders as political prisoners.⁶

The Prosecutor General's Office is initiating adoption of additional measures to stabilize the situation in the country, as announced by the Prosecutor General Andrei Shved before the start of the coordination meeting on combating crime and corruption. Shved also stressed that participants of unauthorized rallies will be punished by larger fines.⁷

¹ <https://spring96.org/en/news/99666>

² <https://t.me/pressmvd/2143>

³ <https://svabod1.azureedge.net/a/30853370.html>

⁴ https://t.me/tutby_official/15610

⁵ <https://spring96.org/en/news/99666>

⁶ <https://spring96.org/en/news/49539>

⁷ <https://www.ctvnews.ca/world/over-360-more-detained-in-belarus-in-protests-against-leader-1.5118284>

Freedom of Speech and Journalists

In total, at least 206 journalists have now been detained in the capital Minsk and across the country since protests against a fraudulent election victory of president Alexander Lukashenko erupted on August 9, according to the Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ).⁸

As nationwide demonstrations against authoritarian rule enter the seventh week, detentions have continued as riot police and security forces attempt to further silence criticism and suppress international reporting of widespread rights abuses, with 22 detentions since September 12.

While the majority of journalists were detained briefly or have since been released from jail, many remain behind bars convicted of “participating in unauthorized events” or “working without accreditation” in speedy trials, many of which were held behind closed doors.⁹

On 23 September 2020, Yahor Martsinovich was taken to the Investigative Committee after his apartment had been searched by the police. His detention is linked to the Nasha Niva article where one of the interviewees claimed that he had been beaten in a detention centre by the deputy head of the Interior Ministry Alexander Barsukou. The police have started criminal proceedings against Martsinovich under Article 188 of the Criminal Code — defamation. Barsukou is recognised as a victim in the case. Martsinovich is regarded as responsible for the article as the editor-in-chief of Nasha Niva.

Advocates and rights to defence

We continue to observe unprecedented pressure on representatives of the legal community. Two lawyers (advocates) of the members of the Coordination Council are in custody: Maksim Znak, lawyer and member of the presidium of the Coordination Council, has been officially charged under Part 3 of Art. 361 (calls for actions aimed at harming the national security of the Republic of Belarus) of the Criminal Code. In an act of protest, the arrested lawyer went on a hunger strike.¹⁰

The Investigative Committee earlier brought the same charges against one of the leaders of the Coordination Council Maryia Kalesnikava and Viktor Babaryka’s lawyer Illia Salei.

⁸ <https://baj.by/en/analytics/repressions-against-journalists-belarus-2020-chart>

⁹ <https://ipi.media/new-arrests-of-journalists-follow-latest-protests-in-belarus/>

¹⁰ <https://spring96.org/en/news/99683>

Ludmiła Kazak, a lawyer (advocate) representing Maryia Kalesnikava, was detained on September, 24 by the police in connection with administrative proceedings.¹¹

Belarusian Lawyers recorded a [video message](#) to draw attention to the unprecedented situation.

Academic liberties

Students, being a significant part of the protest and one of the most vulnerable social groups in Belarus, continue to face pressure from the University administration, but despite this young people continue to organize various creative protests.

At Belarusian State University, Journalism and Philosophy department students organized a joint protest rally. After it ended, the students were summoned to the dean's office.¹²

Students at Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics organized a sit-in protest. A solidarity rally was held at the Belarusian State University Chemistry department. Students performed a few songs to express their support for those who had been detained.¹³

Minsk State Linguistic University rector issued a decree prohibiting “unauthorized rallies” on campus.¹⁴

Today, Lukashenko warned that Belarusian students studying in Poland will have to confirm their diplomas back in their home country. In turn, Poland announced that it is ready to keep graduates from Belarus if they encounter difficulties in confirming their diplomas at home.¹⁵

Recent statements on Belarus

- Urgent action by Amnesty International: Release human rights defender Marfa Rabkova
- Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union
- The civic solidarity platform on the situation in Belarus
- Human rights violations in Belarus must stop immediately
- Lithuanian Foreign Ministry’s statement on the situation in Belarus
- Blog by EU High Representative Josep Borrell

¹¹ <https://spring96.org/en/news/99683>

¹² <https://www.esu-online.org/?policy=statement-on-the-presidential-elections-in-belarus>

¹³ <https://news.tut.by/society/701601.html>

¹⁴ <https://news.tut.by/society/701601.html>

¹⁵ <https://people.onliner.by/2020/09/25/lukashenko-vypuskniki-polskix-vuzov-dolzhny-budut-podtverdit-sv-oj-diplom-v-belarusi>

Good news

We advise you to have a look at a [summary article](#) about creative art during peaceful protests, Belarusians are indeed creative.