

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-Sunday, August 28-30:

Peaceful protests continue.

No confirmed or official information regarding the number of participants of Saturday and Sunday protest is available, but according to approximate independent assessments based on video and photo materials, it varies from 200 to 300 thousands people. More than 100 people were detained in Minsk and other towns of Belarus. Some of the detained were released during the night after facing “illegal protesting” charges and are expected to stand trials soon.¹

Riot police, army personnel and special equipment deployed in Minsk and other towns. At least 4 Armoured personnel carrier (БТР) and at least 9 Infantry fighting vehicle (БМП) are seen in the streets of Minsk and suburbs. Armed personnel, supposedly snipers, are reported to be seen on the roofs.²

According to *official information*: protest actions were observed in 24 settlements across the country. In total, as a result of the investigations conducted by the internal affairs bodies, 35 violations of the legislation on mass events were documented; 29 people were detained before the consideration of cases on administrative violations in court.³

Freedom of speech

Freedom of and information is under the Iron Curtain.

Belarusian authorities stripped accreditation from at least 17 journalists from major foreign news organizations who have been covering the country’s turmoil following the disputed presidential election.⁴The journalists targeted include employees of major Western news organizations, including RFE/RL, the BBC, the Associated Press, Reuters, Agence-France Presse, Germany’s ARD television, Deutsche Welle, and Radio France. Without accreditations, journalists are not legally permitted to gather news within the country.⁵

The country’s largest independent media sites Nasha Niva and Naviny.by were blocked. The newly appointed Minister of Information has assured people that “internet normalization” would

¹<https://www.rferl.org/a/belarus-braces-for-more-postelection-protests-amid-attacks-on-media-freedom/30811205.html>

² https://t.me/tutby_official/12843

³ <https://www.mvd.gov.by/ru/news/7400>

⁴ <https://spring96.org/en/news/99290>

⁵<https://www.rferl.org/a/belarus-detention--journalists-rferl-bbc-reuters-intimidation-accreditation-revoke-d-protests/30810015.html>

not mean blocking sites. Lukashenko has also repeatedly stated that “we do not restrict anyone”. The access has been blocked by the order of the Ministry of Information of Belarus.⁶

The Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ) on Friday demanded the opening of a criminal investigation against those who detained at least 47 journalists on Thursday 27 August to prevent them from covering the protests against disputed President Lukashenko in Belarus.⁷ The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) fully supports the legal proceedings initiated by its affiliate BAJ.⁸

Digital Freedoms

The government of Belarus continues to shut down access to the internet, according to Bloomberg News, by using equipment manufactured by a U.S. company.^{9 10}

Partial blocking of mobile internet was taking place during the peaceful protests. A1 again published an official warning, that in accordance with the order of the authorized state bodies, the capacity of the mobile internet was reduced on August 30. Execution of this order leads to degradation of quality of data services materially or its full unavailability.¹¹

The Anniversary Internet Governance Forum will not take place this year in Belarus. Open statement of the IGF Belarus program committee was published.¹²

Statements:

OSCE chairs calls for "immediate and significant improvement" in Belarus with "no ifs or buts"

Joint Statement by the Missions of the United States, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and the European Union on behalf of the EU Member States represented in Minsk on the use of violence and repression in Belarus.

⁶ <https://www.voiceofbelarus.com/live-feed-29-aug/>

⁷<https://baj.by/ru/content/oo-bazh-trebuot-ot-sk-vozbudit-ugolovnoe-delo-za-voisprepyatstvovanie-zakonoy>

⁸<https://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2020/08/29/wall-of-silence-on-belarus-massive-withdrawal-of-press-accreditations/>

⁹<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-28/belarusian-officials-shut-down-internet-with-technology-made-by-u-s-firm>

¹⁰ <https://humanconstantaby.com/bloomberg-translate/>

¹¹<https://www.a1.by/en/company/news/o-rabote-mobilnogo-interneta-v-minske-30-avgusta/p/rabota-mobilnogo-interneta-3g-30avgusta>

¹²<https://humanconstantaby.com/yubilejnyj-forum-po-upravleniyu-internetom-ne-sostoitsya-otkrytoe-obrashhenie-programmnogo-komiteta-igf-belarus/?fbclid=IwAR1KBq50rFr9ueUFx1pgFkU4jJxdsyA65orFnyGZEFU5ucSh6XPTm3nYxTc>

Good news

Online activists have created the so-called “couch troops”, in the telegram group already more than 1,500 people who are actively fighting fake news and trolls.¹³

¹³ https://t.me/kanapa_army