

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-Friday, 10-13 November:

For more than three months, people in Belarus have been protesting the contested August 9 presidential election results and police brutality that followed.

Activist bitten to death

On November 12, **Raman Bandarenka** died in Minsk Emergency Hospital. On the previous day he was detained in his neighbourhood by people in plain clothes. The ambulance transported Raman to hospital from the police department of the Central district of Minsk. He had a severe traumatic brain injury.¹

Raman Bandarenka was an activist in a Minsk neighbourhood “Plošča pieramien” [The Square of Changes]. Plošča pieramien is a trend-setting “rebel” neighbourhood in Minsk where the local community started decorating buildings with murals and white-red-white flags, organising neighbours’ meetings and concerts. There are numerous cases of persecution and harassment against the neighbourhood activists. On the evening of November 13 the police patrolled and searched several flats in another protest neighbourhood in Minsk - Kaskad².

Reports of torture in detention centres and violence against protesters and detainees

As some of the protesters detained last Sunday (November 8) are being released, they voice alarming testimonies of brutalities and tortures when detained and kept in custody: gas sprayed inside paddy wagons, standing facing the wall outside the police department buildings, marking the detainees’ faces with paint, forcing to squat down Zodzina detention centre corridors, overcrowded cells³, being kept in crowded cold cells with concrete floors, no mattresses, no running water to flush the toilet, no access to showers even after several

¹ <https://spring96.org/be/news/100359>

² TUT.by The police are active in Kaskad neighbourhood: <https://news.tut.by/society/707555.html>

³ As reported by a doctor Iryna Markelava in her interview to the RFR\RL Belarus: <https://svabod1.azureedge.net/a/30939158.html?fbclid=IwAR3j40DdZy-AeGMTlaegAYLpCGCPMQJHX3cQ94E4GXDI3rMzJPgzMCMf6-o>

weeks in custody⁴. We refer to testimonies of the people interviewed by the press or publishing on social media accounts.

Students and youth activists

On November 12, homes of 7 activists of ZBS (Belarusian Students' Association) were searched. The activists are detained and interrogated in the KGB.

One of them is Alana Hebramaryjam. She is a member of the Coordination Council and Ms Tikhonovskaya's representative for youth affairs.⁵

Journalists and freedom of speech

Three more journalists received short jail sentences: Alieh Hruzdilovich (RFE), Aliaksandr Sidareuski (Belsat), Kaciaryna Karpitskaya (Nasha Niva). Currently there are 16 journalists in jail.⁶

Growing number of politically motivated criminal charges

Over 900 persons in Belarus have been targeted by criminal charges related to the August 9 presidential election and the post-election protests that followed. At least 11 of them are minors, several minors are kept in jail⁷. 121 persons are on the list of political prisoners.

The charges are: participating in or plotting riots (at least 157 people charged), grave breach of public order (at least 231 persons), resistance to police officers, and violence against law enforcement officers.⁸ At the same time no cases of torture or other human rights violations have been initiated by the prosecutor's office or the investigating authorities.

This week court hearings on criminal cases related to grave breach of public order, resistance to police officers, and violence against law enforcement officers took place in Minsk, Hrodna, Homiel, Sluck, Khoiniki.

⁴ As reported by an activist Zmicier Dashkievich:

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2083206731809297&id=100003599706773

⁵ Viasna chronicles for November 11-12: <http://spring96.org/be/news/100361>

⁶ Belarusian Association of Journalists: <https://baj.by/be/analytics/16-zhurnalistau-za-kratami-hto-yany>

⁷ Belsat. Law enforcement against school children.

<https://blstv.eu/news/silaviki-suprats-shkolnikau-yak-padletki-traplyayuts-pad-represii/?fbclid=IwAR0XgUdZxtAXWI0cEI2V27isAYXb1f8DU6M6MmRKYv9-ZppVQEwHsYWL5Mw>

⁸ Viasna. Nearly 1,000 criminal cases: Aftermath of presidential election and post-election protests: <http://spring96.org/en/news/100374>

Blocking victims' bank accounts

Authorities in Belarus have ordered banks to seize money raised in small donations via the By_Help initiative⁹ and paid out as compensation to victims of a police crackdown on protesters. The funds were transferred to people who were beaten or fined after taking part in ongoing demonstrations.¹⁰

Banks based on the state order froze any funds transferred by the By_Help fund, due to an open criminal case against the leader of the By_Help, Mr. Leonchik.

Hundreds of people have been affected by the crackdown on the payments. Some, who had already spent the money to pay off fines or on other expenses, found their accounts were overdrawn. In some cases, people had all access to their accounts blocked. The order to banks refers to a sum of 1.4 million Belarusian roubles (\$560,000).¹¹

Other news

Human rights organisations came up with the joint statement regarding the Ice Hockey World Championship 2021, that is planned to take place in Belarus. The statement concludes that “it is impossible to hold the planned event in Belarus until mass and systematic violations of fundamental human rights stop, political prisoners and all persons who have been arbitrarily detained and are now in custody are released, and independent investigations of all cases of torture and death connected with protests are conducted.”¹²

⁹ The By_Help is being supported by prominent Belarusian diaspora and civil society activists. The collected funds are used to support those persecuted for protesting and speaking out in the weeks since the elections.

¹⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/belarus>

¹¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/13/belarus-tells-banks-seize-money-raised-help-protesters-lukashenko>

¹² joint statement regarding the Ice Hockey World Championship 2021 in Belarus
https://humanconstantaby.com/en/2021-iihf-belarus_and_human-rights_eng/