

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

Summary: Saturday 12 December to Monday 14 December 2020

Belarusians continue their fourth month of protests. For the fourth Sunday in a row, people have gathered in their neighbourhoods and then moved on to the locations either previously decided in local chats or decided on the spot on where to march. In Minsk, where the temperature was about three degrees below zero, water cannons were spotted in a number of residential areas.¹ The human rights organisation Viasna said that nearly 238 people were detained during the 13 December protests, with most of the arrests reported in Minsk.² In search of protesters, the riot police cleared out street yards in many bedroom Minsk neighbourhoods. Often, they detained bystanders and passers-by, not protesters. In Smaliavichi, a school class was taken to the police station. Young people were returning from a waltz rehearsal for a graduation ceremony. The schoolchildren say they were taken to the backyard and told to face the wall, but were later released, receiving an apology. The Ministry of Internal Affairs denies that the children were put against the wall.³

In contrast to past weekend demonstrations, on 13 December Minsk authorities did not shutter the subway system, and no major Internet disruptions were reported.

Multiple administrative charges and short-term arrests

Yan Salanovich, a student and an ex-employee of the KGB scientific and technical centre, was arrested on 1 November. Since then he has faced seven trials in a row, all while still in a detention centre, and has been sentenced to 99 days of arrest in total.⁴

Volha Khizhynkova, the holder of the title Miss Belarus 2008, has already spent 33 days in a detention centre under notorious conditions. During her custody, Khizhynkova was tried for the third time and sentenced to another 15 day term of administrative arrest; she is likely to spend another nine days under arrest.⁵

¹ See Belsat: <https://belsat.eu/en/news/march-of-people-s-accusing-kicks-off-in-minsk-and-regions/>

² See Viasna: <http://spring96.org/be/news/100906>

³ According to the Facebook page of activist and teacher, Hanna Sieviaryniec: https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=3682573108472334&id=100001590432268

⁴ See TUT.by: <https://news.tut.by/society/711077.html?tg>

⁵ See Belsat: <https://belsat.eu/en/news/over-30-days-in-custody-miss-belarus-2008-volha-khizhynkova-still-not-released/>