

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 27 March 2021 to Friday 2 April 2021**

### **Arbitrary detention on 27 March 2021**

According to data collected by human rights defenders, 176 people were arrested on 27 March 2021, including at least 5 journalists, with only 39 released. In fast-tracked trials, many of the arrested individuals faced fines or jail sentences of up to 15 days. Despite the high number of detained individuals, the Ministry of Interior stated that no unauthorised gatherings happened on that day.<sup>1</sup>

### **Sanctions against Belarus: New targets and the Belarusian response**

The United States Department of State representative stated that the country may re-impose sanctions on Belarusian companies, which have been 'paused' since 2015, if Belarusian authorities fail to release political prisoners.<sup>2</sup>

On 30 March 2021, Alexander Lukashenko signed an executive order, № 128, "On the application of special measures". The order provides for an import ban on certain goods and services provided by companies and individuals from states that have adopted sanctions in respect to Belarusian companies and individuals. The exact list of goods and services, as well as foreign companies and individuals, will be developed by the Council of Ministers.<sup>3</sup> De facto Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko, commenting on the order, said that Belarus will be introducing targeted counter-sanctions.<sup>4</sup>

### **Crackdown on dissent under the premise of counter-extremism**

In addition to popular Telegram channels NEXTA and MotolkoPomogi (MotolkoHelp), as well as several regional ones, Belarusian authorities added two more Vitebsk-based Telegram channels to the list of "extremist materials".<sup>5</sup> This means that reposting information from any of the channels can be punishable with fines, deprivation of liberty, and confiscating electronic devices through which information was shared.

The Belarusian Investigative Committee stated that those who "follow the incitements to take part in unauthorised mass events" posted on Telegram channels must be held accountable.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://news.tut.by/society/724144.html?tg>

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.tut.by/economics/724698.html?tg>

<sup>3</sup> <https://news.tut.by/economics/724520.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://news.tut.by/economics/724684.html?tg>

<sup>5</sup> <https://42.tut.by/724304?tg>

<sup>6</sup> <https://news.tut.by/society/724136.html?tg>

## **Factory strikes outlawed**

Belarusian authorities stated that amendments to laws on labour rights are underway. The amendments will allow employers to fire individuals who call for strikes. They have called strikes a “destructive activity” aimed at halting the work process and inciting and shattering the foundation of work collectives.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> <https://news.tut.by/society/724202.html?tg>