

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 3 July 2021 to Friday 9 July 2021**

### **Ex-presidential candidate sentenced to 14 years in prison**

Former presidential candidate and now political prisoner, Viktor Babaryka,<sup>1</sup> was sentenced to 14 years in prison for tax evasion and money laundering. Because the case was considered by the Supreme Court as the court of first instance, the verdict could not be appealed. Babaryka's lawyers applied to take the trial to a lower court, but were unsuccessful. Co-defendants and ex-colleagues of Babaryka pleaded guilty to the charges against them.<sup>2</sup>

### **Persecution of lawyers and lawyers-to-be**

Viktor Babaryka's lawyer, Dmitriy Laevski, continues to face pressure from Belarusian authorities. On 8 July 2021, he was called into two disciplinary proceedings – one for a Facebook post commenting on the recent amendments to the Law on Legal Practice,<sup>3</sup> and the other for his statement during Babaryka's trial which hinted at the innocence of Babaryka's co-defendants – and was consequently disbarred.<sup>4</sup>

The persecution of lawyers follows a larger trend of silencing the professional community. In addition to initiating disbarment and disciplinary proceedings against lawyers, Belarusian authorities target law school students. A recent graduate of the Law Faculty of Belarusian State University, Katsiaryna Vinnikava, was arrested soon after giving a speech in support of repressed lawyers and professors during her graduation ceremony and was sentenced to 15 days of administrative arrest. The fact that the student was wearing a white dress with a red belt was also used by the court as evidence of her guilt.<sup>5</sup>

### **Migration crisis at the border**

As the number of migrants willing to cross the Belarusian–Lithuanian border continues to grow, Lithuanian authorities have announced their intention to erect a 'physical barrier' at the border.<sup>6</sup> The Lithuanian government urged the country's parliament to convene an extraordinary parliamentary session in connection with the situation on the border with

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<sup>1</sup> <https://prisoners.spring96.org/en/person/viktar-babaryka>

<sup>2</sup> <https://belsat.eu/en/news/06-07-2021-viktar-babaryka-sentenced-to-14-years-of-imprisonment/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://humanconstanta.by/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Human-Rights-29.05-04.06-1.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://t.me/s/advokat\\_laevski](https://t.me/s/advokat_laevski)

<sup>5</sup>

<https://telegra.ph/Narushila-pravila-provedeniya-massovyh-meropriyatij-i-byla-v-belom-plate-s-krasnym-poyasom-Kak-segodnya-sudili-vypusknicu-yurfak-07-02;>

<https://www.defenders.by/news/tpost/ke8u495f91-vipusknitsu-yurfaka-publichno-poblagodar>

<sup>6</sup>

<https://belsat.eu/en/news/07-07-2021-pm-announces-mobilising-military-installing-physical-barrier-to-protect-lithuania-s-border-with-belarus/>

Belarus. According to a statement from the Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė, the Belarusian authorities may be participating in the organisation of migration flows “both actively and passively”.<sup>7</sup>

### **Famous athlete arrested**

Aliaksandr Ivulin – a player with Krumkachy football club and a journalist with Tribuna.com – was arrested on 3 June 2021 and sentenced to a 30 day administrative arrest for having a white-red-white flag in the window of his apartment. After he served the sentence he was not released, but was instead transferred to a pre-trial detention facility on suspicion of committing a criminal offence of grossly disrupting public order.<sup>8</sup>

### **Allegations of torture in prison**

Activist and political prisoner Mikalai Dzyadok, who was accused of gravely violating the public order and the illegal use of combustible substances, spoke about the torture he was subjected to during arrest and detention.<sup>9</sup> Human rights organisations have called upon the authorities to investigate the torture of Dzyadok, as well as other detainees, such as Stsiapan Latypau, Ivan Bahdzevich, Ihar Yarmolau, Aliaksandr Marjasau, David Slashchou, Vital Shyshlou, and Artsiom Anishchuk.<sup>10</sup> Political prisoner and human rights defender Marfa Rabkova has also complained of ill-treatment in prison.<sup>11</sup>

### **Crackdown on independent media continues**

After the notorious crackdown on TUT.BY – the largest independent media outlet in Belarus – Belarusian authorities have continued to exert pressure on journalists’ communities. On 8 July 2021, Nasha Niva’s website was blocked, its offices were searched, and at least three of its editors, including the editor-in-chief, were reportedly detained.<sup>12</sup> The website of another outlet,

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<https://belsat.eu/en/news/07-07-2021-pm-announces-mobilising-military-installing-physical-barrier-to-protect-lithuania-s-border-with-belarus/>

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<https://prisoners.spring96.org/en/person/aljaksandr-ivulin;>  
[https://by.tribuna.com/football/1098852955-ivulin-priznan-politzaklyuchennym.html;](https://by.tribuna.com/football/1098852955-ivulin-priznan-politzaklyuchennym.html)  
[https://belsat.eu/en/news/06-07-2021-lithuanian-president-says-lukashenka-s-regime-responsible-for-migrant-crisis/;](https://belsat.eu/en/news/06-07-2021-lithuanian-president-says-lukashenka-s-regime-responsible-for-migrant-crisis/) <https://belsat.eu/en/news/05-07-2021-lithuania-wants-to-bill-lukashenka-for-migrants/>

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<https://belsat.eu/en/news/01-07-2021-pillow-stifling-tear-gas-threats-of-rape-mikalai-dzyadok-gives-statement-about-torture-by-police/>

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<http://spring96.org/en/news/104182;>  
<https://belsat.eu/en/news/02-07-2021-artsyom-anishchuk-tortured-in-colony-his-wife-says/>

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<https://belsat.eu/en/news/06-07-2021-political-prisoner-marfa-rabkova-loses-too-much-weight-but-sticks-to-guns-attorney/>

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<http://spring96.org/be/news/104203;>  
<https://belsat.eu/en/news/08-07-2021-minsk-police-raiding-office-of-popular-belarusian-media-outlet-nasha-niva-website-down/>

Euroradio, was blocked. Several journalists working for regional media outlets across the country were arrested.<sup>13</sup>

### **Work of Goethe-Institut in Belarus to be suspended**

Belarusian authorities are set to halt all activities by the Goethe-Institut and the German Academic Exchange Service in the country.<sup>14</sup>

### **Persecution for ‘mockery of state symbols’**

According to Prosecutor General Andrei Shved, since 2020 the number of criminal cases opened over “mockery” of the red and green flag has increased tenfold, totaling 100 criminal cases.

### **Political prisoners**

As of 9 July 2021, the total number of political prisoners in Belarus is 546.<sup>15</sup> The number continues to grow daily.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://spring96.org/be/news/104203>

<sup>14</sup>

<https://belsat.eu/en/news/01-07-2021-regime-set-to-halt-work-of-goethe-institut-german-academic-exchange-service-in-belarus/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://prisoners.spring96.org/en>