

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: Friday 23 July 2021 to Friday 29 July 2021

A wave of civil society organisation liquidations

Following a wave of searches and detentions of human rights defenders and civil society activists, liquidation procedures have been initiated in respect of almost all non-profit sector organisations in Belarus. Due to enormous pressure, many organisations and their members have been forced to relocate and operate without the official registration status. The consequences of liquidation are particularly damaging for those organisations that provide direct help to individuals or collect charity contributions through official accounts.¹

Maryia Kalesnikava and Maksim Znak's case

The criminal case against one of the leaders of democratic forces, Maryia Kalesnikava, and her lawyer, Maksim Znak, is to be heard by Minsk regional court on 4 August 2021 in a closed hearing. Both political prisoners are accused of three crimes under the Criminal Code: calling to undermine national security, conspiring to seize state power by unconstitutional means, and creating and running an extremist group. They may face up to 12 years in prison. Both Kalesnikava and Znak have been in detention since September 2020.²

Migration crisis at the Belarusian border

The migration crisis at the Belarusian–Lithuanian border and, most recently, Belarusian–Polish border,³ continues to worsen. A record high number of 171 migrants were detained at the Belarusian–Lithuanian border on 27 July 2021. The total number of people who have crossed into Lithuania illegally is now more than 3,000.⁴

Independent media outlet recognised as extremist

The website and social networks of Belarusian independent media outlet Belsat were declared 'extremist' on 27 July 2021 by Homiel city court. Following the decision to block access to the outlet, Interior Ministry spokesperson, Volha Chamadanava, reinforced the message that spreading (reposting) information from "extremist sources" entails administrative responsibility

¹ <https://news.zerkalo.io/economics/840.html>

² <https://news.zerkalo.io/economics/882.html?c>

³ <https://news.zerkalo.io/life/898.html>

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https://news.zerkalo.io/world/872.html?utm_source=news.zerkalo.io&utm_medium=news-right-block&utm_campaign=recirculation-manual-main-news;

[https://belsat.eu/en/news/27-07-2021-lithuania-accuses-belarusian-border-guards-of-ignoring-trespassers/;](https://belsat.eu/en/news/27-07-2021-lithuania-accuses-belarusian-border-guards-of-ignoring-trespassers/)

<https://belsat.eu/en/news/22-07-2021-over-1-5k-illegal-migrants-detained-at-belarusian-lithuanian-border-in-july/>

with punishment in the form of a fine or arrest. Blocking Belsat falls into a larger trend of silencing independent journalists and civil society in Belarus. Belarusian authorities have already targeted the content of TUT.by, Nasha Niva, Euroradio, Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty, some regional media outlets, as well as that of Telegram channels.⁵

Treatment in prisons

While Belarus ranks first in Europe for the number of prisoners per 100,000 people,⁶ the treatment of prisoners also remains inhumane. Multiple complaints on the inhumane and degrading conditions in Belarusian prisons and detention facilities remain unaddressed, since the body authorised to consider the complaints *de facto* runs the detention facilities and determines their way of operation.⁷

Political prisoners

As of 29 July 2021, the total number of political prisoners in Belarus is 589.⁸ The number continues to grow daily.

⁵ <https://belsat.eu/en/news/28-07-2021-belsat-officially-declared-extremist-in-belarus/>;
<https://news.zerkalo.io/economics/888.html>

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<https://belsat.eu/en/news/26-07-2021-belarus-ranks-first-place-in-europe-by-number-of-prisoners-per-100k-people/>

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https://news.zerkalo.io/life/865.html?utm_source=news.zerkalo.io&utm_medium=news-right-block&utm_campaign=recirculation-manual-main-news

⁸ <https://prisoners.spring96.org/en>