

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 9 October 2021 to Friday 15 October 2021**

### **Migration crisis at Belarusian border**

The migration crisis continues to intensify at the Belarusian border with Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland. On 11 October 2021, [538](#) attempts to cross the Polish border were made. On the same day, [39](#) migrants attempted to cross the Lithuanian border and [21](#) attempted to cross the Latvian border.

There has been evidence of Belarusian border control authorities spreading [misinformation](#) about Polish border control officers forcing families with children (including children with disabilities) to return to Belarusian territory. There are also confirmed [reports](#) that people crossing the border with Poland receive SMS messages, telling them to “go back to Minsk.”

Reportedly, German authorities have opened an [investigation](#) into Alexander Lukashenko’s role in the migrants’ transference process from Belarusian territory into Germany through Poland.

### **Nuremberg Conference on Belarus**

On 11 October 2021, a [conference](#) on crimes against humanity in Belarus and recognition of Lukashenko as a terrorist was organized by the Belarusian alternative democratic force National Anti-Crisis Management in Nuremberg, Germany. During the conference, Belarusian and foreign experts and civil society representatives discussed the legal avenues and prospects of holding officials responsible for violent repression in Belarus accountable. The conference’s [final document](#) encouraged the wider use of universal jurisdiction mechanisms, suggested the creation of an ad hoc tribunal investigating human rights violations in Belarus, and called upon democratic states to use the toolbox of international legal means to resolve the crisis in Belarus.

### **Suspected KGB spy detained in Poland**

On 10 October 2021, the Polish National Security Agency [arrested](#) a man suspected of engaging in [espionage](#) against Poland. The detained person is a Polish national, who is believed to have ties to the Belarusian State Security Committee (KGB).

### **Belarusian athletes publish a report on violations of law committed by the Belarusian Football Federation**

On 13 October 2021, the Belarusian Sport Solidarity Foundation published a [report](#) revealing numerous violations of law, including FIFA and UEFA regulations, committed by the Belarusian Football Federation. According to the report’s authors, the Belarusian Football

Federation has breached the principles of political neutrality and good governance when electing the Federation's leadership, as well as the principles of integrity of sport, human rights adherence, and non-discrimination. The report describes several [cases](#) of people meddling with rules and exerting political pressure in sports competitions in Belarus.

### **The EU to adopt a fifth package of sanctions against Belarus**

The European Parliament has passed a non-binding [resolution](#) on Belarus, calling on member states to proceed with a fifth package of sanctions with the utmost urgency and apply the universal jurisdiction principle to Lukashenko. The MEPs insist that during the next session of the European Council on 21–22 October 2021, a comprehensive strategy of sanctions against the Belarusian regime should be developed. More information on sanctions and other international responses to the political and human rights crisis in Belarus can be found [here](#).

### **Belarusian authorities accuse UN officials of misuse of funds**

In an official [statement](#), the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva accused the United Nations Office staff in Belarus of misusing financial resources, intended for legal aid to people with disabilities and victims of domestic violence. According to the statement:

*“In August 2020, after externally incited riots took place in Belarus following the announcement of the election campaign results, on the initiative and with further support of the UN official, two employees of the UN Office in Belarus, with full awareness of the illegality of their actions, developed and implemented an illegal scheme to cover the services of lawyers to Belarusian citizens who were neither persons with disabilities nor victims of domestic violence. These citizens participated in illegal protests aimed at undermining statehood and overthrowing the current government. As a result, lawyers were illegally financed to service 23 citizens.”*

The statement also mentioned that some UN employees have been “earning career points on the ‘Belarusian theme’,” distorting facts, and misleading the international community. The Office of the United Nations Permanent Coordinator in Belarus made a [statement](#) acknowledging awareness of the Belarusian authorities' concerns and expressing willingness to continue dialogue with the Belarusian authorities through diplomatic channels.

### **Controversial resolution on “extremism” adopted by the Council of Ministers**

The Belarusian highest executive body – the Council of Ministers – has adopted a [resolution](#) on countering extremism and Nazism. The document provides that the Ministry of Internal Affairs will now maintain a list of people and companies associated with “extremist activities.” Additionally, the document stipulates the creation of a specialized commission under the auspices of the Ministry of Information, tasked with assessing whether symbols and regalia can qualify as extremist.

In line with the general [trend](#) of using anti-extremism laws to silence dissent, the Deputy of the House of Representatives, [Ihar Marzalyuk](#), stated that teachers and professors who deviate from the version of World War II events approved by the authorities should be recognized as extremists and deprived of their right to the profession.

Recently, the representatives of Human Constanta, Belarusian Association of Journalists, and Legal initiative made a joint [statement](#) on the impermissibility of restricting freedom of speech in connection with persecution of online commentators under the premise of anti-extremism.

### **Developments in politically motivated cases**

Some of the key developments in politically motivated cases include:

- On 13 October 2021, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's election team volunteer [Alyaksandr Dabryianik](#) was sentenced to three years of restriction of liberty in an open-type correctional institution for grossly violating public order;
- On 10 October 2021, an additional criminal charge of "unwarranted appropriation of the title or power of an official" was brought against democratic leaders [Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and Pavel Latushka](#), who had already been subjected to criminal persecution in Belarus;
- On 10 October 2021, former investigator [Yahor Vyarshynin](#) was found guilty of grossly violating public order for participating in peaceful demonstrations and sentenced to two years of imprisonment;
- On 10 October 2021, former director of environmental organization APB Birdlife [Viktar Fyanchuk](#) was charged with organizing group actions, which violated public order;
- On 8 October 2021, a [Navagrudak resident](#) was charged with "aiding extremist activities" for allegedly "leaving a comment in a Telegram-channel in support of extremist activities and use of guns." The accused was already subjected to administrative responsibility for participating in peaceful protests;
- On 8 October 2021, [four people](#) were detained in connection with the case of hacking the website of the Minsk City Executive Committee and taking active part in "mass riots;"
- On 8 October 2021, an ex-officer from the riot police, [Eduard Pestrak](#), was detained and charged with committing an "act of terrorism;"
- On 8 October 2021, peaceful protester [Yauhen Kuzmyankou](#) was found guilty of grossly violating public order by "obstructing the traffic" and "shouting slogans and clapping loudly." He was sentenced to a year and a half in a minimum-security prison;
- On 7 October 2021, Minsk resident [Svyatlana Baranouskaya](#) was found guilty of insulting the representatives of state authorities for leaving an online comment criticizing the actions of Belarusian riot police and was sentenced to three years of restriction of liberty without being sent to prison.

### **Political prisoners**

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [804](#). The number continues to grow daily.