

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 13 November 2021 to Friday 19 November 2021

Migration crisis at Belarusian border

The migration crisis continues to intensify at the Belarusian border with Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland, having reached an unprecedented scale by mid-November 2021. On 18 November 2021, Alexander Lukashenko's press service [reported](#) that there are 7,000 migrants in Belarus, with up to 2,500 at the Belarus–European Union (EU) border. On 14 November 2021, [223](#) attempts to cross the Belarusian–Polish border were made, while 50 people are reported to have crossed the border by force. Since the beginning of autumn 2021, more than [8,000](#) attempts to get into Germany through the 'Belarusian route' have been made.

The migrants remain a vulnerable group in need of medical, legal, and psychological assistance. On 13 November 2021, a [Syrian citizen](#) was found dead in the border area. A pregnant woman is [reported](#) to have lost her unborn child. A World Health Organization regional director for Europe, Hans Kluge, [stated](#) that approximately 60 percent of migrants at the border are in need of some form of medical help. Polish border control authorities have reportedly [used](#) tear gas, flash grenades, and water cannons in response to forced attempts by migrants to cross the border. Belarusian border control authorities are also reported to be violent to migrants – [beating them up](#), [being verbally abusive](#), [firing shots](#) to control migrants, and [restricting their freedom](#).

On 11 November 2021, six members of the UN Security Council – Estonia, France, Ireland, Norway, the United Kingdom, the United States – issued a [statement](#) condemning “the orchestrated instrumentalization of human beings whose lives and wellbeing have been put in danger for political purposes by Belarus”.

On 12 November 2021, the North Atlantic Council issued a [statement](#) on the situation at the Poland–Belarus border, condemning “the continued instrumentalisation of irregular migration artificially created by Belarus as part of hybrid actions targeted against Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia for political purposes”.

On 15 November 2021, the Council of the European Union [amended its sanctions regime](#) against the Belarusian authorities by broadening the listing criteria on which specific designations can be based. The EU is now able to target individuals and entities organising or contributing to activities by the Lukashenko regime that facilitate illegal crossing of the EU's external borders. On the same day, the Spokesperson for the United States (US) Department of State, Ned Price, [stated](#) that the US was also “preparing follow-up sanctions in close coordination with the EU and other partners and allies that [would] continue to hold the Lukashenko regime accountable for its ongoing attacks on democracy, on human rights, on international norms”. Previously, the situation at the border was [discussed](#) by European

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and US President Joe Biden during a meeting at the White House.

Lukashenko [discussed](#) the migration crisis during phone calls with Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel on 15 and 17 November 2021. Commenting on the calls, Estonia's Foreign Minister Eva-Maria Liimets [stated](#) that Lukashenko might contribute to the migration crisis resolution in exchange for recognition as the president of Belarus and lifting sanctions.

On 17 November 2021, the EU [allocated](#) 200,000 EUR to the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund, managed by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, as well as an additional 500,000 EUR to be distributed among humanitarian partner organizations "to alleviate the suffering of people stranded at the border and in other parts of Belarus".

As a result of ongoing actions regarding the crisis, the citizens of Iraq, Syria, and Yemen will no longer be allowed to board [Belavia and Turkish Airlines flights](#) to Belarus. At the same time, the Belarusian Investigative Committee has [opened](#) a criminal investigation of alleged "crimes against humanity" committed by Polish law enforcement personnel against migrants who attempted to forcibly enter Polish territory, specifically the use of tear gas, water cannons, and flashbang grenades at the border crossing. In turn, Jarosław Szymczyk, head of Poland's National Police Headquarters, [said](#) that 12 Polish officers were injured in the course of recent attacks by migrants.

Human Constanta commented on the situation in the [media](#), providing information of migrants' persecution in their home countries and the rise of hate speech and xenophobia in connection to the crisis, and released a [statement](#) on the matter.

Political pressure on professional communities in Belarus

In a BBC interview, Belarusian doctor Nadezhda Gurmanchuk [stated](#) that Belarusian authorities are using political repression against medics in Belarus. She highlighted the cases when politically dissenting doctors are fired or pressured to manipulate information on actual causes of deaths and injuries, when caused by the actions of Belarusian authorities.

Developments in politically motivated cases

Some of the key developments in politically motivated cases include:

- On 17 November 2021, teacher and international secretary of the Belarusian Social Democratic Party (Hramada), Valyantsin Askirka, was [detained](#) during a lesson at a private school in Hrodna. Previously, he was fired from Hrodna State University on political grounds;
- On 15 November 2021, [Pavel Belavus](#), founder of the clothing and souvenir store Symbal.by, best known for selling Belarus-themed merchandise, was detained for alleged distribution of extremist materials;

- On 10 November 2021, Belarusian athlete [Alyaksandra Ramanouskaya](#) was detained and fined for violating the rules of holding mass public events. In October 2020, she was fired from the Belarusian national freestyle team;
- On 10 November 2021, Minsk resident [Aksana Zybina](#) was sentenced to 10 days in jail for violating the rules of holding mass public events by putting a sticker on her car with the Belarusian historical emblem 'Pahonya' (eng. Pursuit);
- Political prisoner and democratic leader [Maryia Kalesnikava](#), sentenced to 11 years in prison for attempting to seize state power in an unconstitutional manner, creating an extremist formation, and harming Belarusian national security, is reported to have been kept in [solitary confinement](#) for eight months;
- Political prisoner and activist [Palina Sharenda-Panasiuk](#) reported in her correspondence that the prison administration [deprived her of food parcels](#) for three months.

Political prisoners

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [873](#). The number continues to grow daily.