

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 18 September 2021 to Friday 24 September 2021

Migration crisis at Belarusian border

The migration crisis continues to intensify at the Belarusian border with Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland. Deaths of migrants have been reported. According to the Belarusian Investigative Committee, a 39-year-old Iraqi woman [was found dead](#) at the Belarusian–Polish border, while the Polish border authorities reported finding three bodies. According to Polish border guards, special services [rescued](#) eight migrants who were trapped in a swamp near the Suprasl River, not far from the Belarusian border.

Both the Polish and Lithuanian prime ministers [have commented](#) on the migration crisis. The former said that “there are more than 10,000 people in Belarus, maybe even more, who have moved from the Middle East, mostly from Iraq, as well as from Syria, to conduct a hybrid attack”. The latter said that the process of illegal migration to Lithuania and Poland was created “by the evil will” of the Minsk regime. According to Polish authorities, migrants who have crossed the border illegally will be subjected to a [temporary ban](#) to enter the Schengen area. At the same time, as a response to the crisis, Lithuanian authorities [have allowed](#) migrants to lodge asylum requests with the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in the Republic of Belarus.

Developments in politically motivated cases

Key developments in politically motivated cases include:

- On 17 September 2021, Novapolatsk resident [Eugeniy Horoshkevich](#) was sentenced to 4 years in a medium-security prison for violating public order after serving as an observer during the 2020 presidential elections;
- On 17 September 2021, political prisoner [Ruslan Linnik](#) was sentenced to 4 years in a medium-security prison for insulting the president. He reported being subjected to physical and psychological abuse;
- On 18 September 2021, a criminal case was opened against a 26-year-old [Minsk resident](#) for creating and administering a Telegram channel, recognised as “extremist” by Belarusian authorities;
- On 19 September 2021, Vitebsk resident [Syarhei Dumau](#) was sentenced to 9 years of imprisonment in a maximum-security prison for “organising mass riots”;
- On 20 September 2021, Russian citizen [Iryna Vikholm](#) was sentenced to 1.5 years in a medium-security prison for insulting the president by publishing a tweet about the [Ryanair incident](#);
- On 21 September 2021, Belarusian citizen [Dmitry Holubeu](#) was detained in Moscow’s Red Square for protesting with a poster saying “Stop Maintaining Lukashenko Regime”;

- Musician, activist, and political prisoner [Ihar Bantser](#) may face an upgraded punishment, being transferred from a correctional facility to a penal colony. He is accused of repeatedly violating the rules of serving his sentence;
- The General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Belarus [has closed the investigation](#) into the notorious case of Raman Bandarenka, who died in November 2020 as a consequence of injuries, reportedly after being beaten by Belarusian law enforcement authorities.

Pressure on labour unions

On 21 September 2021, State Security Committee (KGB) officers [searched](#) the Navapolatsk apartment of Volha Brytsikava, chairwoman of the primary organisation of the Belarusian Independent Trade Union at the Belarusian state-owned oil refinery Naftan. Members of the labour union, Maksim Paznyakou and Vadzim Mikhailau, were detained earlier in September.

On 23 September 2021, Alexander Lukashenko made a public [statement](#), saying that there were “spies” in Belarusian factories, who intentionally harmed the Belarusian economy, “being sponsored by the secret services of the West”.

Conditions in prisons and detention facilities

Journalist Katsyaryna Karpitskaya has spent a month in detention at the notorious Akrestsina detention centre in Minsk. In her social media posts she described the [degrading conditions at the facility](#), mentioned the medical conditions she developed (pharyngotracheitis, cystitis, and COVID-19), the lack of access to a shower, essentials, and walks outside, sleeping without a mattress, and the constant light in the prison cell.

Political prisoners

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [671](#). The number continues to grow daily.