

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 30 October 2021 to Friday 5 November 2021

Migration crisis at Belarusian border

The migration crisis continues to intensify at the Belarusian border with Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland. On 29 October 2021, there were [575](#) attempts to cross the Polish border and [186](#) attempts to cross the Lithuanian border. A Kurdish media organization, Rudaw, reports that approximately [300](#) Kurds are stuck at the Belarusian border without access to food and water. The migrants report mistreatment and violence inflicted by Belarusian police.

On 30 October 2021, a 25-year-old citizen of Iraq, [Gaylan Dler](#), was found dead at the Belarusian–Polish border. Dler’s father maintains that the Polish border control officer sent him back to the Belarusian border and separated him from his uncle, who had diabetes medication for Dler stored in his bag.

USAID Office in Belarus closed under pressure

The United States Special Envoy to Belarus, Julie D. Fisher, has issued a [statement](#) entitled ‘Efforts to hamper U.S. development assistance and public diplomacy programs in Belarus’, regarding the pressure of Belarusian authorities on the U.S. Embassy in Minsk and the restrictions imposed on U.S. international development and public relations programs.

According to the 20 October 2021 statement: “The Belarusian authorities informed the United States of new measures designed to impede the functioning of the U.S. Embassy in Minsk by forcing the closure of the Embassy’s Public Diplomacy and USAID offices, including the American Center in Minsk. The Belarusian authorities are forcing the Embassy to terminate the employment of more than 20 Belarusian members of our staff.” The Special Envoy mentioned that such actions “reflect the Belarusian authorities’ deep insecurities about the role of diplomacy, people-to-people ties and independent civil society”.

More media resources labeled “extremist”

Belarusian authorities [recognized](#) Telegram channels NEXTA, NEXTA-Live, and LUXTA as “extremist”, while their editors were called an “extremist group”. The channels were widely used during peaceful protests in Belarus to receive and impart information on the situation in the country.

Media outlets [Euroradio](#) and Deutsche Welle were also recognized as “extremist”, causing the German Ambassador in Belarus to [contact](#) the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to demand an explanation for the categorization.

At the same time, efforts to recognize the content of Belarusian propaganda as extremist remain [futile](#).

Universal jurisdiction case against Belarusian top officials in Germany

The European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) filed a complaint against six members of the Belarus security apparatus. In his official [statement](#), OMCT Secretary General Gerald Staberock noted that "there is clear evidence that torture was used intentionally and that it was widespread and systematic, thus reaching the threshold of crimes against humanity". The criminal complaint is in alignment with other legal steps taken by ECCHR to bring those responsible for crimes against humanity to justice under the principle of universal jurisdiction.

Viktar Babaryka's lawyer disbarred

On 28 October 2021, [Yauhen Pylchanka](#) – the lawyer of political prisoner and former presidential candidate [Viktar Babaryka](#) – was disbarred in accordance with a decision by the Minsk City Bar Association's disciplinary commission for alleged systematic violations of laws regulating legal practice in Belarus.

It is Babaryka's sixth lawyer who has been disbarred. Of his previous lawyers: Maksim Znak has been sentenced to 10 years; Ilyya Saley left Belarus; Alyaksandr Pylchanka was disbarred more than a year ago; Zmitser Layeuski was disbarred in July 2021; and Natallia Matskevich was suspended on 13 October and expelled from the Bar on 25 October. Now Babaryka's most recent lawyer, Pylchanka, has been deprived of his license.

Overall, at least [27](#) lawyers have been disbarred in Belarus on political grounds.

Developments in politically motivated cases

In October 2021, at least [95](#) people were convicted in protest-related criminal trials. Some of the key developments in politically motivated cases include:

- On 3 November 2021, "Viasna" Human Rights Center activist [Leanid Sudalenka](#) and volunteer [Tatsiana Lasitsa](#) were sentenced to three years and two and a half years, respectively, in a medium security prison for "grossly violating public order". According to Sudalenka's correspondence, the actions that were deemed unlawful by Belarusian authorities included covering expenses for firewood for the children from a large family, whose father was later convicted of "rioting"; appearing in a YouTube video dedicated to peaceful protests; encouraging fellow activists to meet Maryia Tulzhankova after serving 15 days of administrative arrest; arranging a seminar on digital security for human rights defenders; and paying fines, court fees, and lawyers' services for repressed peaceful protestors;
- On 28 October 2021, Zhlobin residents [Yauhen Kharyanau and Uladzislau Verasau](#) were sentenced to two years of imprisonment in a minimum security prison for "grossly violating public order" by participating in protests in August 2020;

- On 20 October 2021, the official Belsat representative in Belarus, [Iryna Slaunikava](#), and her husband, Alyaksandr Loyka, were returning from Egypt to Minsk and were detained at the airport. Once the plane landed, the couple did not return home. Slaunikava's father was going to file a missing persons report about the disappearance of his daughter and son-in-law to the Minsk police, when the officer on duty told him that they had been arrested on suspicion of committing an administrative offense and transferred to a detention center.

Political prisoners

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [834](#). The number continues to grow daily.