

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 22 January 2022 to Friday 28 January 2022

Developments in politically motivated cases

Some of the key developments in politically motivated cases include:

- On 22 January 2022, journalist [Mikhail Karnevich](#) was detained in Hrodna, following his recent publication about a migrant camp on the Belarusian–Polish border. No details about his detention or charges are yet known;
- On 21 January 2022, Vysokaye maintenance depot worker [Andrey Dubin](#) was detained after discussing changes to the Constitution during a state-organized ‘dialogue platform’ meeting. During the discussion, he made a suggestion that bald men with mustaches be banned from running in the election, allegedly implying Alexander Lukashenko;
- On 21 January 2022, neurologist and political prisoner [Alyaksandr Tsyaleha](#) was found guilty of insulting state representatives and threatening to use violence against the police by posting critical comments on the authorities’ actions online and was sentenced to four years in prison;
- Political prisoner [Yauhen Barouski](#), serving a prison term for “violence against police” and “gross violations of public order”, was placed in solitary confinement at a time when he urgently needed medical assistance;
- Reportedly, a criminal case was initiated in Belarus against a former chairman of the United Civic Party of Belarus, [Anatol Lyabedzka](#). While Lyabedzka is currently outside of Belarus, his wife has recently been summoned to the police as a witness. No details on the exact charges have been provided.

Migration crisis

While the [migration crisis](#) at the Belarus–EU border reached its peak in November 2021 and has subsided in scope since then, approximately [700 migrants](#) still remain stranded at the border, placed in Bruzgi logistics center. Belarusian Red Cross started documenting and systematizing data about the remaining migrants, allegedly to distribute humanitarian aid more effectively. At the same time, Polish border control authorities have reported [810 attempts](#) to illegally cross the Belarusian–Polish border since the beginning of January 2022.

Poland continues to accept refugees and asylum seekers leaving Belarus due to the fear of political persecution. Foreign Minister Mariusz Kaminski stated that Poland had accepted [15,000](#) political refugees from Belarus after the events of 2020.

PR agency searched

On 15 January 2022, the office of Minsk-based PR agency Sette [was searched](#). Three of the agency's employees were detained and were subsequently released, while no grounds for the searches were given.

'Extremism' cases on the rise

On 24 January 2021, Belarusian Prosecutor General Andrey Shved stated that more than [1,600](#) people were convicted in “extremist” criminal cases in Belarus in 2021. This number is even higher than the estimates of human rights defenders. A wave of recognizing media and civil society platforms as extremist also continues in Belarus – most recently, the website of the [Union of Poles in Belarus](#), previously recognized as “extremist”, was blocked in Belarus.

Additionally, political prisoners continue to be labeled as “extremist” even behind bars. Political prisoner [Pavel Vinahradau](#), serving a prison term for “grossly violating public order”, “insulting the President”, and “inciting hatred”, was reportedly listed as “a person prone to extremism and other destructive activity”. This label entails especially harsh treatment in prison – for instance, there is a special place in the cell where such prisoner has to be when a jailkeeper enters; such prisoners are also expected to be regularly called in for “preventive conversations.” Such a label is almost exclusively used against political prisoners, that is, Darya Chultsova, Katsyaryna Andreyeva, Uladzimir Matskevich, Andrey Alyaksandrau, and others.

Investigative Committee to purchase hacking software

The Investigative Committee of the Republic of Belarus has recently posted a call to purchase [hacking software](#) called Mobile Criminologist Expert Plus, developed by Russian company Oxygen Software. The software is advertised as a tool of bypassing passwords, decrypting information, and restoring deleted contacts and messages.

Raman Pratasevich to become a volunteer for state-sponsored “human rights organization”

Belarusian journalist Raman Pratasevich, detained following the notorious Ryanair incident in May 2021, has recently stated that he is planning to cooperate with a recently established and state-affiliated human rights organization, [Systemic Human Rights Defense](#), which emerged at the peak of the migration crisis at the Belarus–EU borders. Since all independent human rights organizations in Belarus were [liquidated](#) by the decision of Belarusian authorities and Pratasevich remains a suspect in a criminal case, there are grounds to believe that such “cooperation” was the result of political pressure.

Political prisoners

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [1,007](#). The number continues to grow daily.