

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.

## **Saturday 26 March 2022 to Friday 1 April 2022**

Human Constanta expresses its [solidarity](#) with the people of Ukraine. We urge the international community to prioritize the voices and stories of Ukrainians, highlight violations of human rights and international law, call for accountability for the actions of the aggressor, and [support the most vulnerable groups fleeing the war without discrimination](#).

### **Persecution of Belarusian volunteer fighters supporting Ukraine**

Belarusian authorities have initiated a criminal case against the Belarusian [Katus Kalinouski battalion](#), fighting in Ukraine on the side of the Ukrainian army. The charges against at least 50 members of the regiment include accusations of “taking part in the armed conflict on the side of a foreign army”.

A Wikipedia contributor, [Mark Berstein](#), was detained and sentenced to 15 days in prison in Minsk. He recently contributed to articles related to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Belarusian police published a video of Mark lying on the floor and stating his name and place of work to the camera on a government Telegram channel. The caption to the post read “This person spreads fake anti-Russian materials”.

A member of the group Pussy Riot and Russian citizen, [Rita Flores](#) was detained in Minsk on 30 March 2022. Belarusian police officers forced her to record a video endorsing Alexander Lukashenko. Following her release, she stated that she was forced to choose between recording a video supporting Lukashenko or one saying that the Russian invasion of Ukraine is justified. According to her account, she was also threatened with imprisonment for 15 years.

[Railroad workers](#) are detained *en masse* in Belarus. In recent weeks, at least 40 workers have been detained, with 38 forced confession videos published on state Telegram channels. At least one of the detained professionals is kept at a State Security Committee (KGB) detention center. Most people were subjected to KGB-led searches prior to arrests. Detained railroad workers were forced to admit that they were members of the Telegram chat group ‘Live. Belarusian Railroad Workers Community’, recognized as ‘extremist’ in Belarus. The documents related to their arrests reportedly contain the words “state treason”, “espionage”, and “preparing to commit terrorist attacks,” suggestive of potential criminal charges. Reportedly, ‘rail guerillas’ were detained in connection with an increased number of acts of railroad sabotage in Belarus, as they seek to prevent the movement of supplies and military equipment to Russian forces in Ukraine.

At the same time, Belarusian political prisoners continue expressing [solidarity with Ukraine](#), even from behind bars, in their letters.

### **Political persecution on Belarus Freedom Day**

On 25 March, Belarus celebrates the unofficial Independence Day – the day when the Belarusian People's Republic was founded. This date has historically been a day of [detentions, arrests, and brutal dispersals of peaceful citizens](#) who oppose the Belarusian authoritarian regime. On this, the 104th anniversary of Belarusian independence, the repression continued.

Women wearing white-red-white clothes, the colors of the unofficial Belarusian flag, and carrying blue and yellow umbrellas, the colors of the Ukrainian flag, as well as anti-war posters [were detained](#) in Minsk on 25 March 2022.

On the same day, 12 people who were sitting on a bench in a park were detained. Some of them [were sentenced](#) to administrative arrests.

### **Belarusian activist and artist sentenced to five years in prison**

Belarusian artist, performer, and political prisoner [Ales Pushkin](#), accused of desecrating state symbols and inciting hatred, was sentenced to five years in a medium-security prison. During the announcement of the verdict, Pushkin spoke loudly and undressed so that the cuts on his stomach in the shape of a cross could be seen. He was placed in a punishment cell for 13 days for self-harm.

### **Political prisoners**

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [1110](#). The number continues to grow daily.