

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 9 April 2022 to Friday 15 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](#).

### **Belarusian involvement in Russia–Ukraine armed conflict and persecution for anti-war speeches**

On 13 April, the Investigative Committee [announced](#) that seven criminal cases for facilitating extremist activities had been initiated in the Gomel region against people who took photos and videos on their mobile phones of the movements of Russian military equipment and transferred them to the administrators of Telegram channels. All of these people could face up to seven years in prison.

The Kastus Kalinouski battalion, consisting of Belarusians voluntarily fighting on the Ukrainian side in the Russia–Ukraine war, reported that another Belarusian fighter, Dmitriy Rubashevskiy (nickname Hans), [was killed](#). He is the fourth Belarusian to have died during the war – the other Belarusian fighters were Ilya Litvin, Dmitriy Apanasovich, and Alexey Skoblya. Skoblya was posthumously awarded the title of '[Hero of Ukraine](#)' by Volodymyr Zelensky.

A Minsk resident [sent a request to the Ministry of Defense](#) about the morale and financial support of the Belarusian military, to which she received the answer that “it should not bother her” and assured her that the Belarusian soldiers “do not take part in the special military operation of the Russian armed forces on the territory of Ukraine”.

### **Political persecution continues**

On 12 April, the court of the Frunzensky district of Minsk sentenced [Gayana Akhtiyan](#), the mother of anarchist Roman Khalilov, who fled from Belarus, to three years in prison in an open type correctional institution under the article on “gross violation of public order”. In November 2021, the security forces published a video of a woman in detention, which was signed “Parents are responsible for their children...”.

In the Minsk City Court, the prosecutor requested a sentence of five years in prison for politically imprisoned surgeon [Andrey Lyubetsky](#) for participating in peaceful protests, as well as comments on the Internet in which he stated that he refused to provide medical assistance to the families of security forces.

Moreover, numerous other sentences are known of for people participating in mass protest marches under the infamous article 342 of the Criminal Code (“actions grossly violating public order”): on 11 April, the Zavodskoy District Court of Minsk sentenced [Lydia Novik](#) to three years in prison; on 12 April, the Moskovski District Court of Minsk punished [Vasily Telenchenko](#) with three years in prison; and the Molodechno District Court punished [four people at once](#), imposing sentences from a year to a year and a half in prison. Such sentences are handed down almost every day.

### **Persecuting for expressing alternative opinions**

On 13 April, the Pervomaisky Court of Vitebsk punished [Marina Koloskova](#) with restraint of liberty and sent her to an open institution for a period of one year and six months for commenting on social networks about the involvement of one of the security forces in the detentions and beatings of peaceful demonstrators.

On 14 April, the Brest Regional Court sentenced local resident [Viktor Kotovsky](#) to three years in prison for a supportive comment to IT specialist Andrei Zeltser, who in September 2021 killed one of the employees of the State Security Committee who broke into his house and was killed by return fire.

The court of Luninets and Luninets district sentenced [Yury Tereshkevich](#) to two years in prison in a penal colony for negative comments about Alexander Lukashenko, which were voiced to the traffic police who detained him.

### **Extremist cases are on rise**

The State Security Committee recognized the Belarusian Independent Trade Union of Workers of the Radio-Electronic Industry as an [“extremist formation”](#). Now, union members or subscribers to its information resources can face up to six years in prison.

On 14 April, [Nikita Slepenok](#), the administrator of the cultural and historical Telegram channel ‘Rezystans’, which was banned by a decision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, was detained for “creating an extremist group”.

On 13 April, the Telegram channel ‘Brestskaya Gazeta: News - 2022’ was recognized as [“extremist material”](#) and now people who distribute or save news from this resource may face arrest for up to 15 days or a large fine.

The Supreme Court of Belarus has recognized the most popular opposition Telegram channels Nexta, Nexta Live, and Luxta, with an audience of a million, as [“terrorist organizations”](#). At the moment, it is not known how the subscribers of these resources will be punished, but it is likely that the police will use one of the strict ‘anti-terrorist’ articles of the Criminal Code.

### **Mistreatment of political prisoners**

The Prosecutor General’s Office [refused to consider the appeal](#) of concerned citizens who requested to provide medical assistance to the Viasna Center human rights activist, Marfa Rabkova, who is recognized as a political prisoner. She experiences constant abdominal pain and inflamed lymph nodes, tests show a number of inflammatory processes, and she also has gynecological problems that require surgical intervention.

There are [reports of pressure](#) in the penal colony against Artyom Onishchuk, convicted of damaging a police car: guards spoil the man’s food with household chemicals, send provocateurs to his cell, who puts forbidden items to make Onishchuk appear as if he is smuggling them. Recently he was arbitrarily sent to a punishment cell.

### **Political prisoners**

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [1133](#). The number continues to grow daily.