

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 7 May 2022 to Friday 13 May 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](#).

Human Constanta has published a piece on why the [actions of the de facto Belarusian authorities can be categorized as war crimes](#).

Sofia Sapega sentenced to six years of imprisonment

Following the detention of Roman Protasevich and [Sofia Sapega](#) in the infamous [Ryanair plane landing](#) incident in May 2021, Sapega was charged, tried, and sentenced to six years of imprisonment in a medium-security prison. She was found guilty of inciting hatred and disclosing private information due to her alleged administration of the Telegram channel 'Black Book of Belarus', which contains data about law enforcement officers suspected of committing grave human rights violations. Protasevich is known to be cooperating with Belarusian authorities following his arrest.

Another Belarusian lawyer disbarred on political grounds

On 10 May 2022, Belarusian lawyer [Mary Kolesava-Hudzilina](#), who was defending political prisoners, such as Eduard Palvhis, Evgeniy Yushkevich, and others, was disbarred. The decision was taken following her failing an exam held by the Qualification Commission of the Ministry of Justice.

Overall, 59 Belarusian lawyers have been disbarred and effectively denied the right to practice their profession. Another disbarred lawyer and political prisoner, Maksim Znak, sentenced to 10 years in a maximum-security prison, is set to publish a [book](#) from behind bars, containing stories and poems written during the imprisonment.

Animal protection activist imprisoned

The ex-director of the bird protection organization 'Protection of the Birds of Motherland', [Viktor Fenchuk](#), was sentenced to 2.5 years of imprisonment for grossly violating public order. According to the prosecution, Fenchuk was blocking traffic and shouting protest slogans. 'Protection of the Birds of Motherland' was liquidated by a Belarusian authorities decision in March 2022.

Persecution for anti-war speech

Mediazona.by has published a [piece](#) covering the wave of political persecution of anti-war activists. More than 800 people were detained following anti-war protests. Some of the cases of persecution included:

- detention of Pavel Kopanev for leaving online comments, encouraging people to take part in anti-war protests. Kopanev was forced to 'confess' and the 'confession video' was then published by Belarusian pro-government Telegram channels;
- detention of student Nikita Kardashev for telling his classmates of his position condemning Russian military aggression in Ukraine. His 'confession video' was also published on pro-government channels;

- opening a criminal case against journalist Yuriy Gontsarevich for sending pictures of Russian military equipment to independent media outlets;
- detention of dozens of activists for taking part in 'extremist' activities, for exchanging pictures of Russian military equipment;
- opening a criminal case against Liudmila Romanovich for sending a letter to Alexander Lukashenko's administration calling for the removal of the "foreign army from Belarusian territory";
- opening a criminal case on inciting hatred against TikTok blogger Elen888 for posting anti-war content on the platform;
- opening a criminal case against Roman Bartosh for painting 'No War' graffiti;
- imposing a fine on school teacher Liudmila Sekerzhitskaya for putting yellow and blue ribbons in her hair; and
- detention of and a fine for Dmitriy Matyushenko for writing 'No War' on the window of his house.

Activist detained for comparing Lukashenko to Hitler

In the Brest region, a man [was detained](#) for comparing Lukashenko to Hitler and subscribing to channels recognized as 'extremist' in Belarus. His 'confession video' was published on pro-government Telegram channels. The detainee is reportedly charged with insulting government officials, aiding extremist activity, and taking part in an "extremist formation".

Belarus to legalize trials of political prisoners *in absentia*

A [bill](#) on holding criminal trials *in absentia* was adopted in the first reading by the lower chamber of the Belarusian parliament. The bill states that "special proceedings" may be held in the absence of the defendant, if the defendant in question is suspected of crimes that threaten the national security of Belarus. When commenting on the potential application of the bill, the Investigative Committee of Belarus mentioned such proceedings may result in confiscating the assets of people who "committed grave crimes against the country". The agency cited the case of former Belarusian diplomat [Pavel Latushko](#), who is now one of the leaders of Belarusian democratic forces, forced into exile, as an example of cases the new proceedings may apply to.

Political prisoners

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [1186](#). The number continues to grow daily.