

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 1 October 2022 to Friday 14 October 2022

Daily politically motivated prosecutions for criticizing the authorities on the Internet under articles about “insulting government officials” and “inciting hostility,” as well as for participating in 2020 peaceful protests under articles about “mass riots” and “actions grossly violating public order” continue. In addition to these cases, there are several more alarming trends such as ongoing criminal prosecutions of independent journalists, criminal cases against members of the Belarusian armed formations fighting on the side of the Ukrainian army, and pressure on other anti-war manifestations.

Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Belarusian human rights activist Ales Bialiatski

The 2022 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Belarusian [human rights defender Ales Bialiatski](#) (founder and chairman of the Human Rights Center “Viasna”), Ukrainian human rights organization “Centre for Civil Liberties,” and Russian human rights organization “Memorial.” The committee noted that Bialiatski was one of the initiators of the democracy movement that emerged in Belarus in the mid-1980s and has devoted his life to promoting democracy and peaceful development in his home country. Ales Bialiatski was arrested on 14 July 2021, as part of a series of criminal investigations against leaders and permanent members of human rights organizations in Belarus. Human Constanta welcomes the award to the human rights defenders, yet [notes](#) that in [its statement](#) the Nobel Committee referred to the “fraternity between nations” – the rhetoric justifiably causing anti-colonial criticism.

Amnesty will not apply to political prisoners

On 13 October 2022, the Law [“On amnesty in connection with the Day of National Unity”](#) was published. As it became known from the content of the law, not a single category of political prisoners will fall within the law’s ambit – the amnesty does not apply to those convicted under the “defamation” and “protest” articles of the Criminal Code, as well as under articles related to “extremism” and “terrorism.”

Harsh sentences and new criminal cases against independent journalists

On 6 October 2022, Minsk Regional Court announced the verdict to employees of the [BelaPAN news agency](#). The court sentenced journalist and media manager Andrei Andrei Aliaksandrau to 14 years in prison; sociologist and activist Irina Zlobina – to 9 years; editor-in-chief and director of BelaPAN Irina Levshina – to 4 years, and former agency director Dmitriy Navazhilov – to 6 years of imprisonment. The charges included four articles of the Criminal Code: “creation and leadership of an extremist formation” (in November 2021, the agency was recognized as an “extremist formation”), “high treason” (for cooperation with the By_help solidarity fund), “organization and preparation of actions grossly violating public order” (for covering fines and providing other material assistance to peaceful protesters who were detained), as well as for “tax evasion.”

On 7 October 2022, former TUT.BY journalist (TUT.BY is recognized in Belarus as an “extremist organization”) [Snezhana Inanets](#) and journalist of Onliner [Alexander Lychavko](#) were detained. Pro-government channels released “confession” videos recorded under pressure from security forces, in which journalists say they were detained for following “extremist” Telegram channels, as well as for participating in protest marches in 2020. Both journalists were charged with “grossly violating public order.” They may face up to 4 years in prison.

On 13 October 2022, the State Security Committee (KGB) included former TUT.BY journalists [Volha Loika](#) and [Alena Talkachova](#) in the List of people involved in terrorist activities. As it became known, they are accused of "incitement of hatred" and "calls to harm national security" - these articles of the Criminal Code provide for a sanction of up to 12 years in prison. At the moment, the journalists have been released from the pre-trial detention center, but the charges against them have not been dropped. Currently, in total about 183 t Belarusians are included in the list of "terrorists" held on politically motivated charges – on par with members of ISIS, Al-Shabab, etc.

According to [the Belarusian Association of Journalists](#), as of 12 October 2022, 33 employees of independent media are in custody in Belarus.

Persecution related to the war in Ukraine

On 7 October 2022, employees of the Main Directorate for Combating Organized Crime and Corruption (GUBOPiK) arrested [a Grodno resident](#) for "inciting hatred" against Belarusian and Russian military officers and state officials. Allegedly, he left critical comments online, including comments about the head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov. The law enforcement officers forced the man to apologize to Kadyrov on camera against the background of the Chechen flag and say the slogan "Ahmat is strong," used by Kadyrov's supporters.

On 11 October 2022, the Investigative Committee initiated a criminal case against the creators and participants of the Belarusian formation "[Kalinovsky Regiment](#)" fighting on the side of Ukraine. The case was initiated under Article 361 of the Criminal Code ("creation of an extremist formation or participation in it"), which stipulates a penalty of up to 7 years in prison. The ministry stated that "this formation was created for the purpose of providing armed resistance during a special military operation and for the subsequent armed seizure of power in the Republic of Belarus."

On the same day, Novopolotsk court convicted local resident [Anna Tukova](#) for the third time in a row. Anna staged an anti-war action at a school event in honor of the Day of Knowledge on 1 September 2022. This time around, Tukova was accused of "picketing," using photos of the Ukrainian flag on Instagram and was sentenced to a fine of 100 basic units (approx. 1260\$) on charges of "violating the procedure for holding mass events." In total, she must pay 7360 Belarusian rubles (approx. 2,900\$) as punishment.

Political prisoners

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [1343](#). The number continues to grow daily.