

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 17 September 2022 to Friday 30 September 2022

Daily politically motivated prosecutions continue for criticizing the authorities on the Internet under articles about “insulting government officials” and “inciting hostility,” as well as for participating in peaceful protest actions in 2020 under articles about “mass riots” and “actions grossly violating public order.” In addition to these cases, there are several more alarming trends such as testing out the newly adopted procedure of trying political opponents *in absentia* or imposing multiple administrative sentences in a row, disproportionately extending the term of administrative detention

***In absentia* trials against Belarusians who fled from political repressions**

On 21 July 2022, Alexander Lukashenko signed [Law No. 199-Z](#), which introduces the possibility to conduct special *in absentia* trials of people who are accused of “extremist” and “terrorist” crimes and reside outside Belarus. Chairman of the Investigative Committee Dmitry Gora [stated](#) that one of the main goals of the adoption of this law was to create legal grounds for the confiscation of the property of political migrants which remained on the territory of Belarus. He believes that the conversion of such property into state income will allow “at least partially to cover the damage that has been done to the country.”

On 27 September 2022, the Investigative Committee initiated the [first in absentia trial](#): five defendants were accused of administering Telegram channel “The Black Book of Belarus,” which de-anonymizes government representatives, involved in human rights abuses. The next day, the agency also [stated](#) that within the framework of this procedure, trials will be held against members of the Belarusian Sports Solidarity Foundation, the Opposition Coordination Council, human rights center “Viasna,” opposition Telegram channel “NEXTA,” as well as against participant of the 2020 presidential campaign Valery Tsapkala.

Severe terms of imprisonment for disobedience of the regime

On 20 September 2022, Central District Court found three Minsk residents guilty of [“attempting to obstruct the referendum.”](#) According to investigators, before the referendum on amending the Constitution (held in February 2022), the defendants in the case distributed leaflets containing threats to members of the election commission. Activists claim that the leaflets contained calls to count votes in an honest manner. One of the defendants in the case was sentenced to 5 years of restriction of liberty, the rest were sentenced to prison terms of 4 and 6 years. On 28 September 2022, Zavodsky District Court [sentenced](#) 4 more Minsk residents to up to 2.5 years in prison on identical charges.

On 28 September 2022, the Minsk City Court [ruled](#) on the high-profile case of the informal initiative “The Storks Are Flying,” which was recognized as terrorist organisation in Belarus. Six defendants in the case were sentenced to imprisonment from 8 to 15 years for committing “an act of terrorism against a statesman and public figure,” “participation in a terrorist organization,” “inciting social hatred,” and other crimes. They were accused of participating in protests, damaging the judge's car, throwing rocks at the prosecutor's apartment, and damaging video surveillance systems.

On 28 September 2022, the Minsk City Court sentenced [Ksenia Lutskina](#), a former journalist of state TV and a member the Opposition Coordination Council, to 8 years in prison. Along with other journalists who quit state TV in protest after the presidential elections 2020, Ksenia planned to create an “alternative television” on YouTube. According to the investigation, she prepared and edited various statements on behalf of the “Coordination Council”, which were used to destabilize the situation in Belarus. She was charged with “conspiring to seize state power” under article 357 of the Criminal Code.

Extending sentences for those convicted of misdemeanors

On 22 September 2022, human rights activist [Nasta Lojka](#) was sentenced for the second time in a row to 15 days of administrative arrest. She is set to spend 30 consecutive days in detention without hygiene products and medical care, which she requested during the trial. On 6 September 2022 she was detained after a court hearing in the “Revolutionary Action” case, along with relatives and lawyers of the convicts, as well as representatives of the diplomatic corps.

On 27 September 2022, it became known that priest [Vladislav Bogomolnikov](#) was convicted for the third time in a row for “distributing extremist materials,” this time to 14 days of administrative arrest. In total, he will spend 44 days in custody.

Political prisoners

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [1327](#). The number continues to grow daily.