

The information is aggregated from open online sources and our own practice. In these newsletters, we will update you in brief on human rights violations in numbers and facts.

Saturday 13 May 2023 to Friday 26 May 2023

The human rights crisis in Belarus continues to deepen. The analyzed period was marked by mass detentions of doctors in Novopolotsk in connection with leaking information about the state of health of the politician Viktor Babaryka, as well as continued detentions following provocations by security forces, and repressions against people who support Ukraine or have ties with it.

Mass detentions of doctors in Novopolotsk

On 17 May 2023, the security forces [detained](#) 6 doctors from the Novopolotsk Central City Hospital, where on the night of 24-25 April 2023, ex-presidential candidate Viktor Babaryka was taken from the local colony [with traces of beatings](#). The detentions occurred after several information leaks about Babaryka's health condition in the media. It is known that surgeon Mikhail Pashkovsky and urologist Pavel Stalmakov were arrested for 15 days allegedly for “sharing extremist materials,” while gynecologist Irina Vasilyeva and paramedic Natalia Pervenonok were arrested for 10 days for “violating the order of organizing mass events.” The ground for the detentions was the Ukrainian flag on the avatar in the social network. Ultrasound specialist Alla Stalmakova and nurse Svetlana Grigorovich were also convicted under “political articles.” Later independent media outlets [reported](#) that the arrested doctors could have been transferred to a pre-trial detention center, which may indicate that criminal cases have been initiated against them.

Raman Pratasevich pardoned

On 22 May 2023, Alexander Lukashenko pardoned oppositional blogger Raman Pratasevich, who was detained after the infamous [Ryanair incident](#) and sentenced to 8 years in prison in [NEXTA case](#). Earlier, he was found guilty of “public calls to seize state power,” “acts of terrorism,” “insulting Lukashenko,” “spreading false information about Belarus,” and other crimes. In [an interview](#) with pro-government media, Pratasevich thanked the country and personally Lukashenko for the decision to pardon him. The figure of Pratasevich continues to be used by the authorities for propaganda purposes. For instance, students of Baranovichi State University were gathered in the assembly hall [to watch a new interview with Pratasevich](#), after which an “educational discussion” with local security officers was organized.

Detentions based after provocations by security forces

On 18 May 2023, the security forces detained [a resident of the Belynichi](#) district for “insulting government officials” and “inciting national enmity.” The reason for the detention was another provocation by the security forces in online chatroulette – a pro-government blogger Yuri Komar introduced himself as a citizen of Ukraine and provoked the interlocutor to make harsh statements against the servicemen of Russia and Belarus.

Employees of the Main Directorate for Organized Crime and Corruption (GUBOPiK) [continued to send tasks through the fake account](#) of the opposition initiative “Plan Peramoga” and detain people who responded. The security forces offered “cooperation” to those who got in touch – for example, to “monitor the assigned object” or “pick up the contents of the cache.” According to pro-government sources, hundreds of people have responded to the fake letters and now can potentially be on criminal grounds.

Repression related to the war in Ukraine

On 16 May 2023, Minsk City Court sentenced former collector of Belgazprombank and ex-special forces officer [Jan Papkovich](#) to 4 years in prison for “gross violation of public order” and “preparation for participation in an armed conflict on the territory of a foreign state” under Articles 342 and 361-3 of the Criminal Code respectively. The basis for the charges under Article 361-3 were correspondence in the messenger with friends of Yan, who at that time served in the Kalinovsky regiment (a volunteer formation of Belarusians, part of the Armed Forces of Ukraine), in which the interlocutors invited him to Ukraine.

On 18 May 2023, security forces detained singer [Patricia Svinina](#). In a “confession video,” the woman admits to participating in the protests, as well as publishing “negative messages” on social networks about the security forces and “a special operation being carried out on the territory of Ukraine.” She is accused of “inciting enmity and hatred between Slavic peoples.” In one of the messages, the girl expresses disagreement with the use of the territory of Belarus for aggression against Ukraine in Belarusian and Ukrainian languages. In another message, she calls on those who “support Putin” to unsubscribe from her accounts.

Political prisoners

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [1516](#). The number continues to grow daily. As of 26 May 2023, our colleague [Nasta Lojka](#) has been in custody for 240 days. According to our data, the investigation against Nasta has been completed, her case will soon be sent to court.