

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.

Sunday 2 September 2023 to Friday 15 September 2023

The human rights crisis in Belarus continues to deepen. The analyzed period was marked by the adoption of legislative measures that significantly complicate the situation of Belarusian political emigres abroad. The European Parliament has adopted another resolution regarding Belarus, in which it condemned the regime's "unabated repression and systematic human rights violations," as well as support of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Harsh sentences related to donations to pro-democracy organizations, as well as to anti-war actions continued. KGB reported the alleged detection of another "extremist" group, whose members could face the death penalty.

Legislative restrictions on political emigres

On 7 September 2023, Alexander Lukashenko's [Decree](#) "On the procedure for issuing documents and performing actions" [was published](#) and immediately entered into force. According to the decree, Belarusians who reside abroad will no longer be able to exchange their passport or extend their validity in Belarusian consular offices abroad. Now a passport can only be obtained through the internal affairs bodies at the place of one's last registered residence, *i.e.* after returning to Belarus. The decree also stipulates that several administrative procedures, as well as transactions related to property, can only be carried out in person or via a power of attorney, issued in Belarus. [According to experts](#), the main purpose of this innovation is to continue pressuring people who fled from the regime's repression, as well as stimulating the return of Belarusians who have problems with documents back to Belarus and getting them to "repent" before the authorities.

The European Parliament resolution condemning the actions of the Lukashenko regime

On 13 September 2023, the European Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) "On relations with Belarus." Deputies of the parliament demanded "that the Lukashenko regime end this spiral of violence, torture, repression and propaganda against dissenting voices and perceived critics, immediately and unconditionally release all political prisoners, their family members and all persons arbitrarily detained, declare a universal amnesty for all those arrested on political grounds since 2020 and enable the peaceful transfer of power after the organisation of free and fair elections in the resolution." The deputies expressed support for the possible establishment of an international tribunal for human rights violations in Belarus in the Hague. Moreover, the deputies once again condemned the participation of the regime in Russia's war against Ukraine, noting that the actions of the regime could amount to crimes against humanity, and called on the International Criminal Court to consider the possibility of issuing a warrant for Lukashenko's arrest.

Persecution for donations to pro-democracy organizations

On 4 September 2023, Gomel Regional Court sentenced local resident [Dmitry Makeev](#) to 6 years of imprisonment on charges of a number of "extremist crimes," including "financing extremist activities" and "financing the participation of citizens of the Republic of Belarus in armed groups on the territory of a foreign state" under Articles 361-2 and 361-3 of the Criminal Code. He was accused of transferring 68 EUR to the accounts of the independent media outlet Belsat, 68 EUR and 78 USD to the accounts of tBYSOL solidarity fund, as well as 33 EUR to the account of the Kastus Kalinowski Regiment, a group of Belarusian volunteer fighters fighting on the side of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

On 12 September 2023, Pervomaisky district Court of Minsk sentenced Minsk resident [Nikolai Vasilyevich](#) to 9.5 years of imprisonment and a hefty fine on charges of “financing terrorist activities” under Article 290-1 of the Criminal Code. Three months ago, he was already sentenced to 6 years in prison for “financing extremist activities” under Article 361-2 of the Criminal Code. It is likely that in both cases, the reason for such harsh sentences was donations to opposition initiatives, recognized by the Belarusian authorities as “extremist” and “terrorist,” respectively.

Persecution related to war in Ukraine

On 4 September 2023, Minsk Regional Court sentenced Pinsk resident [Andrei Romanovich](#) to 2.5 years of imprisonment on charges of “aiding extremist activities” under Article 361-4 of the Criminal Code. He was accused of recording the movement of military equipment on the territory of Belarus on his phone in 2022 and sending the video to one of the Telegram groups, recognized as “extremist materials.”

On 8 September 2023, Moscow district Court of Brest sentenced 60-year-old [Sergei Mickiewicz](#) to 2 years of restriction of liberty for “insulting authorities” under Article 369 of the Criminal Code. He was accused of writing a comment with the word “cattle” under a video from a pro-government rally at the Ukrainian embassy in Minsk in March 2022. In his comment, he touched upon the odious deputy Oleg Gaidukevich and propagandist Grigory Azarenok, who came out in front of the embassy to protest “against the Nazi authorities in Ukraine” that day.

On 11 September 2023, KGB officers [reported](#) on the suppression of the activities of three foreign agent groups, allegedly collaborating with the Security Service of Ukraine. The agency reported the detention of six people, including two Ukrainian citizens. According to the investigation, the detainees, under the auspices of the Ukrainian special services, “were plotting terrorist attacks on the railway in the Stolbtsy and Tolochin districts.” The detainees are accused of attempted terrorism, espionage, and high treason under Articles 289, 358-1, 356 of the Criminal Code. Under [newly amended Belarusian laws](#), they may face the death penalty.

Political prisoners

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [1512](#). The number continues to grow daily. As of 15 September 2023, our colleague [Nasta Lojka](#) has been in custody for 352 days.