

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

Saturday 7 September 2024 to Friday 20 September 2024

The human rights crisis in Belarus continues to deepen. The analyzed period was marked by pardoning some political prisoners, continuation of mass blocking of independent Internet resources, repressions for solidarity with political prisoners and sentencing for interviews with independent media.

Another pardon of political prisoners amid ongoing repression

On 16 September 2024, Alexander Lukashenko [signed another decree](#) pardoning 37 more political prisoners ahead of the “National Unity Day” celebrated on 17 September 2024. Among those pardoned are 6 women, as well as several people who have chronic diseases or disabilities, as well as elderly people. Pro-government media called the release of political prisoners “another gesture of humanism on the part of the state towards those who have stumbled [made a mistake].” Moreover, pro-government political analyst Yuri Voskresensky [noted that](#) further pardons should then be discussed with representatives of the Western countries, who must offer “something in return” and “respond with positive actions.”

As of the evening of 18 September 2024, human rights activists know about all 37 people released at this stage of the pardon, including:

- journalist [Andrei Tolchyn](#);
- [Aliaksandr Fikau](#), [Vital Charnavusau](#), [Vital Sanko](#), [Vital Yurenia](#), [Aliaksandr Baranouski](#), convicted of making donations to pro-democratic organizations;
- [Tatsiana Biruliya](#), convicted of distributing protest newspapers;
- [Anzhela Sikorskaya](#), [Mikhail Korzun](#), [Katsiaryna Dzhyh](#), [Aliaksandr Yemialyanau](#), [Ihar Barysau](#), [Aliaksandr Zhandorau](#), [Siarhei Matsiukhevich](#), [Yauhen Nareika](#), [Andrei Astratsou](#), [Zoya Baranova](#), [Aliaksandr Puhach](#), [Dzmitryi Kushalevich](#), [Aleh Zavadski](#), [Dzmitryi Siniuta](#), [Siarhei Mardzilovich](#), [Dzmitry Lahutsenka](#), [Andrei Ihnatovich](#), [Dzmitry Utouka](#), [Vital Tsyzdik](#), [Siarhei Fisiuk](#), [Kanstantsin Salamiyuk](#), convicted of online critical comments and posts, as well as threats to security forces;
- [Aliaksandr Pastserniak](#), [Uladzislau Papou](#), [Siarhei Mazol](#), [Andrei Ramanovich](#), convicted of providing information to pro-democratic resources in the context of Belarus's participation in the aggression against Ukraine;
- [Aliaksandr Rukoits](#), convicted of participating in an opposition chat;
- [Aliaksandr Zhuk](#), convicted of participating in protests;
- [Mikalai Amelchanka](#), likely convicted of leaking personal data of government officials;
- [Iryna Harachkina](#), convicted in the “[Autukhovich case](#).”
- [Yuliya Labunova](#), convicted of a performance with a portrait of Lukashenko under the article on “hooliganism.”

Thus, over the 4 stages of pardon since 3 July 2024, a total of 115 political prisoners have been released. Despite the release of some political prisoners, the authorities continue mass detentions. For example, during the analyzed period, information surfaced that [12 residents of Glubokoe](#) and [10 residents of Bereza](#) were detained for participating in the 2020 protests, while [7 residents of the Gomel region](#) and [4 residents of Ushachi](#) were detained for subscribing to “extremist resources.” During the analyzed period alone, human rights activists recognized 7 new people as political prisoners.

Mass blocking of “undesirable” resources

As of 1 September 2024, the Ministry of Information [restricted access](#) to almost 14000 online resources, 5000 were recognized as “extremist.” In 2023, the Ministry of Information

[restricted access](#) to 3388 resources, many of which were opposition portals or independent media, which the authorities recognized as “propaganda destructive extremist resources.” For comparison, from 2015 to 2020, access was restricted to 400 Internet resources, which indicates that mass blocking and the practice of recognizing information as “extremist” began precisely after the suppression of mass protests in 2020 as tools to suppress criticism of the authorities.

Repression for showing solidarity with political prisoners

Mass persecution of people who support political prisoners, as well as relatives of political prisoners who were detained during a KGB raid on people who showed solidarity with them, continues ([according to the HRC “Viasna,”](#) there are at least 17 documented cases of prosecution in this regard). On 3 September 2024, the Minsk Regional Court sentenced [Yulia Krautsova](#) to 4 years of restricted freedom without being sent to an open correctional facility (“house chemistry”) for helping political prisoners. On 12 September 2024, the same court sentenced [Maryna Hatsura](#) to 5 years of restricted freedom without being sent to an open correctional facility (“house chemistry”), also for helping political prisoners. A criminal case has also been opened against [Hanna Auchynnikava](#) for sending 2 parcels that she sent to political prisoners Dzmitry Dashkevich and Svyataslau Udod, who was able to evacuate from Belarus.

Persecution for giving interviews to independent media

On 13 September 2024, historian [Ihar Melnikau](#) was sentenced to 4 years in prison on charges of “aiding extremist activity” under Article 361-4 of the Criminal Code. The historian was accused of giving an interview to Euroradio – an independent media outlet, which was only recognized as an “extremist formation” 5 months after the interview was published. According to the prosecution, he did this for the purpose of “carrying out extremist activity, including popularizing extremist media resources” and “involving a larger number of citizens in extremist activity.”

Political prisoners

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [1324](#) (during the analyzed period, human rights activists recognized 7 new people as political prisoners). As of 20 September 2024, our colleague [Nasta Lojka](#) has been in custody [for 723 days](#).