

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 13 July 2024 to Friday 26 July 2024**

The human rights crisis in Belarus continues to deepen. The analyzed period was marked by publication of Overview of the fight against “extremism” in Belarus for April-June 2024 by Human Constanta, the death sentence for a German citizen, the release of information about five released political prisoners, another sentence for treason, the continued persecution of independent journalists, and sentences to ex-political prisoners for online criticism.

### **Overview of the fight against “extremism” in Belarus for April-June 2024**

Human Constanta human rights defenders in their [Overview of the fight against “extremism” in Belarus for April-June 2024](#) noted that state bodies and state media continued to use “extremism” as an instrument of political pressure and persecution of civil society representatives. In three months, human rights activists have documented at least 137 new criminal cases and 29 sentences on “extremist” grounds (excluding cases related to “protests” and “insults”). During the analyzed period, the toughest rendered judgements included 20 years of imprisonment (ruled *in absentia*) and a real term of 23 years’ behind bars. As of 1 July 2024, there are 5813 materials on the Republican List of Extremist Materials, 221 formations on the List of Extremist Formations, 4190 people on the List of People Involved in Extremist Activity, and 447 citizens of Belarus on the List of People Involved in Terrorist Activity. The Chairman of the Investigative Committee Dmitry Gora stated that about 19 thousand “extremist crimes” have been committed in Belarus since August 2020 and that about 5.5 thousand crimes have been identified in 2023, including “participation in unauthorized events, mass riots, financing of extremist activities, insulting government officials.”

### **“No Safe Passage. Migrants’ deaths at the European Union-Belarusian border” report**

[The new report](#) by Human Constanta, Ocalenie Foundation, “I Want to Help Refugees,” and Sienos Grupė presents the data on migrants’ deaths on the EU-Belarusian border since the traffic on this route intensified and the humanitarian crisis in the border area began in the summer of 2021. By the end of March 2024, 116 border deaths had been documented in four countries (Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland) and at least another 26 cases had been reported by migrants in testimonies. While the direct causes of the border deaths are a subject of formal inquiries by local authorities and, in many cases, are not known to the public, general circumstances and indirect causes may be derived from analyzing cases. Harsh conditions and prolonged stay in the forest due to pushbacks can lead to exhaustion and hypothermia, the most frequent cause of death in the border areas. Eleven bodies have been found in rivers, which migrants sometimes choose as a route, hoping that they are easier to cross than high border fences. Five people have died in car accidents after being chased by the police or border guard. Finally, lack of preparation of local authorities, including medical staff, can put migrants at greater risk.

### **German citizen sentenced to death in Belarus**

On 22 July 2024, Human rights activists reported on the death sentence [handed down](#) at the end of June against German citizen Rico Krieger. He was accused of “mercenarism,” “an act of terrorism,” “illegal actions with regard to firearms,” “causing transport routes to become unusable,” “agent activity,” and “participation in an extremist formation” under Articles 133, 289, 295, 309, 358-1, and 361-1 of the Criminal Code. Previously, in Belarus, all death sentences were handed down only in cases involving the murder of one or more people. The

sentence was not appealed and entered into force. It is assumed that Rico Krieger can be exchanged for an employee of the Federal Security Service of Russia Vadim Krasikov, who is serving a life sentence in Germany.

According to the propaganda media outlet “Belarus Today,” Krieger arrived in Belarus as a tourist with phones and a drone on 4 October 2023. Allegedly the Security Service of Ukraine gave him the task of conducting reconnaissance in Osipovichy and photographing military facilities. After that, he was instructed to plant explosives on the railway tracks at the Ozerishche station. On 6 October 2023, after successfully collecting information and carrying out an explosion, he was detained. Human rights activists report that his case also concerns the Kalinovsky Regiment (Belarusian paramilitary unit fighting on the side of Ukraine against the Russian aggression).

### **Information about the names of the five released political prisoners emerged**

On 3 July 2024, Alexander Lukashenko [signed the law](#) “On amnesty in connection with the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Belarus from the Nazi invaders.” Human rights activists know the names of at least 18 political prisoners who were released. On 24 July 2024 [information surfaced](#) about the names of five more political prisoners who were released at that day: [Darya Losik](#), the wife of political prisoner activist [Ihar Losik](#), convicted for an interview; [Sviatlana Lupach](#), the daughter of journalist Dmitry Lupach, convicted for participating in protests; [Palina Palavinka](#), the wife of journalist [Dzmitry Luksha](#), convicted for allegedly participating in the creation of journalistic stories “discrediting Belarus”; [Katsiaryna Madziankova](#) and [Tamara Astreika](#), convicted for participating in protests.

### **Sentencing for alleged collaboration with Western intelligence agencies continues**

On 14 July 2024, propaganda media outlet [announced](#) that the head of the Republican Tourist Union Alexander Mirsky was sentenced to 7.5 years in prison for “high treason” under Article 356 of the Criminal Code. The propagandists’ story claims that he collaborated with the Lithuanian State Security Department for seven years and passed on to its employees data on more than a hundred Belarusians, as well as information on “several editions of the National Bank’s telephone directory.”

### **Sentences of ex-political prisoners for online criticism**

On 18 July 2024, Molodechno District Court sentenced former political prisoner Vileika activist [Andrei Kudik](#) to 4 years in prison for “discrediting the Republic of Belarus” under Article 369-1 of the Criminal Code. Presumably, the case concerns his critical videos on TikTok. On 22 July 2024, information surfaced that the Leninsky District Court of Mogilev sentenced former political prisoner [Pavel Belogolov](#) to 3 years and 4 months in prison for “slander against Lukashenko” under Article 367 of the Criminal Code. Presumably, his case concerns critical comments on YouTube under one of the videos.

### **Political prisoners**

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [1380](#). The number continues to grow daily. As of 26 July 2024, our colleague [Nasta Lojka](#) has been in custody [for 667 days](#).