

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 1 June 2024 to Friday 14 June 2024**

The human rights crisis in Belarus continues to deepen. The analyzed period was marked by mass detention of people associated with the organization of the holidays, harsh sentences against “Belarus” health resort employees for alleged cooperation with the Lithuanian special services, the recognition of platforms consulting conscripts as “extremist materials,” another sentence against an independent journalist, the detention of teenagers on charges of making explosives, and the detention of a hospital patient for an opposition tattoo.

### **Mass detentions of event organizers and hosts**

From 27 May to 14 June 2024, security forces [detained at least 10 people](#) associated with the event organizing industry. The detentions began after posts by the notorious pro-Russian activist Olga Bondareva – she accused the Ministry of Culture of infiltrating the register of organizers of cultural and entertainment events with “enemies” and demanded an inspection. Security forces detained the directors of the event agencies “Vash Prazdnik,” “Event-cafe,” “AP Ivent,” “Grafimil,” the deputy director of the agency “Pink Zebra,” and also [held a preventive conversation](#) with an employee of “Vremya Prazdnika” organization. The detentions of holiday hosts were also documented – Brest host Viktor Stelmakh, as well as Minsk hosts Kirill Allahverdyan and Pavel Pashkevich were detained. Most of the arrests are related to people's participation in the 2020 protests and the distribution of “extremist materials.” Following the mass arrests, 7 organizations were excluded from the respective state register, leading them to lose the right to organize holidays.

### **Sentences handed down in “Belarus” health resort case**

Former director of “Belarus” health resorts in Lithuania and Russia [Andrei Kobel](#) was sentenced to 9 years in prison on charges of “high treason” under Article 356 of the Criminal Code. The head of the marketing department of the sanatorium in Lithuania, and Lithuanian citizen [Elena Romanauskiene](#), was also sentenced to 6 years in prison on charges of “espionage” under Article 358-1 of the Criminal Code. Law enforcement officials believe that they were both recruited by Lithuanian special services more than 10 years ago and “repeatedly provided information about guests who arrived for vacation, including high-ranking Belarusian officials.”

### **Online platforms consulting on conscription matters declared “extremist materials”**

On 13 June 2024, the press service of the Prosecutor General's Office [reported](#) that online platforms “offering paid advisory services for evading military service on medical, family and other grounds” were recognized as “extremist materials.” The department emphasized that the investigation revealed “negative factors that could affect the staffing of military units and formations, as well as pose a threat to national security.” In particular, prosecutors established “that certain Internet platforms hid their destructive activities under the guise of supposedly legal assistance to conscripts during their draft.” Typically, the activities of such organizations consisted of a more detailed study of the client's medical documents and referring them to appropriate doctors. This case once again demonstrates the general trend of the Belarusian authorities toward expanding militarization.

### **Teens arrested on charges of making explosives**

On 9 June 2024, state television showed a story about KGB officers who [had detained 10 teenagers](#) who allegedly were members of private online chats and were making explosives. Allegedly, the criminal case was initiated against one of the teenagers, Vyacheslav Drizik, a resident of Vitebsk, on charges of “preparing for an act of terrorism” and “illegal actions in relation to explosives” under Articles 289 and 295 of the Criminal Code. In the video, the teenagers talked about blowing up small cans of gunpowder and making explosives from a mixture of saltpeter and aluminum. The story also mentioned that Ukrainian handlers gave them the task of “creating Telegram channels with information about manufacturing explosives and weapons.”

Recently state propaganda has regularly published films about terrorist attacks and sabotage organized by “Western” or Ukrainian intelligence services. In many cases, [traces of state involvement](#) into such crimes can be detected, and some of the reported “sabotages” were completely staged.

### **Repressions against independent journalists**

On 3 June 2024, Brest Regional Court sentenced freelance journalist for the Green Portal and Brestskaya Gazeta [Elena Timoshchuk](#) to 5 years in prison on charges of “inciting enmity,” “joining an extremist formation,” and “discrediting Belarus” under Articles 130, 361-1, and 369-1 of the Criminal Code.

### **Hospital patient detained for opposition tattoos**

On 11 June 2024, independent media [reported](#) that a patient was detained right in the hospital emergency room for having a tattoo of the national coat of arms “Pahonia” on his leg, which the authorities considered to be oppositional. The case materials state that he “violated the procedure for holding a picket with the purpose of publicly expressing his socio-political interests.” The man explained in court that he did not pursue any socio-political goals, but was simply dressed in a T-shirt and shorts, because it was hot. The court found him guilty under Article 24.23 of the Code of Administrative Offenses and sentenced him to 7 days of administrative arrest.

### **Political prisoners**

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [1406](#). The number continues to grow daily. As of 14 June 2024, our colleague [Nasta Lojka](#) has been in custody [for 625 days](#).