

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 15 June 2024 to Friday 28 June 2024

The human rights crisis in Belarus continues to deepen. The analyzed period was marked by more *in absentia* convictions of activists abroad, persecution for anti-war stance, and continued repression for disseminating independent information and participating in the 2020 protests.

Increase in the number of *in absentia* sentencings

On 17 June 2024, Gomel Regional Court sentenced the former political prisoner and human rights activist of the Viasna Human Rights Center [Leonid Sudalenko](#) to 5 years in prison *in absentia* on charges of “aiding extremist activity” under Article 361-4 of the Criminal Code, allegedly for an interview with independent media about the conditions of detention in captivity.

On 20 June 2024, Minsk City Court sentenced *in absentia* [Franak Viachorka](#), the chief adviser to political leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, to 20 years in prison under nine “political” articles of the Criminal Code. Vyachorka was also sentenced to compensate property damage caused by his allegedly illegal actions by paying i30.9 million Belarusian rubles (about \$1.2 million) to the state.

On 24 June 2024, Brest Regional Court [sentenced](#) blogger Andrei Pauk and his wife Olga *in absentia* for writing a satirical blog “Rudabelskaya pokazukha” (recognised as “extremist formation”) to 12 and 8 years of imprisonment, respectively, on charges of “leading an extremist formation,” “financing extremist activity,” “inciting enmity,” “slander” and “insulting Alexander Lukashenko,” “insulting a government official,” “illegal actions in relation to information about private life” under Articles 361-1, 361-2, 130, 367, 368, 369, and 203-1 of the Criminal Code. In the same case, Margarita Levchuk, Ilya Solenkov, and Vladislav Novozhilov were convicted for “participating in an extremist formation” under Article 361-1 of the Criminal Code.

Criminal cases related to the war in Ukraine

On 25 June 2024, one of the government supporters posted a video on TikTok in which she walked the streets in Brest holding the Belarusian state and Russian flags, with the latter having the letter “Z” drawn on it, the letter being most recently associated with the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The video then showed passersby asking why she went out into the street with such flags, and one of the men questioned insulted the aforementioned symbol. The security forces later [detained](#) the man and placed him in a temporary detention facility, while the details of the charges against him remain unknown.

On 26 June 2024, 24-year-old Chinese language teacher from Minsk [Darya Khmelnitskaya](#) was sentenced to 5.5 years in prison for participating in protests and “financing military actions on the territory of a foreign state” under Articles 342 and 361-3 of the Criminal Code. The latter article is usually used to punish people for monetary donations to the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Belarusian units that are part of them.

Mass arrests for dissemination of “extremist materials”

Mass detentions continued in regional cities as part of raids in government institutions and enterprises. During such operations, security forces inspect the devices of workers

previously suspected of disloyalty to the regime. During the analyzed period, such raids mainly covered the Grodno region, in particular the city of Lida. On 19 June 2024, at least 9 people [were detained](#) at the Lida metal-woven plant HAVER. On 21 June 2024, a raid [was conducted](#) at the Lida Foundry and Mechanical Plant.

Security forces continue to use the practice of drawing up protocols in such a way that each repost represents a separate offense, which then allows the courts to punish people with arrests for 15 days an almost unlimited number of times. For instance, priest [Andrzej Juhnevich](#) was tried 4 times in a row for a total of 60 days of arrest.

Mass repressions for participating in the 2020 protests

Sentences and arrests for participation in protests on charges of “gross violation of public order” under Article 342 of the Criminal Code continue. In all such cases, security forces claim that protesters “went out onto the roadway” and “blocked traffic.”

On 18 June 2024, it became known that the Mogilev court [sentenced](#) five local residents to imprisonment or restriction of freedom for terms ranging from 2 to 2.5 years. On the same day, Minsk resident [Oleg Lyadenko](#) was sentenced to 2 years of restriction of freedom without being sent to an open-type correctional facility (house arrest). On 20 June 2024, the Central District Court of Minsk sentenced [Elena Tereshkova](#) to 3 years of house arrest. On 21 June 2024, security forces [detained](#) six residents of Fanipol for participating in local protests in 2020.

Political prisoners

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [1421](#). The number continues to grow daily. As of 28 June 2024, our colleague [Nasta Lojka](#) has been in custody [for 639 days](#).