

The information is aggregated from open online resources and our own practice. In these newsletters, we will shortly update you on everyday human rights violations in numbers and facts.

Summary Tuesday-Monday, 13-19 October:

For 71 days protests in different forms continued in Belarus. The demands remain the same - stop the violence, release the political prisoners, and conduct democratic elections. New groups are joining the protests: seniors, teachers, doctors, athletes, people with disabilities.

At the same time, the authorities do not have a clear strategy and plan on how to “suppress the protest”: excessive use of force continues. On October 17, at least **51 people** were detained during a women's march and a student rally in Minsk.¹

On October 18, at least **242 people** were detained during the peaceful protest march. Detention took place in Minsk, Salihorsk, Brest, Vitebsk and Gomeł. Riot police fired rubber bullets at a crowd of protesters. According to the Interior Ministry's spokespersons “the shots were fired in the air after protesters threw stones at the police”. However, video footage released later during the day shows that the riot police were targeting the protesters.²

According to the prosecutor general, more than 400 criminal cases, concerning violation of the public order, have been opened in Belarus since 9 August, 2020.³ Head of the Minsk Prosecutor's Office officially stated that “harsher punishments for participation in ‘unauthorised rallies’ is planned to be used”.^{4 5} **Not a single case concerning the use of violence by law enforcement officers has been opened so far.**

Political prisoners

3 political prisoners - Illia Salei, Vitaly Shklyarov and Liliya Ulasava released from pre-trial detention and placed under house arrest.⁶ Significant restrictions imposed as a result of house arrest, therefore human rights defenders continue to view these 3 persons as political prisoners. **Currently, 94 people are recognized as political prisoners in Belarus.**⁷

¹ <https://spring96.org/be/news/100008>

² <http://spring96.org/en/news/100021>

³ https://www.tvr.by/news/chp/s_9_avgusta_vozbuzhdeno_bolee_400_ugolovnykh_del_svyazannykh_s_narusheniem_obshchestvennogo_poryadka/

⁴ <http://www.ctv.by/kamery-i-nalichie-smartfona-prokuror-minska-rasskazal-kak-vychislyayut-uchastnikov-voskresnyh-akciy>

⁵ <https://belsat.eu/en/news/prosecutor-of-minsk-authorities-set-to-toughen-penalty-for-participating-in-protests/>

⁶ They continue to be in strict isolation, have no right to leave their place of residence, and are limited in their ability to communicate with other people, so we consider house arrest as detention.

⁷ <https://spring96.org/en/news/49539>

Legal profession and right to defence

Pressure on lawyer continues: on September detentions of lawyers (Ilya Salei and Maksim Znak⁸ on 9 September 2020, and Liudmila Kazak⁹ on 24 September 2020) took place. On October 16, the Belarusian Ministry of Justice disbarred Alyaksandr Pylchanka, a defense lawyer of Viktor Babaryka and opposition activist Maryia Kalesnikava. The same measure was taken against his colleague Yuliya Levanchuk, who was defending Maksim Kharoshyn¹⁰, the owner of a shop in Minsk who handed out flowers to protesters.¹¹

Labours rights and trade unions

On 15 October, a drilling and blasting master of Belaruskali, Alexander Kurban, refused to leave the shaft at the end of his shift and remained chained at a depth of 440 metres demanding the general director of the enterprise to inform the labour collective of steps taken for new, open and fair elections, release of all political prisoners and termination of police violence.¹² In September, miners Aleh Kudzelka and Yury Korzun protested in such a way. The latter is now serving a 15-day term in jail.¹³

Employees of the Hrodna “Azot” Plant published video, in which they expressed their position against the falsification of elections, including the brutality, repressions and pressure applied by the management to employees with different political views and their dismissal.¹⁴

⁸ On September 9, Maxim Znak – the lawyer of Viktor Barbarika and Maria Kalesnikava - and Ilya Salei – the lawyer of Maria Kalesnikava - were detained and later remanded in custody on charges of calling for actions aimed at causing harm to the national security of the Republic of Belarus (article 361 of the criminal code). Ilya Salei was recently released from pre-trial detention and placed under house arrest.

⁹ On September 24, 2020, the lawyer of Maria Kalesnikava Liudmila Kazak was detained in the center of Minsk. She was abducted by unknown people and taken to the Centralny District Department of Internal Affairs of Minsk to conduct administrative proceedings. In the course of administrative detention, the lawyer was subjected to a personal search, which violated the attorney-client privilege. On September 25, 2020, the Kastychnitski District Court of Minsk fined Liudmila Kazak under article 23.4 of the Code of Administrative Offences in the amount equivalent to 300 US dollars for disobeying the legal requirements of police officers.

¹⁰ Kharoshyn was beaten so severely in detention that he was barely able to walk and left a police station in an ambulance on October 13

¹¹

<https://www.rferl.org/a/lawyers-in-belarus-face-disbarment-arrest-just-for-representing-opponents-of-lukashenka/30898088.html>

¹² <https://belsat.eu/en/news/another-belaruskali-miner-chains-himself-in-protest/>

¹³ <https://belsat.eu/en/news/salihorsk-belaruskali-strike-leader-under-arrest-again/>

¹⁴ <https://t.me/radiosvaboda/18158>

A group of Belarusian medical professionals has recorded a video, in which they express their disagreement with statements by government officials that peacefully protesting citizens were the reason behind the growing rate of coronavirus infections in Belarus.¹⁵

Reports

The Belarusian Student Union and the Student Initiative Group published [a report on repressions against students](#) by the state and university administrations. In September and October, at least 149 students were detained. In total, they were collectively fined 11,799 rubles (\$4578) and sentenced to 382 days of administrative detention.

Other news

British film crew has been making a film about Belarus and Belarusian protests for Netflix.

¹⁵ <https://youtu.be/wtD3Ufdlzoc>