

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

## **Summary: Saturday 20 November 2021 to Friday 26 November 2021**

### **Migration crisis at Belarusian border**

The migration crisis continues to intensify at the Belarusian border with Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland, having reached an unprecedented scale by mid-November 2021. Polish authorities report that there are currently [3,000 to 4,000](#) migrants at the Belarusian–Polish border. On 18 November 2021, [225](#) attempts to cross the Belarusian–Polish border were made. Kurdish authorities received approximately [700](#) declarations on voluntary return from Belarus. [Estonia](#) has begun fortifying the border with Belarus with barbed wire.

Belarusian authorities [claim](#) that Polish border officers were using toxic substances against migrants, while Polish authorities confirmed the use of [pepper gas](#) against migrants trying to break through the border as a response to the alleged [aggressive actions](#) of some migrants.

On 18 November 2021 alone, [11](#) migrants at the border requested medical help. Representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO) [arrived](#) at the migration camp and organized on the premises of a logistics center. A WHO representative reported that approximately [100](#) migrants, including pregnant women, had to be transferred to hospitals.

According to Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, as a consequence of the migration crisis created by the Belarusian regime on the border with the European Union (EU), Poland is considering [more extreme action against Belarus](#), including closing borders, transit, and trade crossings. The prime minister also [suggested](#) that Poland might assist in funding the return of migrants to their home states.

At the same time, the EU has started [technical negotiations](#) with the Belarusian authorities regarding the migration crisis. Meanwhile, during her speech at the European Parliament, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya [stated](#) that “Europe needs to face autocracy more proactively”.

Human Constanta has commented on the situation in the [media](#), providing information of migrants’ persecution in their home countries and the rise of hate speech and xenophobia in connection to the crisis, and released a [statement](#) on the matter.

### **Revoking citizenship on the grounds of extremism**

Belarusian authorities [announced](#) that legislative amendments, seeking to revoke citizenship and seize the property of Belarusians convicted of extremism, were being prepared. They stated that “the police will seek out and prosecute anyone who insults officers and their families on the Internet”. Human Constanta’s regular [reports](#) cover the situation on anti-extremism laws and their application in more detail.

## **Police brutality, torture, and intentional crackdown on civil society confirmed by Lukashenko in a BBC interview**

In an [interview](#) with BBC journalist Steve Rosenberg, Alexander Lukashenko commented on the migration crisis, the assaults in Akrestina detention center, and the mass liquidation of Belarusian civil society organizations.

Lukashenko acknowledged that Belarusian authorities “may well have helped migrants to cross the Polish border illegally”, and said he would not stop the flow of migrants, because “they are not coming to me, but to you”. Lukashenko also admitted to beatings in Akrestsina detention center, notorious for the widespread use of torture, mentioning that police officers sustained injuries as well. In response to the question on the mass liquidation of civil society organizations, Lukashenko stated: “We’ll massacre all the scum that you [the West] have been financing. Oh, you’re upset we’ve destroyed all your structures! Your NGOs, whatever they are, that you’ve been paying for.”

### **Developments in politically motivated cases**

Some of the key developments in politically motivated cases include:

- On 22 November 2021, political prisoner [Yauhen Markavets](#) was sentenced to 1.5 years of imprisonment in a medium security prison for grossly violating public order and insulting public officials for posting six comments in Telegram chats;
- On 18 November 2021, International Secretary of the Belarusian Social Democratic Party (Hramada) [Valyantsin Askirka](#) was sentenced to 10 days in jail for violating public order;
- Editor-in-Chief of BelaPAN and political prisoner [Iryna Leushyna](#) and ex-director of BelaPAN and political prisoner [Dzmitry Navazhylau](#) were [charged](#) with creating an “extremist formation” punishable by up to seven years of imprisonment;
- Musician and political prisoner [Dzmitry Shymanski](#), sentenced to three years of restricted freedom in an open-type correctional facility for playing the bagpipes at the march in August 2020, was able to leave Belarus before being transferred to the penitentiary facility.

### **Political prisoners**

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [888](#). The number continues to grow daily.