

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 27 November 2021 to Friday 3 December 2021

Migration crisis at Belarusian border

The migration crisis continues at the Belarusian border with Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland, having reached its peak in mid-November 2021. On 29 November 2021, Lithuanian and Polish border guards stopped [233](#) illegal border crossing attempts from Belarus. Yet another migrant [was found dead](#) at the Belarusian–Lithuanian border. At the same time, it is reported that 1,458 migrants [returned](#) to Iraq on evacuation flights from Minsk. Meanwhile, Lithuanian authorities are considering [closing some border control points](#) and Polish authorities have introduced a [ban](#) prohibiting people who are not border control workers or local residents from being present in the border area.

Migrants at the border and in temporary centres report the [low quality of food](#) provided by the Belarusian authorities as humanitarian aid. Observers also note the [lack of heating](#). Some of the migrants who returned to their home countries reported the [use of torture](#) by the Belarusian authorities. [COVID-19 cases](#) are reported in the temporary facilities. Despite widespread complaints of mistreatment, during his visit to Bruzgi border control point, Alexander Lukashenko [declared](#) that the goal of the Belarusian authorities was “to help migrants in distress”.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have announced a [campaign](#) to collect 9.5 million Swiss francs (about USD 10.3 million) to help migrants on the Belarus–European Union border.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki [discussed](#) the migration crisis, agreeing that the Belarusian authorities’ intentions were not only to weaken Poland but also the whole of the European Union.

According to Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Gabrielius Landsbergis, the Lithuanian government is discussing the possible initiation of an [international trial against Lukashenko](#) over his treatment of migrants. Two weeks ago, the heads of parliamentary committees from Lithuania and 16 other European countries appealed to the leadership of the European Union and NATO with a proposal to initiate an international trial against Lukashenko. The heads of the committees, supervising European politics, offered to refer the case of Belarus to the International Court of Justice, since, in their opinion, Lukashenko’s regime has violated the International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The [5th packet](#) of the European Union sanctions in response to the instrumentalization of migrants was adopted on 2 December 2021. The United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada adopted [sanctions](#) as well.

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.

Repression of theatre workers

After the premiere of a play in Vitebsk theatre on 21 November 2021, news about the persecution of actors and theatre personnel started to surface. The play, involving the phrase “Long live Flandria!” (an original quote from Charles-Theodore-Henri De Coster’s book *Uylenspiegel*), [was banned](#) by the authorities – allegedly due to the similarities of the phrase to the “Long live Belarus!” slogan used by peaceful protestors. As a result, three actors and the theatre’s director [were fired](#).

On 26 November 2021, Mogilev actor [Vyacheslav Sikora](#) was charged with inciting hatred and insulting state officials and put on the international wanted list upon leaving the country.

Previously, actors were one of the groups actively repressed by the Belarusian authorities. Almost [60 employees of Yanka Kupala theatre](#) left the theatre *en masse* in protest at election fraud and the use of torture by Belarusian authorities in the summer of 2020. The former director of the theatre and now head of [National Anti-Crisis Management](#), Pavel Latushka, was put on the [terrorist list](#) by Belarusian authorities.

Belarusian courts to allow verdicts in absentia

According to the State Secretary of the Security Council Alyaksandr Valfovich, the authorities want to [try political emigrants in absentia](#) and amend the law accordingly. According to Valfovich, the initiative of the Investigative Committee is supported by the Supreme Court and the Prosecutor General’s Office. The issue is planned to be addressed at the next meeting of the Security Council with the participation of Lukashenko.

More Belarusian lawyers disbarred on political grounds

On 25 November 2021, the Qualification Commission under the auspices of the Belarusian Ministry of Justice passed a decision on the [disbarment of seven lawyers](#) who defended persons persecuted on political grounds. Iryna Varankova, Natalia Matskevich, Eugeniy Pylchanka, Ihar Petrashevich, Natalia Alyakseeva, Alexander Byalov, and Natalia Vantsovich were deprived of the right to practice their profession.

Belarusian sports functionary deported from Czech Republic

The head of the Belarusian National Football Association, [Vladimir Bazanov](#), was deported from the Czech Republic along with his wife. He was detained for violating the healthcare regulations applicable for visits to the country. The visas of Bazanov and his wife were annulled.

Developments in politically motivated cases

Some of the key developments in politically motivated cases include:

- On 1 December 2021, Belarusian security officers conducted [unexpected searches](#) in the apartments of multiple activists across the country. The police have raided the homes of Vitebsk activists Uladzimir Kiyko and Mikalai Kachurets, as well as that of Krychau journalist Syarhei Nyarouny. Financial Investigations Department officers searched the flat of journalist Larysa Shchyrakova in Homiel. The following homes have been searched: those of the Homiel-based representative of the United Civic Party of Belarus, Vasil Palyakou; Mazyr-based human rights activist Uladzimir Tselyapun; Hrodna-based journalist Nadzeya Vitsina; Mahiliou-based human rights defender Barys Bukhel; Brest-based activists Alena Zhushma and Volha Malaichyk; as well as Vitebsk-based former political prisoner Mikhail Zhamchuzhny;
- On 25 November 2021, a freelancer for the Belarusian service of Radio Liberty, [Andrei Kuznechyk](#), was detained, with his equipment confiscated. That same evening, the Telegram channel Radio Liberty was hacked. The grounds of his arrest are unknown.

Political prisoners

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [896](#). The number continues to grow daily.