

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 12 February 2022 to Friday 18 February 2022

Developments in politically motivated cases

Some of the key developments in politically motivated cases include:

- On 15 February 2022, Belarusian philosopher and political prisoner [Uladzimir Matskevich](#) went on a dry hunger strike to change the measure of restraint in the form of detention, end the pretense of investigative actions, and refer his case to the court. Previously, he had been on hunger strike for 11 days, but had not refused to drink water. Relatives of Matskevich launched a [petition](#) in support of him;
- On 11 February 2022, the Belarusian Investigative Committee opened two criminal cases on “[obstructing in realizing the right to vote, right to take part in a referendum, or obstructing the work of election commissions](#)” under Article 191 of the Criminal Code for alleged burning of the Belarusian national flag, blocking road traffic, and painting opposition statements on buildings. One person charged with the crime is Anatoly Latushka – the brother of Pavel Latushka, a former diplomat and head of National Anti-Crisis Management, an alternative democratic coalition based in Poland.

Restrictions related to upcoming Constitution referendum

Ahead of the referendum on amending the Belarusian Constitution, scheduled for 27 February 2022, the Central Election Commission [has classified](#) the names of precinct commissions’ members. According to the Commission’s representative, such a decision had been made “for security purposes”, because precinct commissions’ members had received a lot of threats in 2020, as their names had been in the public domain.

However, according to Article 34 of the [Electoral Code](#) of the Republic of Belarus, the decision on the formation of commissions must specify “the surname, name, patronymic of each member of the commission, the method of nomination to the commission, location and telephone numbers of the commission”.

European Union officials indicated they would not be sending an [observers’ mission](#) to the referendum. According to the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights observers’ mission](#) was invited, but did not indicate the wish to come.

KGB exerts pressure to obtain information about political dissenters

One head of a Belarusian homeowners’ association reported that people in similar positions are increasingly called to meet the State Security Committee (KGB) to be [questioned and forcefully recruited](#) to provide information about people likely to protest, who are part of homeowners’ associations.

Humanitarian crisis at the Belarus–EU border

Poland opened an [investigation](#) into the activities of an organized criminal group, which facilitated the transfer of migrants to the border during the autumn–winter 2021 border crisis. The investigation will specifically examine the involvement of Belarusian authorities in the

movement of migrants to the border and the violation of Poland's sovereignty by such actions.

Political prisoners

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [1062](#). The number continues to grow daily.