

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.

## **Saturday 6 August 2022 to Friday 12 August 2022**

Human Constanta expresses its [solidarity](#) with the people of Ukraine. We urge the international community to prioritize the voices and stories of Ukrainians, highlight violations of human rights and international law, call for accountability for the actions of the aggressor, and [support the most vulnerable groups fleeing the war without discrimination](#).

### **Criminal prosecution of “rail guerrillas” continues**

On 7 August 2022, human rights activists reported on [a raid by law enforcement officers in the city of Ivanovo](#) and Ivanovo district. For several days law enforcement officers carried out arbitrary detentions of local residents using force, in search of those involved in a recent sabotage of the railway in the Brest region.

On 10 August 2022, the Court of the Bobruisk District and the City of Bobruisk [handed down severe sentences](#) to three men and two women, accused of terrorism and insulting Alexander Lukashenko. Local residents Konstantin Yermolovich, Vitaly Minkevich, and Igor Kozlov were found guilty of acts of a “terrorist nature.” The investigation claims that they were involved in the arson of the local military unit’s shooting range. Security forces also claim that they found explosive devices next to the railway, which belong to the accused. The men were sentenced from 14 to 16 years of imprisonment in a maximum-security prison. Along with the aforementioned local residents, Nadezhda Polkina and Natalya Ked were sentenced to two years in prison and two years of restriction of freedom, respectively, on charges of setting fire to a straw effigy, symbolizing Lukashenko.

### **Journalists behind bars**

On 10 August 2022, [Anatoly Bukas](#), former editor-in-chief of the independent newspaper “Borisovskie Novosti,” was sentenced to 15 days of administrative arrest for distributing “extremist materials.” There is no information about what kind of materials banned in Belarus were used by Bukas.

### **Use of anti-terrorism legislation to suppress civil self-organization**

On 11 August 2022, Prosecutor General of Belarus Andrey Shved sent an application to the Supreme Court to recognize the [association of former police officers BYPOL](#) and its structural units, the Situation Analytical Center and “Peramoga” Mobilization Plan, [as terrorist organizations](#). The organization, whose members are former police officers who have protested against the authorities, is engaged in conducting independent investigations into the repressive activities of law enforcement agencies in Belarus, as well as organizing mobilization initiatives of nonviolent resistance to the regime. According to the Prosecutor’s office, the organization encourages current security forces to betray the interests of the service and use their position in extremist activities, and also plans actions of a “terrorist and extremist orientation.”

### **“Extremism” cases on the rise**

On 9 August 2022, the deputy head of the notorious division of the Main Directorate for Combating Organized Crime and Corruption, Mikhail Bedunkevich announced [statistics on criminal cases under anti-extremist legislation](#). He stated that from 2020 to 2022, at least 12 facts of “financing extremist activities in the country” were revealed, 100 people were

identified involved in the opposition plan “Peramoga,” and 160 owners and administrators of Telegram channels, which were recognized in Belarus as extremist materials, were detained. The head of the division also said that 79% of Belarusians, who are wanted in “protest cases,” left the country.

On 11 August 2022, the Investigative Committee stated that from 9 August 2020 to 1 July 2022, [11 000 criminal cases of “extremist nature”](#) were initiated in Belarus.

### **Criminal prosecution for treason against activists continues**

On 9 August 2022, the Investigative Committee initiated another criminal case of treason against the state (part 1 of Article 356 of the Criminal Code) against the owner of the store of national opposition paraphernalia “Symbal.by” [Pavel Belous](#). According to pro-government sources, he “puffed up the protesting masses of society with opposition symbols” and “carried out the tasks of foreign states and organizations for a monetary reward, propagating the idea of the ‘Polish world.’ Belous was detained in December 2021 on charges of “actions grossly violating public order” (Article 342 of the Criminal Code) and recognized by human rights activists as a political prisoner.

### **Political prisoners**

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [1276](#). The number continues to grow daily.