

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

### **Saturday 11 November 2023 to Friday 24 November 2023**

The human rights crisis in Belarus continues to deepen. The analyzed period was marked by the continuation of political persecution – for anti-war actions, 2020 protests, and expressing opinions online.

#### **Mass detentions for the distribution of “extremist materials”**

As of 1 October 2023, there were 4068 materials on the [Republican list of extremist materials](#), including 1392 Telegram resources. The list continues to be updated regularly. For instance, on 21 November 2023, Leninsky District Court of Grodno [recognized](#) the resources of political prisoner and ex-presidential candidate Viktor Babaryka and Razam political party as “extremist materials.” Sharing and storage of “extremist materials” are punishable by administrative arrests or fines.

[Systemic “raids”](#) of law enforcement authorities into regional cities and state institutions continue. During such raids, the devices of local residents, who are suspected of “disloyalty to the regime” are examined. As a result, people are detained *en masse* for subscribing to independent resources or distributing information online on charges of “distributing extremist materials” under [Article 19.11 of the Administrative Code](#). [According to Human Constanta](#), From 1 October 2021 to 31 October 2023, at least 4031 cases of persecution under this article have been documented. During the analyzed period, documented cases include mass arbitrary detentions in [Gomel](#) (two “raids” were documented, resulting in at least 11 detentions in total), [Baranovich](#) (at least 10 detentions), [Volkovysk](#) (at least 10 detentions) as well raids in [Lida](#), [Novogrudok](#), [Shchuchin](#), [Mir](#), [Minsk](#).

#### **Criminal cases related to the war in Ukraine**

On 16 November 2023, court of the Oktyabrsky district of Grodno sentenced a local resident [Stepan Zadoiko](#) to 5.5 years in prison on charges of “insulting Lukashenko and a representative of the authorities,” “abuse of state symbols,” and “violence or threat of violence against an official” under Articles 368, 369, 370, 366 of the Criminal Code. Stepan was accused of leaving 1200 comments under videos of “extremist” YouTube channels, most of which contained support for Ukraine and criticism of the Belarusian authorities in the context of the war.

On 24 November 2023, Mogilev Regional Court sentenced local resident [Alexander Baranovsky](#) to 5 years in prison on charges of financing an “extremist formation” and financing the activities of Belarusians in military operations on the territory of a foreign state under Articles 361-2 and 361-3 of the Criminal Code. According to the charges, Alexander made donations to various pro-democratic organizations, and in April 2022, he sent money to the account of the Kalinovsky Regiment (a Belarusian unit that is part of the Armed Forces of Ukraine). It is worth noting that Kalinovsky's regiment was recognized by the Belarusian authorities as an “extremist formation” only in September 2022, while the man was convicted of making donations in April 2022, when it formally did not constitute a *corpus delicti*. This case once again underlines the [retroactive effect](#) of the Belarusian anti-extremist legislation.

#### **Detention of protesters in 2020 continue**

Three years after the protests against the Lukashenka regime in 2020, the security forces continue to detain the protesters. In the analyzed period the residents of [Grodno](#), [Minsk](#),

[Brest](#) were detained. The security forces maintain that participation in the protests in 2020 caused the closure of roads and disruption of traffic, on the basis of which the detainees are charged with “participating in actions grossly violating public order” under Article 342 of the Criminal Code providing for a penalty of up to 4 years in prison.

The analyzed period was also marked by several verdicts passed under this article. On 17 November 2023, court of the Frunzensky district of Minsk sentenced the spouses [Kirill and Victoria Prokopievs](#) to 2.5 years of restriction of liberty without referral to an open-type correctional institution (“[home chemistry](#)”) for participating in protests in the fall of 2020. On 24 November 2023, Krugloe district court of the Mogilev region sentenced businessman [Alexander Kalina](#) to 6.5 years in prison on charges of participating in protests and tax evasion (presumably, the businessman was accused of tax evasion exclusively because of his public civic position).

### **Political prisoners**

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [1450](#). The number continues to grow daily. As of 24 November 2023, our colleague [Nasta Lojka](#) has been in custody [for 422 days](#).