

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 18 January 2024 to Friday 31 January 2025

The human rights crisis in Belarus continues to deepen. The analyzed period was marked by the ninth and tenth stages of pardoning political prisoners, another undemocratic presidential elections took place in Belarus and more repressions in connection to them. Human Constanta published a review on the fight against “extremism” in Belarus for October–December 2024.

Ninth and tenth stages of pardoning political prisoners

On 18 January 2025, Aliaksandar Lukashenka [signed a decree](#) pardoning 23 more political prisoners. Among those released are 2 women and 20 men. 13 people are over 50 years old, 14 of them have chronic diseases. 12 have children, one of the pardoned is a father of many children. Moreover, on 24 January 2025, Aliaksandar Lukashenka [signed a decree](#) pardoning 15 more people, including 8 political prisoners. Among those released are 5 women and 3 men who “committed crimes of an extremist nature.” 5 of them have children, and one woman is pregnant. 7 of the pardoned people were convicted of drug trafficking, 6 of them committed the crimes when they were minors, one was diagnosed with cancer. Moreover, on 26 January 2024 U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio [announced](#) that an innocent American citizen, Anastasia Nufer, was released from detention in Belarus.

Thus, 267 political prisoners have been released overall during 10 stages of pardon since 3 July 2024. According to the press service of Lukashenka, in 2024 alone, he [pardoned](#) 293 people (including 89 women, 17 people who committed crimes as minors), which is significantly higher than the data that was officially published in government sources - the public knew about only 227 pardons last year. None of them were exonerated. The pardons affected only a fraction of the total number of arbitrarily detained and unjustly convicted, while more people were convicted than released since the pardons began.

Another undemocratic presidential elections took place in Belarus

On 26 January 2025, the presidential elections were held in Belarus, in which Aliksandar Lukashenka, was re-elected for a seventh term, [receiving](#) 86.82% of the votes. The elections took place amid mass repression and the suppression of civil rights, with the electoral process being fully controlled and manipulated by the authorities to maintain Lukashenka’s power. The pre-scheduled elections, the opaque formation of electoral commissions, the absence of independent candidates, the use of administrative resources for signature collection and campaigning, as well as voter coercion, indicate that the elections did not meet democratic standards and [were purely performative](#). The European Parliament adopted [a resolution](#) calling for the election results in Belarus not to be recognized as fictitious.

In response to the imitation of the elections, activists of the Belarusian diaspora held protests abroad – in response to them, the Investigative Committee [stated](#) that security forces identified 365 participants in protests abroad on election day, in particular 11 people at protests in Wroclaw, 203 in Warsaw, 18 in Bialystok, 29 in Vilnius, 39 in New York, 11 in Prague and other cities. Criminal cases were initiated against them in the order of special (*in absentia*) proceedings. The department reported on the verification of these people’s property and real estate on the territory of Belarus, including those registered to other persons, for subsequent confiscation.

Human rights activists [reported](#) mass trials against Belarusians who took photos of their ballots – [at least 10 people](#) are being tried under Article 10.9 of the Code of Administrative Offenses (“violation of the legislation on elections, referendums, and the exercise of the right of legislative initiative of citizens”), which provides for a fine of up to 15 basic units (about \$180).

Review on the fight against “extremism” in Belarus for October–December 2024

Human Constanta has published its latest review, highlighting key trends in state policies aimed at combating “extremism” and “terrorism” in Belarus and their impact on the human rights situation from October to December 2024. During this period, Human Constanta documented at least 133 new criminal cases and 143 convictions on “extremist” grounds, excluding cases related to participation in peaceful protests or insulting officials. Additionally, 232 administrative offense cases were publicly reported. Over three months, Viasna human rights defenders documented approximately 500 convictions under “extremist” articles of the Criminal Code and around 1,000 court proceedings under “extremist” articles of the Administrative Code. In total, from October to December 2024, human rights defenders documented over 1,800 politically motivated repressions, the vast majority carried out under the pretext of “countering extremism.”

For the first time since the adoption of the relevant law, a conviction was issued under Article 130-2 of the Criminal Code for “denial of the genocide of the Belarusian people” in connection with a historical publication. Additionally, for the first time state authorities officially charged individuals with “propaganda of terrorism” under Article 289-1 of the Criminal Code. This period was also marked by harsh sentences handed down to individuals accused of sabotage and alleged cooperation with Ukrainian intelligence services – dozens of people, including several Ukrainian citizens, were convicted under Articles 289 (“act of terrorism”) and 356 of the Criminal Code (“high treason”). Furthermore, Article 361-4 of the Criminal Code (“aiding extremist activity”) was used to issue more than a dozen sentences against individuals who expressed solidarity with political prisoners in various forms. Notably, for the first time, a person was convicted for monitoring judicial proceedings, with this activity being classified as “aiding extremism.”

You can read the full review [on our website](#) (English translation pending).

Political prisoners

The total number of political prisoners in Belarus is [1245](#), 15 new people were recognized as “political prisoners” during the analyzed period. As of 31 January 2025, our colleague [Nasta Lojka](#) has been in custody for more than 2 years ([854 days](#)).