

# Fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review Republic of Belarus

Joint NGO Submission on behalf of the Coalition of Belarusian NGOs,  
April, 2025

*This Joint NGO Submission has been prepared by the Belarusian Helsinki Committee, Belarusian Association of Journalists, Belarusian Association of Human Rights Lawyers, Belarusian Coalition of Civil Society Organizations, Initiatives and Activists against Gender-based and Domestic Violence, Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions, Human Constanta, Human Rights Center “Viasna”, Lawtrend, Legal Initiative, Medical Solidarity Foundation (BYMEDSOL), Office for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, PEN Belarus, Respect-Protect-Fulfill, - under the overall coordination of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee and in partnership with Human Rights House Foundation.*



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*This report provides an overview of the current situation and includes relevant recommendations. An assessment of the implementation of the third cycle*

*recommendations<sup>1</sup>, along with comments, can be found in the table attached as an annex.<sup>2</sup>*

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE COALITION MEMBERS

**Belarusian Helsinki Committee (BHC)** is an independent, non-political, non-profit civic association. BHC works with international human rights mechanisms, provides legal assistance to the victims, monitors and analyzes public policy in the field of human rights, arranges human rights education for the youth, civil society activists and legal professionals, and organizes events to draw public attention to the most pressing human rights issues in Belarus.

**Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ)** is the largest non-governmental, non-profit association of Belarusian media representatives. Since 1995, BAJ has been promoting freedom of expression and protecting media workers' rights in Belarus. It systematically monitors violations in this sphere, serving as a unique source of information on the country's media landscape.

**Belarusian Association of Human Rights Lawyers** is a community that unites lawyers deprived of the right to practice their profession in Belarus, as well as lawyers who care about the issues of the Belarusian Bar and the right to defence. The Association's mission is to restore and further preserve the Belarusian Bar as an independent institution by international human rights standards, and to support lawyers in exile.

**Belarusian Coalition of Civil Society Organizations, Initiatives, and Activists against Gender-based and Domestic Violence.** It aims at international advocacy of women's rights. Members of the Coalition provide direct services to Belarusian women in Belarus and in emigration countries, including psychological, legal and information support and counselling. The Coalition is based in exile.

**Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions** is an association of Belarusian independent trade unions. The main areas of activities include: representing Belarusian workers in the International Labour Organization and other international organizations, monitoring violations of workers' rights, providing international legal protection for the rights of Belarusian workers, and humanitarian support of persecuted trade unions members.

**Human Constanta** is a Belarusian human rights organization, working to promote public interests and joint actions in response to modern challenges in the field of human rights through advocacy, education, and analytics since 2015. The organization's key areas of focus

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<sup>1</sup> *Implementation statistics:*

Of the 266 recommendations received by Belarus in the third cycle, 14 were not assessed due to lack of sufficient information.

Of the 252 recommendations assessed, only 2 are implemented, 24 are partially implemented and 226 are not implemented.

Of the 9 recommendations **accepted** by Belarus, 6 are partially implemented and 3 were not assessed.

Of the 124 recommendations **accepted** by Belarus **as implemented**, 2 are implemented, 17 are partially implemented, 94 are not implemented and 11 were not assessed.

Of the 18 recommendations **partially accepted** by Belarus, 1 is partially implemented, 17 are not implemented. 4 recommendations **accepted** by Belarus **as currently being implemented** are not implemented.

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

include migrants' and foreigners' rights, digital rights, and anti-discrimination. Human Constanta monitors legislative and policy developments in Belarus, inter alia, through regular reviews of “anti-extremism” laws and their application in Belarus, as well as research on the impacts of such laws and practices on human rights and the rule of law.

**Human Rights Center “Viasna”** is the leading human rights organization of Belarus with 27 years of relevant experience. Its priorities include assistance to the victims of human rights violations, information activities, monitoring freedom of peaceful assembly and fair trial standards, etc. Viasna has over a dozen local offices across Belarus with nearly 80 activists based in Belarus and abroad, together with over 100 volunteers.

**Human rights organization Respect-Protect-Fulfill** is a Belarusian independent non-governmental non-profit human rights litigation organization, currently based in Lithuania. The mission is promotion of human rights in Belarus and beyond its borders, utilizing international mechanisms for strategic litigation and prioritizing issues that have never been raised before.

**Lawtrend** is the Belarusian human rights organization. Since 1996, Lawtrend has been the leading Belarusian expert organization in the field of freedom of association and legal regulation of CSOs. Areas of expertise: freedom of associations; access to information; freedom of movement and rights of migrants; international mechanisms.

**Legal Initiative** is a non-profit non-governmental human rights organization, protecting human rights in Belarus since 1996. The organization primarily works in four main areas of expertise: human rights education, legal help to victims of human rights violations, improvement of legislation and change in law enforcement practice, international advocacy.

**Medical Solidarity Foundation (BYMEDSOL)** is an organization established in 2020 to support and raise awareness for healthcare workers and patients in Belarus. The main areas of the foundation's activities include: advocacy for healthcare workers' rights, monitoring the state of the healthcare system, running media dedicated to Belarusian healthcare.

**Office for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** is a Belarusian human rights organization, liquidated in Belarus and operating from abroad. The focus of the activity is the whole range of rights of people with disabilities within the framework of a comprehensive and universal understanding of human rights, non-discrimination.

**PEN Belarus** is a Belarusian human rights organization, was founded in 1989 and admitted to PEN International in May 1990 at its 55th International Congress. Its mission is to develop Belarusian culture, defend freedom of expression and the rights of writers, journalists and other cultural figures.

## SCOPE OF INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

1. Belarus does not seek to expand its *international obligations*, rather it denounced the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), depriving Belarusians of access to Human Rights Committee (HRC), and withdrew from treaties related to human rights and environmental protection: the Aarhus and Bern Conventions.
2. **Re-accede to human rights treaties denounced over the last 5 years, ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, as well as the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR and other international human rights treaties.**
3. Belarus' *cooperation with international human rights mechanisms*<sup>1</sup> has sharply declined since 2020.<sup>2</sup> While it submits reports to treaty bodies, it does so in bad faith, ignoring recommendations and presenting a misleading image of progress. It dismisses HRC views and rejects interim measures. It suspended the work of the OHCHR Senior Human Rights Adviser in 2021. Belarus consistently refuses to engage with UN mandates investigating post-2020 violations. and to cooperate with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, no longer participating in related interactive dialogues. Belarus manipulates thematic procedures for political gain, selectively engaging with them. It partially responds to inquiries, withholding key information under the pretext of political bias.
4. For more than 20 years Belarus has failed to comply with the ILO Commission of Inquiry's Recommendations<sup>3</sup> and subsequent ILO supervisory bodies recommendations, leading to the application of Article 33 of the ILO Constitution<sup>4</sup> in 2023. Belarus refuses to comply in good faith with follow-up measures related to application of Article 33.
5. Additionally, Belarus has failed to cooperate with the OSCE Moscow Mechanisms 2020 and 2023 and Vienna Mechanisms 2021 and 2024, dismissing it as politically biased.
6. **Cooperate fully and meaningfully with UN treaty bodies and special procedures, as well as OSCE and ILO, implementing their recommendations. Engage with**

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Belarus on the topic of Belarus' engagement with United Nations human rights related bodies and mechanisms, 19 July, 2024, A/79/201, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/a79201-situation-human-rights-belarus>; Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.23-138.42, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> National Human Rights Index, <https://index.belhelcom.org/en/>

<sup>3</sup> Report of the Commission of Inquiry appointed under article 26 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization to examine the Observance by the Government of the Republic of Belarus of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98) (November 2004, GB.291/6), [https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx\\_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:50012:0::NO::P50012\\_COMPLAINT\\_PROCEDURES\\_ID%2CP50012\\_LANG\\_CODE:2508289%2Cen](https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:50012:0::NO::P50012_COMPLAINT_PROCEDURES_ID%2CP50012_LANG_CODE:2508289%2Cen)

<sup>4</sup> Resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject of Belarus (12 June 2023, ILC.111/Resolution I), <https://www.ilo.org/resource/ilc/111/resolution-concerning-measures-recommended-governing-body-under-article-33>

**the UN Group of Independent Experts on the Human Rights Situation in Belarus, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus and thematic mandates, as well as the ILO tripartite mission and Special Envoy on Belarus, allowing unhindered access to the country and responding to all communications in good faith. Implement the HRC's views on individual communications, including interim measures on the death penalty.**

## **NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK<sup>5</sup>**

7. The Inter-agency plan to implement the recommendations accepted by Belarus following the second cycle of the UPR and the recommendations of the treaty bodies for 2016-2019 did not contain meaningful actions to change the human rights situation.
8. Belarus adopted national action plans on gender equality (2021–2025), children's rights (2022–2026), and the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017–2025). While these initiatives signal the government's recognition of relevant issues, challenges in gender equality, child protection, and rights of persons with disabilities persist and are often further exacerbated by state actions. The lack of cooperation with independent civil society organizations (CSOs), undermines the effectiveness of the implementation of these plans.<sup>6</sup>
9. Establishment of a national human rights institution (NHRI) has not been considered by the authorities, and there have been no public discussions. Existing state institutions are not independent and cannot replace an NHRI.
10. **Adopt and effectively implement comprehensive national human rights plans and programs, ensuring meaningful cooperation with independent CSOs at all stages. Establish an independent NHRI in accordance with the Paris Principles.**

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS**

### **Equality and non-discrimination<sup>7</sup>**

11. Belarus lacks comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. While the principle of equality is enshrined in the Constitution and laws, it remains too vague to be effectively applied in discrimination cases. The anti-discrimination provisions in the Labor Code and the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, have a very limited scope. The absence of specialized legal procedures limits victims' ability to seek justice.
12. Although Article 130 of the Criminal Code (CC) addresses hate crimes, it has never been effective in combating discrimination. Since 2020, authorities have increasingly used it for political repression.
13. **Adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and ensure effective enforcement and redress mechanisms. Prevent the misuse of Article 130 of the CC for repression and ensure its proper application against hate crimes.**

### **Civil and political rights**

<sup>5</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.46, 138.56,

[https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Id., recommendations 138.59-138.64

<sup>7</sup> Id., recommendations 138.69, 138.70, 138.71

## ***Right to life, liberty, and security of person***

14. The scope of the ***death penalty*** was expanded: in 2022, it was introduced for attempted terrorist acts<sup>8</sup>, and in 2023, extended to officials and military personnel for high treason.<sup>9</sup>
15. Between 2020 and 2024, six death sentences were issued.<sup>10</sup> In all cases where communications were submitted to the HRC, the authorities disregarded requests for urgent measures and did not suspend executions. The HRC recognized previous executions as human rights violations<sup>11</sup>.
16. **Establish a moratorium on the death penalty as a first step toward full abolition per international standards. Until then, ensure full transparency in death penalty cases, including timely notification to convicts and their families regarding sentences and executions. Engage with UN mechanisms to address concerns related to fair trial in death penalty cases.**
17. At least 4 people reportedly died due to the ***disproportionate use of force by the law-enforcement*** during the post-election protests of 2020.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, 7 political prisoners died ***in custody*** between 2020 and 2024.<sup>13</sup> None of these cases have been investigated.<sup>14</sup>
18. Four cases of ***enforced disappearances*** from 1999–2000 remain uninvestigated.<sup>15</sup> Between 2022 and 2025, there were 11 documented cases of prolonged ***incommunicado detention*** of political prisoners, some lasting for 2 years.<sup>16</sup> Allegations regarding ***incommunicado*** as enforced disappearance, have not been addressed by the authorities.<sup>17</sup>
19. **End the practice of *incommunicado* detention and guarantee timely access to legal representation, family, and judicial oversight for all detainees. Ensure impartial investigations into all deaths in custody and deaths from excessive force, enforced disappearances, *incommunicado* detentions, and hold those responsible accountable.**

<sup>8</sup> The amendments were introduced by the Law “On Amendments to the Criminal Code of Belarus” dated May 13, 2022, No. 165-Z

<sup>9</sup> The amendments were introduced by the Law “On Amendments to the Criminal Liability Codes” dated March 3, 2023, No. 256-Z

<sup>10</sup> According to Supreme Court statistics: [https://court.gov.by/ru/justice\\_rb/statistics/](https://court.gov.by/ru/justice_rb/statistics/); For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, recommendation 138.12

<sup>11</sup> Human Rights Committee, Views concerning comm. No. 3196/2018 and No. 3209/2018 (Natalya Berezhnaya and Lyudmila Gershankova v. Belarus)

<sup>12</sup> Viasna, Human Rights Situation in Belarus in 2020, p. 10:

[https://spring96.org/files/reviews/en/review\\_2020\\_en.pdf](https://spring96.org/files/reviews/en/review_2020_en.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Viasna, The year of persecution and pardoning: figures on political prisoners in Belarus in 2024: <https://spring96.org/en/news/117068>

<sup>14</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendation 138.111, 138.228,

[https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Id., recommendation 138.193; AL BLR 1/2020,

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25035>

<sup>16</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendation 138.111,

[https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> A/HRC/WGEID/122/1, A/HRC/WGEID/131/1, A/HRC/WGEID/134/1



20. *Arbitrary detentions*,<sup>18</sup> characterized by persecution for the exercise of fundamental rights and violations of procedural guarantees, remained widespread. Criminal and administrative detention procedure does not ensure detainees' access to legal counsel, timely family notification, or effective judicial oversight.
21. Arbitrary arrests were frequently accompanied by torture and inhuman treatment. It has been a common practice to coerce detainees into humiliating "repentance" recordings, which were disseminated through state-controlled media.<sup>19</sup>
22. Pre-trial detention remained a common practice rather than an exception justified by necessity. Pre-trial detention decisions were not made by a judicial authority,<sup>20</sup> and judicial review occurred only upon appeal and without bringing the detainee to court.
23. As of April 2025, there are 1,208 political prisoners in custody, with a total of 3,929 individuals having been imprisoned for purely political reasons since 2020.<sup>21</sup>
24. **Unconditionally release all political prisoners and stop practice of arbitrary detentions. Reform detention procedures to ensure unconditional access to legal counsel, timely family notification, and effective judicial oversight. Stop ill-treatment, including the practice of coerced guilty pleas and confessions.**

### ***Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including in detention***

25. The state's response to the mass protests following the fraudulent elections in 2020 was an unprecedented violence, accompanied by torture and other forms of cruel treatment, which continue to this day during arrests, administrative detentions, and in places of confinement.<sup>22</sup>
26. Since 2020, typical forms of torture include beatings, strangulation, forcing people to remain in a static position for long periods, impacting sensory receptors, use of tasers, sexualized violence, confinement in an overcrowded cell, prolonged solitary confinement in a punishment cell, *incommunicado* detention, and others.<sup>23</sup>
27. Short-term detention facilities suffer from overcrowding, poor sanitation, inadequate ventilation, and lack of privacy.<sup>24</sup> Detainees are deprived of hygiene products, bedding, daily walks, and warm water.<sup>25</sup> Pretrial detention conditions are similarly

<sup>18</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.105, 138.112, 138.134, 138.204,

[https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Viasna, Human Rights Situation in Belarus in 2024, p. 35: <https://spring96.org/en/news/117321>

<sup>20</sup> According to the national legislation, pre-trial detention at the stage of preliminary investigation is carried out by order of the investigator with the authorization of the prosecutor (Art. 126(2) and 127(3) of Criminal Procedure Code)

<sup>21</sup> Viasna, Political prisoners in Belarus, <https://prisoners.spring96.org/en>

<sup>22</sup> Viasna, Beatings, threats, inhuman conditions: what tortures Belarusians most often tell about. Statistics: <https://spring96.org/en/news/115980>; For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.102, 138.111, 138.228,

[https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 7 February 2025, A/HRC/58/68, paras 42-57,

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/ohchrbelarus/a-hrc-58-68-aev.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Viasna, Parasites in places of imprisonment is a gross violation of international standards of detention: <https://spring96.org/en/news/116919>

Viasna, "Gas sprayed into ventilation reached us": Akrescina facilities detention conditions throughout 2022 in detainees own words: <https://spring96.org/en/news/110396>

<sup>25</sup> Viasna, "She used a rag during her period." Former prisoners spoke about the conditions in Belarusian temporary detention facilities: <https://spring96.org/en/news/115711>

harsh, with limited medical care. Even the new Pretrial Detention Center No. 1 in Minsk reportedly has poor conditions.<sup>26</sup> Prisoners endure low-paid or unpaid forced labor, arbitrary punishments, and extended sentences.<sup>27</sup> Punitive isolation (SHIZO) includes tiny, cold cells (4m<sup>2</sup>), solitary confinement, sleep deprivation, no bedding, and restricted outdoor access.<sup>28</sup>

28. The authorities have never publicly condemned torture or warned of criminal liability for such actions. Instead, officials have publicly endorsed law enforcement's actions.<sup>29</sup>
29. Torture is not recognized as a separate crime, and complaints are not promptly or effectively investigated. Courts are not required to initiate an inquiry on torture claims, and victims face delays in forensic exams and questioning. The Criminal Procedure Code does not include a provision for suspending a criminal case until an allegation of torture by the accused has been fully investigated. Officers accused of torture are not suspended from duty during investigations, and there is no safe mechanism for detainees to file complaints.<sup>30</sup>
30. The lack of independent monitoring mechanism further intensifies these violations.<sup>31</sup>
31. **Ensure independent, prompt, effective, and impartial investigations of all torture and ill-treatment allegations per international standards. Improve detention conditions by guaranteeing communication, healthcare, sanitation, and basic needs. Ensure that prisoners are not subjected to forced labor. Amend the CC to criminalize all acts of torture in full compliance with the Convention Against Torture. Grant independent monitors unrestricted access to all detention facilities. Accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and establish a national preventive mechanism for independent oversight and torture prevention.**

### *Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law<sup>32</sup>*

32. Since the beginning of the 2020 presidential election campaign and continuing to this day, politically motivated persecution of citizens, deemed “disloyal”, has been ongoing.

<sup>26</sup> Viasna, “In summer it's like a greenhouse there.” A former prisoner told about the new pretrial detention center near Minsk: <https://spring96.org/ru/news/115728>

<sup>27</sup> Penal Enforcement Code, article 114 (1), See A/HRC/56/65, paras 35-36

<sup>28</sup> Penal Enforcement Code, article 114 (1), See A/HRC/56/65, paras 35-36

<sup>29</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.102, 138.103, 138.206,

[https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Id., recommendations 138.109, 138.110, 138.205

<sup>31</sup> Viasna, Detention and Penitentiary Facilities of Belarus: 2020-2021. Monitoring report, p. 26-33:

[https://spring96.org/files/book/en/detention\\_and\\_penitentiary\\_2020\\_2021.pdf](https://spring96.org/files/book/en/detention_and_penitentiary_2020_2021.pdf); For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendation 138.102

<sup>32</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendation 138.186,

[https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)



33. National courts do not uphold the rule of law, instead acting as part of a repressive mechanism, issuing politically motivated sentences against dissenters in violation of fair trial guarantees. Since 2020 the courts have prosecuted tens of thousands of people in administrative and criminal proceedings, passing disproportionate and unlawful sentences, including imprisoning people for taking part in peaceful rallies, for their real or perceived opinions. Courts refuse to hear appeals against the actions of state bodies, including law enforcement agencies and election commissions.
34. The judges are appointed, can be disciplined and removed from office by the decision of the president, which undermines the independence of the judiciary.
35. The Bar of Belarus also lacks independence, with its attorneys under the control of the Ministry of Justice.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the Belarusian authorities after the 2020 elections began to deliberately create numerous obstacles to the effective performance of attorneys' professional duties: denying lawyers access to clients,<sup>34</sup> wiretapping confidential conversations between them,<sup>35</sup> forcing attorneys to sign non-disclosure agreements on a wide range of case information, and arbitrarily declaring trials closed.<sup>36</sup> These measures severely restricted their ability to provide effective legal defense, particularly in politically motivated cases.
36. Many lawyers have been arbitrarily detained, interrogated, and otherwise harassed; many have been threatened.<sup>37</sup> Since September 2020, the Belarusian authorities have arbitrarily detained at least 23 attorneys and subsequently used these arrests as a pretext to remove them from politically motivated cases and terminate their licenses. At least 141 attorneys were disbarred and deprived of the right to practice, some were prosecuted for their professional activities or opinions.<sup>38</sup> At least 6 lawyers are imprisoned for six to ten years in politically motivated cases.<sup>39</sup>
37. **Take measures to ensure in law and in practice the full independence of judges, and to deprive the executive authorities of the functions of selecting, appointing, dismissing and disciplining judges. Bring legislation regulating the legal profession in line with international standards. Ensure the independence of the legal profession, self-governance, access to the profession, stop arbitrary application of disciplinary measures.**

### ***Freedom of expression, assembly, and association***

38. Since 2020, massive and systematic violations of freedom of expression, assembly, and association have been taking place. The authorities suppress and persecute any

<sup>33</sup> NGO Report, The Crisis of the Legal Profession in Belarus: How to Return the Right to Defense (2020-2022), <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cGbBv2r6bt5rCg7fOLAmGFoQLUBQQBvx/view>; NGO Report, Belarus. The Crisis of the Legal Profession Continued Repressions (2022-2023), [https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/human\\_rights/justice-defenders/chr-belarus-legal-profession-continued-repressions-report.pdf](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/human_rights/justice-defenders/chr-belarus-legal-profession-continued-repressions-report.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> NGO Report, The Crisis of the Legal Profession in Belarus: How to Return the Right to Defense (2020-2022), Obstacles in the lawyer's access to the client, [https://report2022.defendersbelarus.org/prepyatstva\\_dostup](https://report2022.defendersbelarus.org/prepyatstva_dostup)

<sup>35</sup> Euroradio, Tikhonouski's lawyer filed a complaint for publishing a conversation with a client, <https://euroradio.fm/ru/advokat-tihanovskogo-podala-zhalobu-za-publikaciyu-razgovora-s-klientom>.

<sup>36</sup> Right to Defence, Requiring lawyers to sign non-disclosure agreements about pre-trial investigations as a means of pressure on them, [https://www.defendersbelarus.org/podpiska\\_o\\_nerazglashenii](https://www.defendersbelarus.org/podpiska_o_nerazglashenii)

<sup>37</sup> Id.

<sup>38</sup> Right to Defence, Persecution of lawyers in Belarus after the 2020 elections, [https://defendersbelarus.org/persecution\\_lawyers\\_belarus](https://defendersbelarus.org/persecution_lawyers_belarus)

<sup>39</sup> Viasna, Deterioration of legal profession in Belarus: facts, reasons, assessments, <https://spring96.org/en/news/116599>

- form of real or perceived political criticism and disagreement.<sup>40</sup>
39. Although no street protests have been reported in recent years, arrests and criminal charges continue against peaceful post-election protestors. Judges often impose harsh sentences, including imprisonment, rather than milder alternatives. The legislation lacks a presumption of *freedom of assembly*<sup>41</sup>, with excessive restrictions and requirements, including expense payments. Attempts to hold peaceful assemblies remain risky due to potential political persecution.<sup>42</sup>
  40. **End arbitrary persecution for participating in peaceful assemblies and guarantee freedom of assembly in the future, including by bringing domestic legislation in line with international standards.**
  41. *Freedom of association*<sup>43</sup> is severely restricted, with excessive interference in the creation and operation of organizations. Various forms of repression have been used by the authorities against organizations (raids, inspections, suspension of activities, written warnings, blocking of websites) and their members (searches, interrogations, imprisonment, trials *in absentia*). Human rights organizations are also persecuted, with 6 representatives currently in custody for political reasons.
  42. Telegram channels, chats, websites of CSOs are recognized as “extremist materials”.<sup>44</sup> 255 entities, including human rights organizations, have been recognized as “extremist organizations/formations”.<sup>45</sup>
  43. Since early 2021, Belarusian authorities have forcibly liquidated or coerced the self-liquidation<sup>46</sup> of at least 1,917 non-profit organizations (NPOs), including civic associations, political parties, trade unions and foundations. As of January 1, 2025, there were 1,397 public associations in Belarus.<sup>47</sup> Dissolution of many NPOs and initiatives serving vulnerable populations, further worsens their situation.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>40</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.141, 138.144, 138.146, 138.171, 138.183, 138.184, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> Id., recommendations 138.44, 138.45, 138.61

<sup>42</sup> National Human Rights Index, Right of peaceful assembly, 2023, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/9\\_right\\_of\\_peaceful\\_assembly\\_2023.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/9_right_of_peaceful_assembly_2023.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.59-138.64, 138.105, 138.106, 138.141, 138.143, 138.144, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> List of materials designated as extremist published by the Ministry of Information: <http://mininform.gov.by/documents/respublikanskiy-spisok-ekstremistskikh-materialov/>

<sup>45</sup> List of organizations and individuals involved in extremist activities published by Ministry of Interior: <https://www.mvd.gov.by/ru/news/8642>

<sup>46</sup> Number of liquidated NPOs as of April 1, 2025; Lawtrend, Monitoring of NPOs in Belarus that are in the process of forced liquidation and have decided to self-liquidate: <https://www.lawtrend.org/liquidation-nko>

<sup>47</sup> According to the Ministry of Justice, [https://minjust.gov.by/directions/compare\\_coverage/](https://minjust.gov.by/directions/compare_coverage/)

<sup>48</sup> For more details on the discrimination against women, see the Joint Report of the Coalition of Belarusian NGOs and Initiatives to the CEDAW, 2025, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCEDAW%2FCSS%2FBELR%2F62252&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCEDAW%2FCSS%2FBELR%2F62252&Lang=en); For racial discrimination, refer to the Joint Report of the Coalition of Belarusian Human Rights Organizations to the CERD, 2024, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCERD%2FNGO%2FBELR%2F58867&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCERD%2FNGO%2FBELR%2F58867&Lang=en)

44. On January 4, 2022, Belarus reinstated criminal responsibility for organizing and participating in an unregistered organization (Article 193-1).<sup>49</sup>
45. Registering public associations is complex, costly, and requires extensive documentation, including a legal address in non-residential premises, allowing authorities to arbitrarily deny registration to undesirable associations. Since 2021, the number of NPOs registered annually has been ten times fewer than those liquidated. NPOs have very limited access to funding, especially foreign. Public associations are often forced to exclude specific members.
46. The state creates favorable conditions for a few pro-government CSOs. Forced membership in pro-government organizations like the Belarusian Republican Youth Union, the Belarusian Women's Union, and the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus is widespread.
47. **Stop repressions against civil society activists, including halting administrative and criminal prosecution, arbitrary charges, and pressure on their families. Lift the criminal liability under Article 193-1 and restore the rights of those prosecuted. End forced liquidation of NPOs, restoring dissolved NPOs, and ensuring favorable conditions for their work, including funding access. Halt interference in the activities of CSOs, including prosecutions, searches, freezing of assets, and discrediting in media, and prosecute those responsible under the law. Repeal anti-extremist legislation<sup>50</sup> in its current form as inconsistent with international standards, stop the practice of its arbitrary application.**
48. The state has conducted an unprecedented *crackdown on the media sector*<sup>51</sup>. Since 2021, more than 230 journalists were detained, more than 300 searches have been conducted on journalists' property and media offices.<sup>52</sup> As of March 25, 2025, 41 journalists remain imprisoned.<sup>53</sup>
49. As of March 2025, 38 independent media outlets were labeled as “extremist formations,” putting their employees at risk of criminal prosecution.
50. Most independent media outlets relocated and operate in exile, but repression extends beyond borders, with authorities targeting exiled journalists by pressuring their relatives, conducting home raids, and holding trials *in absentia*.

<sup>49</sup> CSO Meter, Belarus: Criminal penalties restored for unregistered CSOs, <https://csometer.info/updates/belarus-criminal-penalties-restored-unregistered-csos/>; Belarus: First criminal sentence for continuing CSO activities after liquidation, <https://csometer.info/updates/belarus-first-criminal-sentence-continuing-cso-activities-after-liquidation/>; Lawtrend. Freedom of association and legal environment for civil society organizations, <https://www.lawtrend.org/english/freedom-of-association-and-legal-environment-for-civil-society-organizations>

<sup>50</sup> In particular, the “Law on Countering Extremism” and related provisions of the Criminal Code, the Code of Administrative Offenses, and other corresponding legislative acts.

<sup>51</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations, 138.144, 138.147, 138.155, 138.157, 138.160, 138.165, 138.166, 138.171, 138.172, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> Belarusian Association of Journalists, Persecution of Belarusian journalists and media in 2024, in figures, <https://baj.media/en/aglyady-manitoringi/persecution-of-belarusian-journalists-and-media-in-2024-in-figures/>; Figures of the year. Repression of media and journalists in Belarus in 2023, <https://baj.media/en/aglyady-manitoringi/figures-year-repression-media-and-journalists-belarus-2023/>; Repressions against journalists and media in Belarus 2022, <https://baj.media/en/aglyady-manitoringi/repressions-against-journalists-and-media-belarus-2022/>; Figures of the year. Repression of media and journalists in Belarus in 2021, <https://baj.media/en/aglyady-manitoringi/figures-year-repression-media-and-journalists-belarus-2021/>

<sup>53</sup> Belarusian Association of Journalists, Repressions against journalists in Belarus 2025, list of colleagues in prison, <https://baj.media/en/aglyady-manitoringi/repressions-against-journalists-in-belarus-2025-list-of-colleagues-in-prison/>

51. The authorities extensively use administrative measures to restrict access to information, both by blocking media websites and by designating their online content as “extremist materials”, the distribution of which is punishable under Belarusian law.
52. Legislative amendments introduced since 2021 have further restricted freedom of information and significantly increased state interference in journalistic activities.<sup>54</sup>
53. State-funded outlets spread propaganda, disinformation, and hate speech against political opponents.
54. **End the repression of independent media, journalists, and individuals exercising freedom of expression, including the misuse of anti-extremist laws, website blocking, and internet shutdowns. Revise the “On Mass Media” law to align with international standards, ensuring media freedom and a safe environment free from harassment and intimidation.**
55. Authorities arbitrarily use anti-extremist laws to persecute *freedom of expression*<sup>55</sup>, mainly online. Criticism of state institutions, law enforcement, or Russian military actions is labeled as “incitement to hatred,” while alternative views on history are seen as “rehabilitation of Nazism” or “denial of genocide.” Criticizing government representatives in public statements, social media, or private messages can lead to charges of “insult” or “slander.”
56. Any engagement with NPOs or media recognized as “extremist” (giving interviews or communicating with such organizations, providing information, volunteering, or even making a single financial donation) can be classified as “facilitating extremist activity” under CC. The interaction with “extremist materials” is treated as an administrative offense.
57. The legislation allows prosecution for sharing information about the political, economic, or military situation in the country that contradicts the official stance. Calls for sanctions, boycotts of goods, or strikes are interpreted as “calls to harm national security.” This forces people to limit public activities, avoiding any criticism, fostering widespread fear and self-censorship.
58. Between 300,000 and 600,000 Belarusians have been forced to flee the country due to the threat of political persecution. The Group of Independent Experts on the Human Rights Situation in Belarus has found reasonable grounds to believe that Belarusian authorities have committed crimes against humanity, including persecution and related acts.<sup>56</sup>
59. **Repeal laws criminalizing criticism, historical views, and political, economic, or military discussions. Prevent using vague legal provisions for silencing dissent or prosecuting peaceful activism. End arbitrary prosecutions for engaging with independent media and NPOs. Protect free speech online and stop criminalizing private messages, social media posts, and public statements. Decriminalize support for independent organizations, including donations, volunteering, and information-sharing.**

## ***Right to privacy***

<sup>54</sup> Belarusian Association of Journalists, Monitoring Report 2021, <https://baj.media/en/aglyady-manitoringi/monitoring-report-2021/>;

Mass Media in Belarus 2022, <https://baj.media/en/aglyady-manitoringi/mass-media-in-belarus-in-2022/>;  
Mass Media in Belarus 2023, <https://baj.media/en/aglyady-manitoringi/mass-media-in-belarus-in-2023/>

<sup>55</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.105, 138.141, 138.143, 138.144, 138.146, 138.171, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 7 February, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/ohchrbelarus/a-hrc-58-68-aev.pdf>

60. The situation with the right to privacy is characterized by widespread violations, including increased government surveillance, restrictions on privacy at borders<sup>57</sup>, and politically motivated repression against the relatives of individuals seen as politically disloyal.<sup>58</sup>
61. Despite the adoption of the Law “On Personal Data Protection” in 2021<sup>59</sup>, throughout 2023-2024, legislation and state practice allowed extensive personal data collection and mandatory retention by private companies without adequate safeguards.<sup>60</sup> Surveillance technologies, including facial recognition and camera networks, expanded from 35,000 to 60,000 cameras, enabling real-time monitoring and identification of individuals nationwide.<sup>61</sup>
62. Amendments to the Citizenship Law required citizens to disclose foreign citizenships or residency, expanding government access to personal data.<sup>62</sup> Decree No. 278 (“Passport Decree”) adopted in 2023 restricted Belarusian citizens abroad from obtaining identity documents or completing vital legal and administrative procedures, severely impacting personal, professional, and family life. Children, especially those born abroad to parents unable to return, are particularly affected.<sup>63</sup>
63. Despite legislative safeguards like the “Register of Personal Data Operators,”<sup>64</sup> enforcement remains selective. Data protection laws have been instrumentalized for political persecution,<sup>65</sup> with regular unauthorized data leaks by security services and forced confessions published in state-controlled media.<sup>66</sup>
64. Additionally, authorities expanded access to sensitive personal data in financial<sup>67</sup> and transportation<sup>68</sup> sectors without explicit consent, enhancing state monitoring capacities.<sup>69</sup>
65. **Ensure independent enforcement of privacy laws and prevent misuse of personal data for political persecution. Introduce judicial oversight for surveillance technologies, including facial recognition and data retention. Stop practice of arbitrary border checks of personal electronic devices without clear legal**

<sup>57</sup> Zerkalo.io, More than 200 people were detained after returning to Belarus in 2023, <https://news.zerkalo.io/life/58402.html>

<sup>58</sup> Nasha Niva, What questions were asked to the relatives of political prisoners who were mass detained yesterday?, <https://nashaniva.com/ru/334713>

<sup>59</sup> The Law “On Personal Data Protection”, dated May 7, 2021, No. 99-Z, [https://pravo.by/upload/docs/op/H12100099\\_1620939600.pdf](https://pravo.by/upload/docs/op/H12100099_1620939600.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> Human Constanta, A decree that takes the surveillance of people in Belarus to an unprecedented level, <https://humanconstanta.org/ukaz-kotoryj-vyvodit-slezhku-za-lyudmi-v-belarusi-na-besprecedentnyj-uroven-sovmestnoe-obrahenie-pravozashhitnyx-organizacij-v-oon%EF%BF%BC/>

<sup>61</sup> Nasha Niva, How the police video surveillance system works: based on photos, it finds a person on a bus, in a supermarket and at school, <https://nashaniva.com/ru/362168>

<sup>62</sup> Zerkalo.io, The doctor refused to “hand over” the Pole's card, and he was forced to resign, [https://news.zerkalo.io/life/35752.html?utm\\_source=editorial\\_block&utm\\_campaign=recirculation\\_tut&utm\\_medium=read\\_more](https://news.zerkalo.io/life/35752.html?utm_source=editorial_block&utm_campaign=recirculation_tut&utm_medium=read_more)

<sup>63</sup> Belarusian Helsinki Committee, The analysis of violations by the Republic of Belarus of international human rights obligations and constitutional guarantees in respect of its citizens due to the adoption of Decree No. 278 “On the Procedure for Issuing Documents and Performing Actions”, <https://belhelcom.org/en/document/analysis-violations-republic-belarus-international-human-rights-obligations-and>

<sup>64</sup> Register of Personal Data Operators, <https://register.cpd.by/>

<sup>65</sup> Viasna, Detention for messages in the Black Book of Belarus and a new “extremist formation”: Chronicle of persecution on August 2, <https://spring96.org/ru/news/115905>

<sup>66</sup> Viasna, Human Rights Situation in Belarus. March 2024, <https://spring96.org/en/news/114930>

<sup>67</sup> Presidential Decree “On Measures to Counter Unauthorized Payment Transactions”, dated August 29, 2023, No. 269, <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=P32300269>

<sup>68</sup> Presidential Decree “On Passenger Road Transportation”, dated January 25, 2024, No. 32, <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=P32400032>

<sup>69</sup> Belarusian Helsinki Committee, Human Rights in Belarus: Key Trends in Public Policy. January-April'24, <https://trends.belhelcom.org/storage/reviews/May2024/Ln6pcg0TcStHLNDeUimT.pdf>



**safeguards. Restrict government access to financial and transportation data without explicit user consent. Repeal restrictive measures like Decree No. 278 to ensure the rights of Belarusians abroad.**

### ***Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion***<sup>70</sup>

66. Belarus continues to severely restrict religious freedom. Amendments to the Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations”, introduced in 2023, requires all religious organizations to re-register, effectively stripping them of legal status and imposing stricter requirements.<sup>71</sup> Unregistered religious activity is criminalized.<sup>72</sup>
67. Authorities heavily control religious communities, banning services outside approved locations, denying visas to foreign clergy, and spreading propaganda against “undesirable” religious groups. Repressions include arrests, fines, and prosecution, particularly targeting Catholic and Protestant leaders, openly opposing political repression.<sup>73</sup>
68. **Remove the mandatory re-registration of religious organizations. Cease excessive control over religious communities, including restrictions on clergy and foreign religious workers. End repression and persecution of religious activists. Promote religious tolerance.**

### **Economic, social and cultural rights**

#### ***Right to education***<sup>74</sup>

69. Mass repressions combined with inadequate compensation led to a reduction in qualified personnel at all levels of education. The closure of private institutions and strict licensing procedures reduce the number of educational institutions, increasing state control and suppressing independence.<sup>75</sup> Enrollment rates for Roma students at all levels of education remain low, discrimination against them persists.<sup>76</sup>
70. The problem of the quality of education persists, namely its compliance with the educational goals set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Belarusian government actively promotes militarized patriotism in schools, shifting focus from

<sup>70</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.144, 138.153,

[https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> The Law “On Amending Laws on the Activities of Religious Organizations”, dated December 30, 2023, No. 334-Z, <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=H12300334>

<sup>72</sup> CSO Meter, Belarus: Criminal penalties restored for unregistered CSOs, <https://csometer.info/updates/belarus-criminal-penalties-restored-unregistered-csos>

<sup>73</sup> National Human Rights Index, Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, 2023, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/7\\_right\\_to\\_freedom\\_of\\_thought\\_conscience\\_and\\_religion\\_2023.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/7_right_to_freedom_of_thought_conscience_and_religion_2023.pdf); 2022,

[https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/7\\_right\\_to\\_freedom\\_of\\_thought\\_conscience\\_and\\_religion\\_2022.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/7_right_to_freedom_of_thought_conscience_and_religion_2022.pdf)

<sup>74</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.219, 138.233-138.235, 138.253,

[https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> National Human Rights Index, Right to education, 2022, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/14\\_right\\_to\\_education\\_2022.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/14_right_to_education_2022.pdf)

<sup>76</sup> Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Belarus, March 24, 2022, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FBLR%2FCO%2F7&Lang=ru](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2FC.12%2FBLR%2FCO%2F7&Lang=ru)



peace and human dignity to a glorification of strength and war. Children are dressed in military uniforms, exposed to weapons, and enrolled in military-patriotic camps. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, this trend has escalated dramatically. Schools impose ideological conformity through coercion, intimidation, and propaganda, fostering hostility toward political dissenters and certain national groups as state-sponsored narrative.<sup>77</sup> Similar trends are observed at other levels of education.<sup>78</sup>

71. **Stop repressions against educators and support private educational institutions to ensure proper access to education. Address barriers faced by Roma students and ensure equal opportunities for all. Align curricula with international standards, depoliticize education, focus on peace and human dignity instead of war glorification, eliminate ideological coercion and discrimination in educational institutions.**

### ***Right to health<sup>79</sup>***

72. The provision of healthcare have seen a consistent decline due to repressive government measures. There were numerous suspensions of private medical centers. The government's support for the Russian military aggression against Ukraine has further strained the availability of essential medications and medical equipment, even as the demand for these resources has surged. Belarus's *Belkovidvak* vaccine faced secrecy, regulatory violations, and efficacy issues. The refusal to procure proven vaccines and reports of unauthorized disposals further eroded public trust and weakened the country's COVID-19 response.<sup>80</sup>
73. The shortage of medical personnel has progressively worsened, driven by doctors leaving the country due to unfavorable working conditions, inadequate compensation, and political repressions.<sup>81</sup> Transportation accessibility challenges have hindered access to quality medical care in rural regions. Substantial problems persist in

<sup>77</sup> Belarusian Helsinki Committee, Analytical Report on Violations of Some Children's Rights (School, Law Enforcement, Healthcare), 2021–2022, <https://belhelcom.org/ru/document/analiticheskiy-doklad-o-narusheniyah-otdelnykh-prav-rebenka-shkola-pravoohranitelnye-organy>; Violation of some rights of the child. Belarus, 2021–2022. Summary text, <https://belhelcom.org/en/document/violation-some-rights-child-belarus-2021-2022-summary-text>; Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, May 3, 2023, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc5353-report-special-rapporteur-situation-human-rights-belarus-anais>

<sup>78</sup> National Human Rights Index, Right to education, 2022, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/14\\_right\\_to\\_education\\_2022.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/14_right_to_education_2022.pdf)

<sup>79</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.226, 138.231, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>80</sup> Belhalat.news, New details about Belkovidvak, <https://www.belhalat.news/articles/novye-podrobnosti-o-belkovidvak>; After six months, Belkovidvak completely loses its protective properties, <https://www.belhalat.news/news/cherez-polgoda-belkovidvak-polnostyu-teryat-zashchitnye-svoystva>; We found out the truth about the Belkovidvak vaccine, <https://www.belhalat.news/articles/pravda-o-vaccine-belkovidvak>; Prosecutor General's Office, <https://www.prokuratura.gov.by/ru/media/novosti/zashchita-sotsialnykh-prav-grazhdan-zhilishchnoe-i-sotsialnoe/spisali-i-unichtozhi0407/>; <https://prokuratura.gov.by/ru/media/novosti/nadzor-za-resheniyami-po-ugolovnym-i-grazhdanskim-delam/nezakonno-unichtozhi3011/>; <https://prokuratura.gov.by/ru/media/novosti/nadzor-za-resheniyami-po-ugolovnym-i-grazhdanskim-delam/unichtozhili-bolse-9050624/>; <https://www.prokuratura.gov.by/ru/media/novosti/nadzor-za-resheniyami-po-ugolovnym-i-grazhdanskim-delam/prokuratura-vitebsko170624/>;

<sup>81</sup> Civic Monitoring of Public Health, Assessment of the number of doctors in the Republic of Belarus by the end of 2022, <https://civicmonitoring.health/post/doctors-count/>

securing access to healthcare facilities, goods, and services without discrimination, alongside breaches of medical ethics.<sup>82</sup>

74. Psychiatric institutions systematically violate patient rights through unlawful detention, forced treatment, abuse. Patients are often coerced into signing consent forms, deprived of freedom, and face restricted movement, confiscation of belongings, limited contact with relatives, lack of legal protection. Attempts to seek discharge may result in restraint, increased medication, or transfers. Degrading practices, forced labor, and abuse, especially of minors, are widespread, denying patients proper care and dignity.<sup>83</sup>
75. There is a decreasing amount of data being published on the website of the Statistical Committee and other official resources. Key indicators such as birth rates, mortality rates, and morbidity by major nosological groups are missing. The available data is often contradictory.
76. **Improve working conditions and end repressive measures against healthcare workers. Ensure access to high-quality medicines and vaccines for citizens, including through procurement via international agencies. Strengthen rural healthcare infrastructure and address transportation challenges to ensure equal access to medical services. Publish key healthcare and demographic statistics in open access. Ensure humane treatment of individuals with mental disorders by psychiatric services.**

### *Right to work<sup>84</sup>*

77. In July 2022, all independent trade unions were forcibly dissolved, leaving workers without protections as the remaining state-controlled cannot perform this function effectively. Workers face interrogations, detentions, and politically motivated dismissals, especially at state enterprises where KGB officers ensure ideological control.
78. Individuals labelled as “extremists” are banned from certain jobs, including education and public service. Unemployed persons classified as “social parasites” face financial penalties, disproportionately targeting activists and opposition.
79. Fixed-term contracts allowing dismissals without explanation are often used against activists. Strikes are effectively banned, as participation leads to contract termination.
80. A system of forced labor involves sentenced to restriction of freedom, imprisonment, and placement in Medical Labour Centers (LTPs). Inmates and LTPs detainees are required to work without the right to refuse, often in harsh conditions.<sup>85</sup>
81. **Reinstate independent trade unions and protect workers from politically motivated dismissals. Abolish forced labor in prisons and LTPs. Ensure fair**

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<sup>82</sup> National Human Rights Index, Right to health, 2023, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/13\\_right\\_to\\_health\\_2023.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/13_right_to_health_2023.pdf)

<sup>83</sup> Belhalat.news, “The power over the patient is absolute”, <https://www.belhalat.news/articles/bel-psychiatry-02>; The problems in Belarusian psychiatry are huge, but speaking about them, it is important to avoid stigmatization”, <https://www.belhalat.news/opinions/opinions-2>; “If you cry, they might inject you with drugs or tie you to the bed”, <https://www.belhalat.news/articles/bel-psychiatry-04>; “Addiction treatment is out of the question”, <https://www.belhalat.news/articles/bel-psychiatry-05>

<sup>84</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.220, 138.238, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>85</sup> National Human Rights Index, Right to work, 2023, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/12\\_right\\_to\\_work\\_2023.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/12_right_to_work_2023.pdf); 2022, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/12\\_right\\_to\\_work\\_2022.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/12_right_to_work_2022.pdf)

**wages and safe conditions for all workers. Prohibit discrimination based on political views; eliminate job bans for “extremists” and end persecution of activists. Remove the “social parasite” tax and ensure job security by limiting abusive fixed-term contracts. Ensure workers' right to strike without retaliation.**

### ***Cultural rights***

82. Censorship and repression severely restrict cultural expression, forcing artists into silence or exile. Authorities erase cultural figures deemed politically inconvenient, expand blacklists banning exhibitions, concerts, and publications, and intensify surveillance over creative professionals. Many artists retreat into underground spaces or abandon their work for personal safety,<sup>86</sup> any form of solidarity is criminalized.<sup>87</sup>
83. Political prisoners include cultural figures, which also face severe repression - extended sentences, worsening detention conditions, travel bans, and inclusion in extremist lists. Culture has been turned into a propaganda tool, with institutions forced to promote state ideology.
84. The government continues its policy of Russification, suppressing the Belarusian language in education, media, and public spaces while censoring Belarusian-language cultural works.<sup>88</sup> Hate speech against Western countries is widespread, and national minorities face systematic discrimination, including the destruction of shared cultural heritage with Poland and Lithuania, restrictions on native languages in education and religious life, and pressure on Belarusians abroad.<sup>89</sup>
85. Mass dismissals of cultural professionals due to political views or criminal prosecution have led to a depletion of the cultural sphere, rising unemployment, and increased state control. Surveillance, forced ideological loyalty, and denunciation practices further stifle freedom of expression, making Belarus an increasingly hostile environment for independent culture.
86. **Immediately stop torture and political persecution of cultural figures, release all political prisoners among them, ensure safe conditions for creative activity, and end discriminatory practices against cultural figures in exile.**<sup>90</sup>

### **Rights of specific persons or groups**

#### ***Women***<sup>91</sup>

87. Despite formal commitments to gender equality, women face significant discrimination in education and employment. Higher education admissions impose

<sup>86</sup> PEN Belarus, Self-censorship: an invisible form of repression (and a way of preserving Belarusian culture): <https://penbelarus.org/en/2024/12/06/samacenzura-yak-nyabachnaya-forma-represij-i-sposab-zahavacz-belaruskuyu-kulturu.html>

<sup>87</sup> PEN Belarus, 4 years of repression in Belarus in general and in the cultural sector: June 2020 - June 2024: <https://penbelarus.org/en/2024/07/22/4-years-of-repression-in-belarus-in-general-and-in-the-cultural-sector-in-particular-2020-june-2024.html>

<sup>88</sup> International Union of Belarusian Writers, Overview of violations of linguistic rights in Belarus from July 1st to December 31st, 2024: <https://penbelarus.org/en/2025/01/30/aglyad-parushennya-mounyh-pravou-u-belarusi-z-1-lipenya-pa-31-snezhnya-2024-goda.html>

<sup>89</sup> PEN Belarus, Violations of the rights of representatives of national minorities in Belarus (2020–2024): <https://penbelarus.org/en/2024/12/20/parushenni-pravou-pradstaunikou-naczyyanalnih-menshasczyau-u-belarusi-2020-2024.html>

<sup>90</sup> Additionally, see PEN Belarus, Recommendations and best practices prepared by cultural organisations. April, 2024: <https://penbelarus.org/en/2024/04/08/rekamendaczi-i-dobryya-praktyki-ad-kulturniczkih-arganizaczij-2.htm>

<sup>91</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.216, 138.236, 138.237, 138.239, 138.241–138.247, 138.257, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

stricter entry requirements for women in military-related fields.<sup>92</sup> Wage gaps,<sup>93</sup> occupational segregation<sup>94</sup>, and restricted access to leadership persist,<sup>95</sup> reinforced by state policies and gender stereotypes.<sup>96</sup>

88. In June 2023, the Ministry of Health issued a discriminatory Order No. 879, according to which in Belarusian State Medical University in the subinternship program for Anaesthesiology and Resuscitation were allocated 60 spots, with 40 reserved for men and 20 for women. Students at several universities who have raised concerns about this order have faced pressure from authorities.<sup>97</sup>
89. Women detainees, especially political prisoners,<sup>98</sup> endure inhumane treatment, including poor hygiene, medical neglect, forced labor, psychological abuse, and gender-based violence and lack of adequate legal protection, all exacerbated by the lack of independent monitoring and accountability.<sup>99</sup>
90. The government's National Action Plan on gender equality (2021-2025) acknowledges domestic violence (DV), however the State still lacks dedicated DV legislation. The 2022 amendments to the Law on Prevention of Offenses fail to recognize the gendered nature of DV. While the amendments helped to reduce the waiting time for protection orders, their 30-day limit is insufficient. Most DV cases remain private prosecutions, placing the burden of evidence collection on victims.
91. The official statistics on domestic violence are not available to the public and classified by the Ministry of Internal affairs as "information of restricted distribution". The state fails to ensure confidentiality in handling DV cases, undermining trust in support services. There is no clear mechanism for referring perpetrators to the correctional programs, and participation is voluntary and ineffective.
92. Marital rape and stalking are not recognized by law, and the Marriage and Family Code restricts divorce for pregnant women and mothers of young children, trapping victims in abusive relationships. There is no training for law-enforcement bodies to effectively respond to DV cases. State social centers don't provide specialized services for DV victims.
93. **Ensure equal access to education and employment, eliminating discriminatory policies and practices. Improve protections for women detainees, ensuring access to healthcare, sanitation, and safeguards against abuse. Adopt comprehensive gender-based violence legislation, including a dedicated DV law aligned with the Istanbul Convention. Shift DV cases from private to private-public prosecution to prevent case closures due to reconciliation. Extend police-issued protection orders to 90 days, with the possibility of extension up to a year. Train law enforcement and social workers on DV identification, victim assistance, and confidentiality.**

<sup>92</sup> ByMedSol, Assessment of the Admission Campaign to Medical Universities of Belarus in 2014-2024: <https://bymedsol.org/evaluationadmissioncampaign>

<sup>93</sup> National Statistical Committee: [https://gender.belstat.gov.by/economics/62?type=table&reg=\(T\):\(T\)](https://gender.belstat.gov.by/economics/62?type=table&reg=(T):(T))

<sup>94</sup> Belarusian Helsinki Committee, National Human Rights Index, Right to work, 2023: [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/12\\_right\\_to\\_work\\_2023.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/12_right_to_work_2023.pdf)

<sup>95</sup> Id.

<sup>96</sup> Joint Report of the Coalition of Belarusian NGOs and Initiatives to the CEDAW, 2025, pp. 9-10, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCEDAW%2FCS%2FBLR%2F62252&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCEDAW%2FCS%2FBLR%2F62252&Lang=en)

<sup>97</sup> e.petitions.by, <https://e-petitions.by/petitions/5654>

<sup>98</sup> Viasna, More than 8,000 women have been persecuted in Belarus. Infographics about repression against women: <https://spring96.org/en/news/114696>

<sup>99</sup> Viasna, Torture with stress positions, the threat of termination of parental rights: the abuse that Belarusian women face: <https://spring96.org/en/news/113650>

International Committee for Investigation of Torture in Belarus, Torture and Abuse in Women's Penal Colony No. 4 Homel. Public Inquiry: <https://torturesbelarus2020.org/en/pytki-i-zhestokoe-obra%dl%89enie-v-gomelskoj-zhenskoj-kolonii-%e2%84%964/>

### *National minorities*<sup>100</sup>

94. Post-2020 repressive state policies directly target national minorities, particularly Poles, Lithuanians and Ukrainians, often as part of state propaganda portraying neighbouring states as enemies<sup>101</sup>. Anti-Western narratives, labelling these states as external threats, foster hostility towards these minorities in the country. Possession of foreign residency permits or analogous documents is becoming an independent basis for discrimination. Practices of targeted persecution (through the arbitrary application of “anti-extremist” legislation), closure of cultural organizations and the progressive elimination of opportunities for education in minority languages take place together with other violations of minorities’ rights, including the right to participate in cultural life. Various forms of discrimination against Roma communities, including ethnic profiling, also remain widespread.
95. **Guarantee that all national minorities have equal access to the realization of their rights, including the right to participate in cultural life, regardless of the political context or diplomatic relations with neighbouring states.**

### *LGBTQ+*<sup>102</sup>

96. LGBTQ+ individuals face escalating repression, systemic discrimination, and increasing legal restrictions.
97. In June 2023, the Prosecutor General proposed administrative penalties for LGBTQ+ “propaganda.”<sup>103</sup>
98. In 2024, anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric intensified,<sup>104</sup> leading to arrests of over 30 individuals, including at least 8 transgender people, some facing violence and serious charges.<sup>105</sup> There have also been reports of cases of transgender individuals being compelled to decline transition-related medical care, which intensifies discrimination and infringes upon their rights.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>100</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.68, 138.77, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>101</sup> For more information on the situation with racial discrimination, see Report on the Implementation of International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination by the Republic of Belarus Prepared by Civil Society Organizations: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCERD%2FNGO%2FBLR%2F58867&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCERD%2FNGO%2FBLR%2F58867&Lang=en)

<sup>102</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.69, 138.75, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>103</sup> BELTA, Shved: draft law on responsibility for propaganda of non-traditional family relations has been prepared, <https://belta.by/society/view/shved-podgotovlen-zakonoproekt-ob-otvetstvennosti-za-propagandu-netraditsionnyh-semejnyh-otnoshenij-616267-2024/>

<sup>104</sup> TG House, Monitoring of the Belarusian propaganda rhetoric with regard to the LGBTQ+ community in 2024, <https://tbelarus.com/post/monitoring-propaganda-2024>

<sup>105</sup> TG House, Monitoring repression and discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community in Belarus in 2024, <https://tbelarus.com/post/the-monitoring-of-repression-2024>

<sup>106</sup> TG House, Officials forced a trans man to abandon his transition and return his previous documents by threatening to take away his children: <https://tbelarus.com/post/chinovniki-vynudili-trans-muzhchinu-otkazatsya-ot-perehoda>



99. In 2024, the Ministry of Culture classified LGBTQ+ identities alongside necrophilia and paedophilia, restricting their public expression as “pornography.”<sup>107</sup> Amendments of 2025 to the Law on the Rights of Children further ban LGBTQ+ “propaganda” and restrict access to LGBTQ+ content for minors,<sup>108</sup> erasing LGBTQ+ visibility.
100. State propaganda fuels hostility by framing LGBTQ+ rights as a Western threat to Belarusian values, using derogatory rhetoric and promoting intolerance.
101. **Stop arbitrary detentions of LGBTQ+ persons and release all arbitrarily detained, as well as to abandon the adoption of the law “On LGBTQ+ propaganda” and repeal legislation restricting the rights of LGBTQ+.**

### *People with disabilities*<sup>109</sup>

102. Information on the situation of persons with disabilities has become increasingly scarce due to the Belarusian regime’s efforts to create a complete informational blockade.
103. The government's repressive policies have transformed disability organizations into government-organized non-governmental organizations (GONGOs) that act in the regime's interests, both domestically and internationally.
104. The national legislation addresses disability in a perfunctory paternalistic manner, falling short of the Convention's principles of respect for inherent dignity and equality. The Law “On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Their Social Integration” (2022) incorporates some concepts from the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but retains an outdated medical approach.
105. Currently, about 6% of the population is protected by disability status; twice as many people who need it are denied.
106. The country retains a rigid vertical monopolistic system of social protection. Almost 100% of services are provided by the public sector.
107. Despite extensive lists of types of state support for people with disabilities, they are not accessible in practice and feedback is ignored.
108. The country does not have and denies the need for the deinstitutionalization strategy. In fact, people with severe disabilities have to either agree to a care home or die at home, without proper assistance.
109. **Immediately release from places of detention all political prisoners with disabilities and health problems. Ensure the right of citizens to access appropriate information, including statistical and research data on disability, as well as full and comprehensive government reports. Immediately begin reviewing legislation that contains discriminatory elements based on disability. Recognize the problem of institutionalization of people with disabilities. Develop and begin implementing a comprehensive national deinstitutionalization program. Stop all discriminatory practices.**

<sup>107</sup> Resolution of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Belarus “On Amending the Resolution of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Belarus No. 18 dated May 8, 2007”, dated March 19, 2024, No. 24 <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=W22441365>

<sup>108</sup> The draft law “On Amendment of Laws on Ensuring Children's Rights”, introduced in the House of Representatives by the Council of Ministers, passed on February 7, 2025 on first reading: <https://house.gov.by/ru/zakony-ru/view/ob-izmenenii-zakonov-po-voprosam-obespechenija-prav-detej-1745/>

<sup>109</sup> For more information, see Civil Society's written contribution for the review of the Republic of Belarus, CRPD, 2024, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCRPD%2FCSS%2FBLR%2F58956&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCRPD%2FCSS%2FBLR%2F58956&Lang=en); Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.72, 138.257-138.265, [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)



### ***Migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers*<sup>110</sup>**

110. Belarus still lacks an effective, transparent and accessible system for providing international protection.
111. The existing system of international protection is complex and difficult to access, with limited interpretation services. Applicants face long wait times due to administrative backlogs and a lack of resources. Many are unable to even initiate the process, leaving them in prolonged legal limbo. Asylum seekers are detained in unsuitable facilities without automatic legal aid.<sup>111</sup> The system discriminates based on nationality, and authorities forcibly return individuals to their countries of origin, ignoring ongoing armed conflicts and the scale of human rights violations in those countries, and without assessing migrants' protection needs.<sup>112</sup>
112. Since the Belarusian state-led humanitarian crisis began in the summer of 2021, affecting its borders with Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland, Belarus is no longer considered a safe country for transit migrants and asylum seekers.<sup>113</sup> Authorities subject them to violence, force them to cross borders, and trap them in harsh conditions without shelter, food, or medical care. At least 120 deaths have been recorded, though the true number is likely higher.<sup>114</sup>
113. From 2022-2024, most migrants arrived via Russia where there is no border control, increasing the number of undocumented individuals lacking medical care and legal protection. Belarusian authorities conduct mass raids, detentions, and forced expulsions, often without due process. Reports indicate violence by security forces and unlawful transfers to Russia. Belarus offers exit visas to facilitate departure, although the issuance process remains inconsistent.
114. **Address systematic shortcomings in migration procedures, including those related to international protection, ensuring that all procedures are properly implemented and migrants have equal access to them; address risk factors that directly or indirectly contribute to the disappearance of migrants and asylum-seekers, especially those arriving in Belarus in the current humanitarian crisis; fulfil international obligations to protect the human rights of migrants.**

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<sup>110</sup> For more information, see the Report of the Belarusian NGOs on the implementation of recommendations received by the Republic of Belarus during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Annex), recommendations 138.119, 138.266,

[https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_implementation\\_of\\_recommendations\\_received\\_by\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_belarus\\_during\\_the\\_third\\_cycle\\_of\\_the\\_universal\\_periodic\\_review\\_1.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/report_on_the_implementation_of_recommendations_received_by_the_republic_of_belarus_during_the_third_cycle_of_the_universal_periodic_review_1.pdf)

<sup>111</sup> Human Constanta, 2022 Humanitarian crisis in Belarus and at the border with the European Union, [https://humanconstanta.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2022-Humanitarian-crisis-in-Belarus-and-at-the-border-with-the-EU\\_report.pdf](https://humanconstanta.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2022-Humanitarian-crisis-in-Belarus-and-at-the-border-with-the-EU_report.pdf)

<sup>112</sup> Amnesty International, Belarus/EU: New evidence of brutal violence from Belarusian forces against asylum seekers and migrants facing pushbacks from the EU, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/12/belarus-eu-new-evidence-of-brutal-violence-from-belarusian-forces-against-asylum-seekers-and-migrants-facing-pushbacks-from-the-eu/>

<sup>113</sup> Human Constanta, 2022 Humanitarian crisis in Belarus and at the border with the European Union, June 2021-February 2022, <https://humanconstanta.org/humanitarian-crisis-en-2021-2022/>; Amnesty International, Poland: Cruelty Not Compassion, at Europe's Other Borders, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur37/5460/2022/en/>; Human Rights Watch, Violence and Pushbacks at Poland-Belarus Border, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/07/violence-and-pushbacks-poland-belarus-border>

<sup>114</sup> Human Constanta, Joint contribution to the OHCHR report on the phenomenon of missing migrants on the Eastern European migration route at the EU-Belarus border (2021-2024), [https://humanconstanta.org/sovместnyj-vklad-v-doklad-uvkpch-o-yavlenii-propazhi-migrant\\_ok-na-vostochnoevropejskom-migraczionnom-marshrute-na-graniche-es-i-belarusi-2021-2024/](https://humanconstanta.org/sovместnyj-vklad-v-doklad-uvkpch-o-yavlenii-propazhi-migrant_ok-na-vostochnoevropejskom-migraczionnom-marshrute-na-graniche-es-i-belarusi-2021-2024/)