



FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2026

Belarus

NOT FREE

7
/100

<u>Political Rights</u>	1 /40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	6 /60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

7/100 **Not Free**

A country or territory's Freedom in the World status depends on its aggregate Political Rights score, on a scale of 0-40, and its aggregate Civil Liberties score, on a scale of 0-60. See the methodology.

Overview

Belarus is an authoritarian state in which elections are openly rigged and civil liberties are severely restricted. Security forces have violently assaulted and arbitrarily detained journalists, activists, and ordinary citizens who challenge the regime. The judiciary and other institutions lack independence and provide no check on President Alyaksandr Lukashenka's power.

Key Developments in 2025

- Alyaksandr Lukashenka won January's presidential election with 87 percent of the vote, according to state election authorities. The campaign took place amid an environment of extreme political repression, as authorities continued to harshly persecute any expression of dissent.
- More than 130 political prisoners were freed in two releases during the year that followed high-level meetings between US officials and Lukashenka. Those released included prominent opposition figures such as Siarhei Tsikhanouski, Maria Kalesnikava, Viktor Babaryka, and human rights defender and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialiatski. The individuals released were deported to Lithuania and Ukraine, many without their identity documents. At year's end, the human rights organization Viasna counted more than 1,100 political prisoners remaining in Belarus.
- Authorities continued to employ antiextremism legislation against individuals and independent organizations to restrict public outreach and suppress dissent. Viasna reported that in 2025, Belarusian courts declared more than 2,000 information materials including Telegram channels, books, and social media accounts, to be "extremist." The group reported that the government's list of "extremist groups" contained over 300 entities, including educational initiatives, civil society organizations, independent media channels, artists, and hobbyist groups.
- A report by the Belarusian nongovernmental organization Human Constanta found that the government over the last two years had relaxed labor migration regulation, resulting in an increase in the number of migrant workers in the country. At the same time, the group found, serious loopholes in labor laws left migrant workers vulnerable to exploitation and abuse—particularly provisions that prevent workers from changing employers, upon which they are heavily dependent.

This report has been abridged for *Freedom in the World 2026* due to **ongoing budget constraints**. *Freedom in the World* is entirely funded by nongovernmental sources such as private foundations, corporations, and individuals like you. Please consider making a **donation** to support future editions of this vital resource.

For additional background information, see last year's **full report**.

Political Rights

A. Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?

0/4

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?

0/4

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?

0/4

B. Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system

0/4

free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?

B2 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?

0/4

B3 0-4 pts

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means?

0/4

B4 0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?

0/4

C. Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?

0/4

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?

1/4

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency?

0/4

Civil Liberties

D. Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media?	0 /4
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D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private?	1 /4
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D3 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?	0 /4
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D4 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution?	0 /4
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E. Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly?	0 /4
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E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work?

0/4

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?

0/4

F. Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary?

0/4

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?

0/4

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?

0/4

F4 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?

0/4

G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?

1/4

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?

1/4

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?

2/4

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?

1/4



On Belarus

See all data, scores & information on this country or territory.

[See More >](#)

Country Facts

Population

9,228,000

Global Freedom Score

7/100 Not Free

Internet Freedom Score

20/100 Not Free

Other Years

2025

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