

NEWSLETTER #6

NOVEMBER 17, 2020

CULTURAL RESISTANCE IN BELARUS



BELARUSIAN CULTURE SOLIDARITY FOUNDATION
BELARUSIAN PEN CENTRE

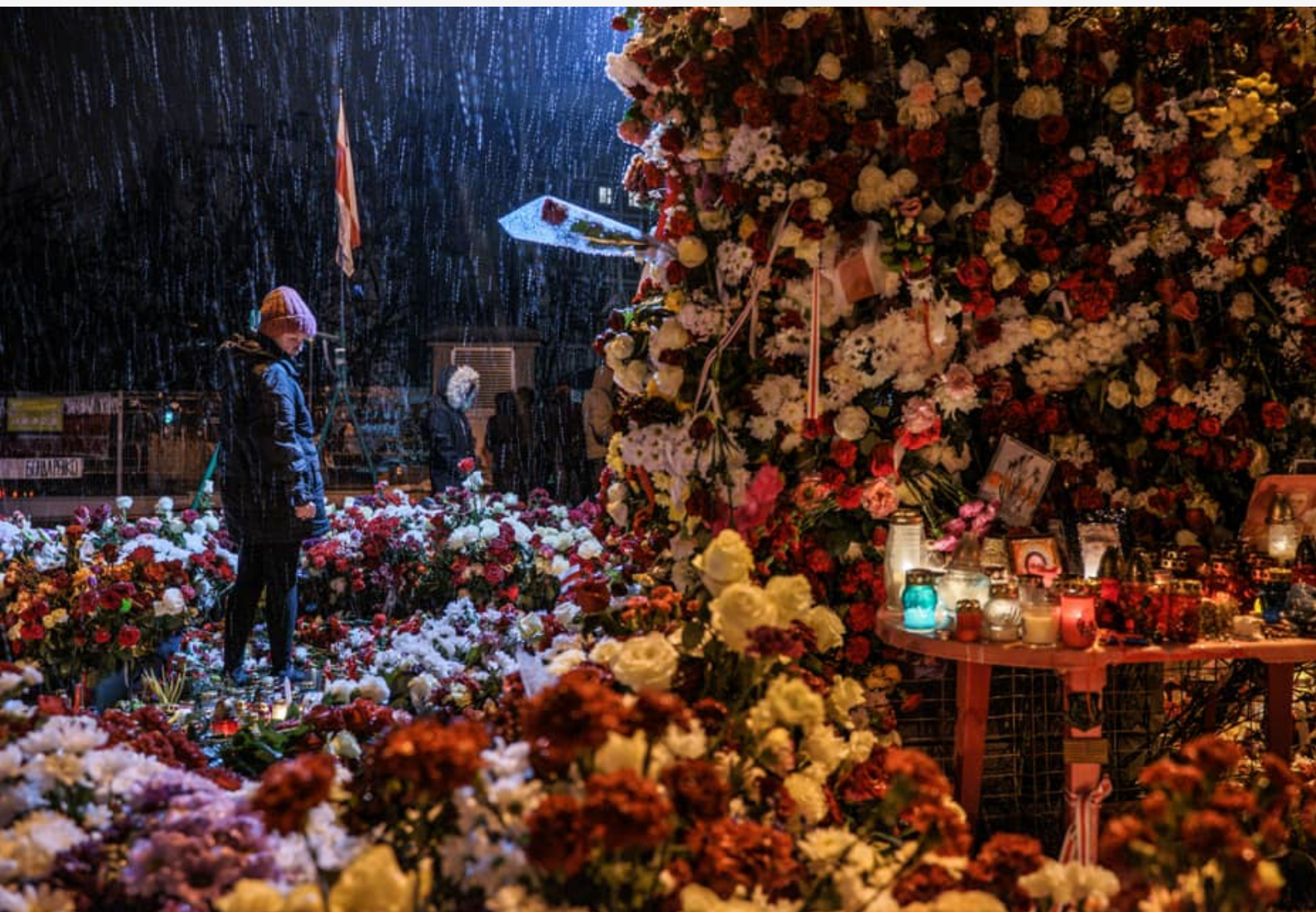


Photo Credit: Ksenia Halubovich

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1. DEATHS



Photo Credit: Belsat

**RAMAN BANDARENKA,
DIED ON NOVEMBER 12,
FELL VICTIM OF THE
BLOODY REGIME.**

On the night of November 11, Raman went down to the yard of the house he lived in to stop the masked policemen from cutting off the white-red-white ribbons which the residents had used to decorate their yard. Police have been raiding neighbourhoods all over Belarus regularly, colliding with the locals, attacking their peaceful gatherings, and arresting people.

That night, Raman was caught and beaten by six masked policemen, kidnapped and then battered mercilessly on the way to and at the police station.

Later that night he was brought to hospital in a coma.

He didn't survive.

Raman was an artist by education, he taught children at the events organized by the local community to draw.

The whole Belarus is grieving over this death, and there's been a wave of solidarity in towns and cities, on the streets, at plants, in the hospitals and universities; this has been a deep wound for all of us.

2. ARRESTS

ON NOVEMBER 9-11
COURT HEARINGS
TOOK PLACE FOR THE
DETAINED THE WEEK
BEFORE.

Musicians from
the band Recha:

**Andrus
Takindang**, **Ihar
Asidchanka**,
**Kanstantsin
Lisetski**, and
**Leanid
Paulionak**

received **15** days
of administrative
arrest each, so did
producer and
director **Yauhen
Shapchyts**.



Alies Zhlutka, one of the leading
Belarusian historians and linguists, the
only specialist on Medieval Latin in
Belarus, and **Uladzislau Stalmakhou**,
designer and artist, have been
sentenced to **10** days of arrest.

An actor and TV host **Alyaksandar
Zhdanovich**'s sentence is **9** days of
arrest, and **Mikhail Tarelka**, a scholar
of Belarusian Tatars, the only
specialist on Tatar manuscripts in
medieval Belarus, received **5** days in
jail.

Nasta Stalmakhova, designer, was
released with a fine of **20** basic units
(**180** Euro) after having spent **2** days in
Zhodzina detention centre.



Photo Credit: Spring96.org

Mikola Dziadok, an anarchist movement activist, former political prisoner, laureate of PEN Belarus award in 2017 for the book *The Colors of the Parallel World* written in jail, political blogger, was arrested on November, 12 as a



suspect on "public order offence case". His house was searched, and Mikola himself was beaten severely, after which he was forced to speak to the camera for the official channel of the Ministry of the Internal Affairs of Belarus.

Zmitser Sasnouski, the leader of the medieval folk band *Stary Olsa*, was detained in Kletsk on November 13, while standing in a solidarity chain. He spent **3** days in the remand prison, deprived of food. On November 16, Zmitser was fined **30** basic units (**267** Euro).



In Minsk, **Ihar Andreyeu** (*in the photo*), an actor at the M. Gorky National Academic Drama Theater, and **Paviel Hontsa**, director of the Men's Choral Group *Uniya* have been detained. Paviel has been released after having spent three days in Akrestsina detention centre and been fined **810** BYN (**267** Euro).

AMONG 1000 DETAINED ON NOVEMBER, 15, THERE ARE

- **Aliaksandr Tabolski**, a guitarist and manager of Naviband;
- **Barys Pastarnak**, publisher. He's published books by such Belarusian writers as Svetlana Alexievich, Viktor Martsinovich, and others. Barys was charged with damaging police property, but he suggested that the investigators should watch the footage the riot police took. As a result, the riot policeman refused to testify and Barys was released.
- **Aliaksandr Sakalou**, sculptor. He created the statuette for Michal Aniempadystaŭ Award given by PEN Belarus for the best Belarusian-language book cover design.
- **Ryhor Laikou**, a musician from PyLai band, was beaten severely and got to hospital with head trauma;
- **Katsiaryna Sumarava**, artist;
- **Mikhas Mishuk**, the artist who created one of the first street art in Kastychnitskaya, one of the most creative streets in Minsk;
- **Yauhen Attsetski**, photographer;
- **Ilia Yasinski**, an actor of the Republican Theatre of Belarusian Drama, beaten severely, hospitalized;
- **Siarhey Hadziayeu**, a DJ at Radio Hrodna;
- **Kanstantsin Charuhin**, writer who has disability group 1; in 2010 he was detained and charged for "clapping hands", which was impossible because he'd lost his hands several years prior to that;
- **Taras Krutskih**, member of the BelarusDocs festival, journalist, film critic, administrator of the channel about Belarusian cinema "Sacred Belawood";
- **Tatsiana Haurylchyk**, director, documentary filmmaker (released **15** hours after detention).

According to the witnesses, the detainees who spoke Belarusian, were marked with paint and then beaten.

3. PRESSURE AND DISMISSAL

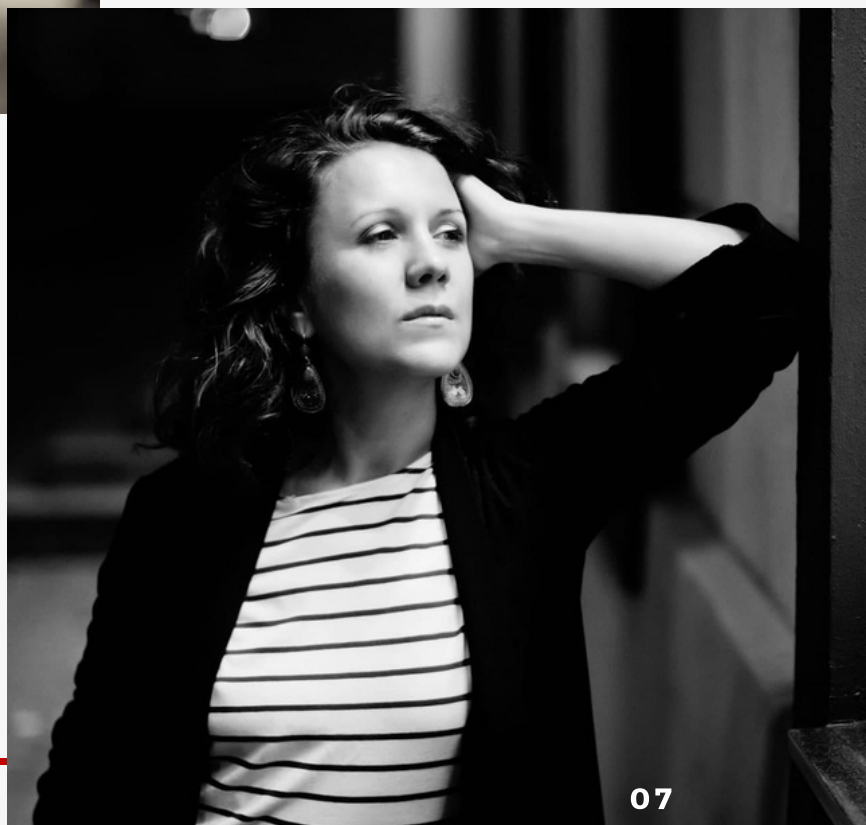
Ihar Kulikou, translator and poet laureate of several awards founded or co-founded by PEN Belarus, a lecturer at the Belarusian State Academy of Arts, was summoned to the commission at work and made to write an explanatory note about his participation in the protests.



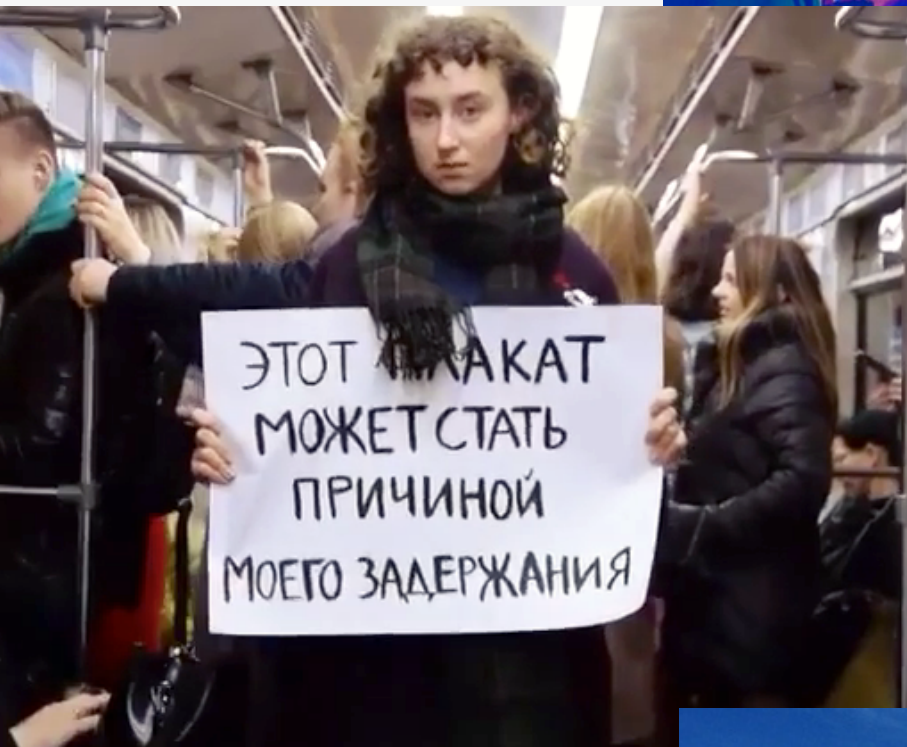
Katsyaryna Vadanosava, a singer and former TV presenter on Belarus-3 TV channel, was summoned to the police department for a "conversation". When Katsyaryna refused to do that, she was told that they could come and "take" her near her house and send her children to a shelter. Katsyaryna is one of those state television employees who resigned during the August strikes.



Anna Zlatkouskaya, a writer who regularly participated in women's marches and wrote several texts that became base for touching videos ("I'm tired, mom, to answer the calls", "Don't wait for home, I'm in a police van"), had to leave Minsk for Vilnius as she feared criminal prosecution. Before that, Anna received a summons from the police.



Uladzimir and **Nadziezhda Irdorath**, musicians of the band Irdorath and pedagogs, were fired from the educational centre they had worked for years on November 9 for their civic stance and participation in the street concerts for the communities in Minsk.



Ulyana Niauzorava, the artist who had a powerful performance (the sign says, "This sign can be the ground for my detention") in the Minsk metro in October, has had her apartment searched. Ulyana said that the search was connected with the criminal case opened against her sister, an activist and student at the Belarusian Academy of Arts **Maryia Kalenik**.

On November 9, three more students were expelled from the Academy of Arts, they are **Raman Davydousky**, **Tsimafey Sheleh** and **Uladzislau Patapchyk**. For the beginning of November, more than **140** students, as well as at least **15** professors, have been dismissed from Belarusian universities for their active civil position and participation in the protests.





Yahor Prystauka, a renowned professor at the Belarusian State University who has taught ancient languages and literature at a number of faculties, including the Schools of Philology, Law, Chemistry and Biology as well as Theology, is fired for taking part in solidarity actions with students and his colleagues.

Katsiaryna Pytlieva, an ex TV presenter from Belarusian state television company, has been threatened with administrative case for a publication on her social media.



Art Credit: veliasnitski



On November 12, **twelve employees of the New Theater** in Minsk officially joined the strike. They are claimed to have caused a loss of **15,000 BYN (4950 Euro)** for the allegedly disrupted performance and are being sued.

Photo Credit: Tut.by

4. CULTURAL RESISTANCE

The **Free Choir** dedicated their album "Worthy Songs" to **Raman Bandarenka**, a band **Stary Olsa** - a song.

Pit Paulau also dedicated a song to Raman Bandarenka and all the Belarusians who took to streets despite the fear and died without seeing the victory.

Artist **Ania Redko** dedicated her new illustration to Roman, and designer **Uladzimir Tseler** - two of his new posters.



Art Credit: Ania Redko



Belarusian performer group **Exorcist Gesamtkunstwerk** started a project Actions Against the Wall with this video, which has gone viral, and with their new piece they encourage artists from all over the world to join in. "**In fact, what is happening in Belarus today is the struggle of society against the concrete wall of the repressive state system. Everyone's struggle for the right to be a person, not another brick in the wall**", the performers say.



The strike committee received a wonderful parcel, wrist watches which **Vyachaslau Sikora**, a theater and film actor, director, screenwriter and "citizen of his country", presented

in solidarity with the workers who joined the strike. He wrote that he also came up with the design for another series, "PRISONER 2020", for those who've been in jail.

Residents of one Minsk neighborhood expressed their solidarity with the actor and former host of one of the warmest TV shows for children on Belarusian TV **Alyksandar Zhdanovich** sentenced to **9** days of arrest.



5. VOICE OF BELARUSIAN CULTURE



Photo Credit: facebook

ERYK ARŁOŨ-ŠYMKUS, A MUSICIAN WHO WAS DETAINED AT A RALLY ON OCTOBER 25 AND HAS BEEN RELEASED AFTER 12 DAYS OF ARREST, TOLD ABOUT HIS ILL-TREATMENT AND CRIMINAL CASE.

“THEY GOT ME DOWN ON MY KNEES AND HIT ME ON MY THIGHS TWICE, WITH A TRUNCHEON, ASKING, ‘WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?’ I SAID I WAS HIDING FROM THE EXPLOSIONS OF THE STUN GRENADES. AFTER THAT, THEY BEAT ME AGAIN WITH A TRUNCHEON ON MY LEFT LEG, SAYING, ‘WHERE WILL YOU BE NEXT TIME?’ I REPLIED THAT I WOULD BE AT HOME, AND THEY TOOK ME TO THE POLICE VAN.”

On the van Eryk was marked with a marker and hit on his head; at the police department he was threatened with more beatings and rape, and completely different circumstances of the detention were recorded in the report.

Eryk also found out that he was a suspect under Part 1 of Art. 342 of the Criminal Code: preparation or active participation in actions that grossly violate public order. According to Eryk, they tried to accuse him of hitting a riot policeman or throwing stones at the Tsentralny District Department of Internal Affairs.

The founder of Belarusian Culture Solidarity Foundation **Siarhei Budkin** shared his thoughts on how to support repressed cultural figures.

"WE HAVE ACCUMULATED THIS COLOSSAL CREATIVE POTENTIAL, AND WE NEEDED A TRIGGER TO HELP IT COME OUT. THEY SAY INDEPENDENCE REQUIRES SACRIFICE, AND BELARUS DIDN'T SACRIFICE ENOUGH IN 1991. IT SOUNDS HARSH, BUT NONETHELESS. ONLY A SLAP COULD START THIS PROCESS."

Belarusian Culture Solidarity Foundation helps the fired art workers to find a new job (which, unfortunately, is complicated by the conditions of the pandemic), register travel documents, and look for psychological help if necessary. When one needs to pay a fine, the person is helped to get in touch with the right fund. The foundation itself has just started to raise funds and ideas.

YOU CAN SUPPORT THEM VIA PAYPAL AND WEBMONEY



One can support the musician **Andrus Takindang**, imprisoned for **15** days for playing a street gig for children and their parents, by listening to his latest album (in Belarusian) and to the new single of the band **Recha** whose leader Andrus is.

Valeryia Valadzko, a singer, soloist of the bands **Harohnitsa** and **KRIWI**, who was fired from the public school for her views, told about her dismissal and the new Belarus.

"A dictatorship can only exist in an atmosphere of fear. It revives the ugliest practices, for example, denunciations. But the unity of Belarusians is only growing as a result."



6. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY



Photo Credit: Beatričė Bankauskaitė

Outdoor advertising banners with illustrations by Belarusian artists in support of Belarus have appeared in Vilnius. See [the link](#) for the photos

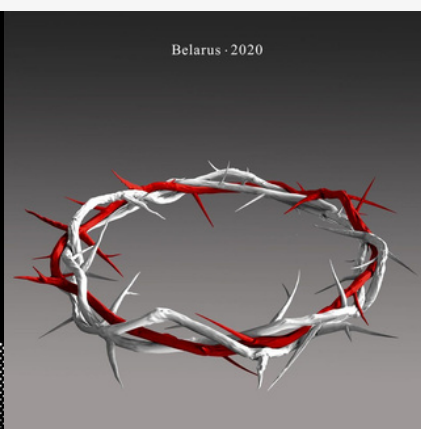
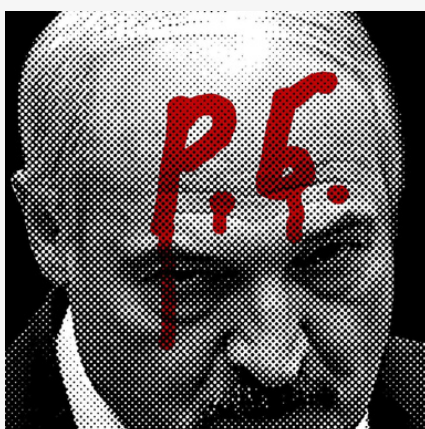
Aliaksandr Yasinski, Belarusian composer and musician who now lives in Prague, organized a [campaign](#) in support of repressed Belarusian artists and recorded a touching video.



An exhibition of solidarity **A Womanly Face of the Protest** organized by the curatorial group of Belarusians of St. Petersburg has opened in St. Petersburg and will last until December 10.

7. AUCTION TO HELP BELARUSIAN CULTURAL FIGURES

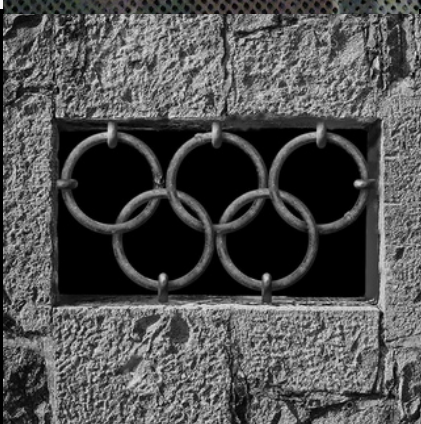
ALL THE FUNDS RAISED WILL BE DIRECTED TO SUPPORT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BELARUSIAN CULTURAL COMMUNITY WHO HAVE SUFFERED FOR THEIR CIVIL POSITION.



CUSTOM LOGO
DESIGN
BY **ULADZIMIR**
TSELER



FOR YOUR BRAND
OR
YOU
EXCLUSIVELY



Art Credit: Vladimir Tsesler

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BELARUSIAN CULTURE SOLIDARITY FOUNDATION



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CONTACT US

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Telegram: [@by_culture](https://www.telegram.com/@by_culture)

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