



Belarussian
PEN
Centre



Cultural Resistance in Belarus

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No detention, no single sentence passed by the regime is fair, only our cultural resistance is fair, and our words, our music, our art are the beginning of a fair trial of real criminals.

1. Arrests, Convictions, Prosecution
2. Pressure, Dismissal, Ban
3. Repressions for the Symbols
4. Cultural Resistance
5. Voices of Belarusian Culture
6. International Solidarity

STAND WITH BELARUSIAN ARTS AND CULTURE COMMUNITY

DONATE TO
SAVE OUR SONGS CAMPAIGN SUPPORTED BY PEN BELARUS
&
THE **BELARUSIAN CULTURE SOLIDARITY FOUNDATION**

1. ARRESTS, CONVICTIONS, PROSECUTION



Jury Łakcijaŭ, musician from Hrodna, vocalist of the band Pet Nihil, is charged under Article 22.9 of the Administrative Code of the Republic of Belarus (violation of the law on mass media) for the newspaper "Hrodna Time" found in the trunk of his car.

Viktar Carykievič faces criminal charges for holding a series of "cynical" actions in September-October 2020: painting bus stops in the Masty district, painting white-red-white flags on trees, hanging stuffed dolls in police uniforms and placing plaques in the form of ritual tombstones and a coffin with a doll in the uniform of a police officer.



On January 23, during solidarity chains in Minsk, **Lesia Pčoŭka** (Alesia Najdovič), a visual artist who works with memory and family archive (fined for 25 basic units [EUR 233], and **Uładzimir Hramovič** (sentenced to 15 days of administrative arrest), an artist, were detained.



In the evening of January 23, **street musicians** performing the song "Change" were detained in the centre of Minsk.



Ryta Novikova, a photographer, was detained on January 24 in Minsk, during the action "Food Not Bombs", activists of which distribute food to homeless people.

Iryna Žabbarava, former head of the culture department of the Mahiloŭ city executive committee, is on trial for bribery. Iryna pleads not guilty and claims that the KGB officers offered her to spy on the activities of the American Embassy, people present at closed events, as well as the mayor of the city and his network.



Ihnat Sidorčyk, a poet, film director and actor, has been in prison since August 10, 2020. He is charged under Part 1 of Art. 342 (organization of group actions that grossly violate public order, or active participation in them). Ihnat didn't take part in the protests, on the evening of August 10 he went out to buy cigarettes, and on his way home (he lives in the center) he was detained and later accused of organizing mass events for a chat for friends called "Walk".

Siarhiej Sparyš, political prisoner, activist of the People's Hramada, composer. He's been in custody since June 25, 2020, a criminal case under Part 1 of Art. 342.



2. PRESSURE, DISMISSAL, BAN



The Januškievič publishing house, whose director was interrogated by Financial Police officers on January 15, can't publish new books because their equipment was confiscated and their accounts were arrested. The same situation occurred with the publisher Hienadz Viniarski (Kni hazbor), to whom the inspection came on January 14.

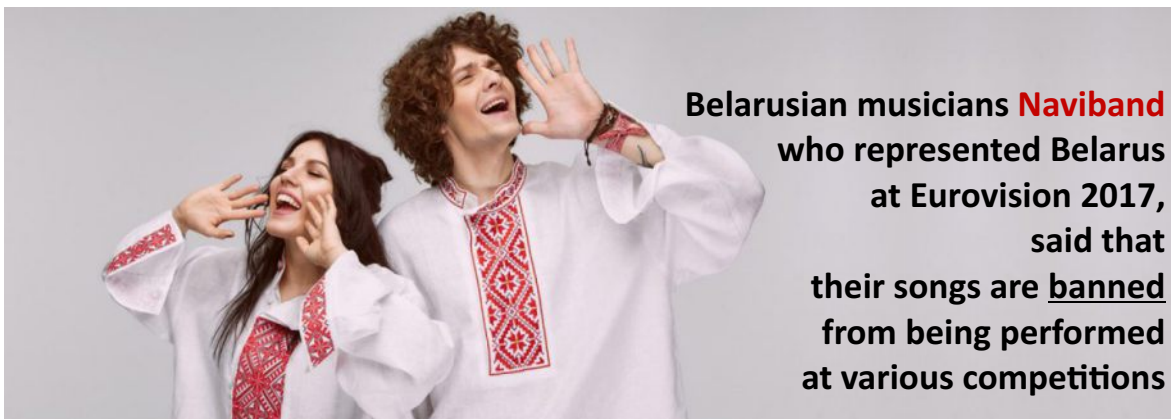
кнігазбор



Jury Kazakievič, owner of a shop with national symbols "Roskvit" in Baranavičy, was visited by the Financial Investigations Department officers who wanted to check information about him evading taxes. Searches took place in the store, at home and in the car of Jury, his computer and the phone were confiscated.



Belarusian musicians Naviband who represented Belarus at Eurovision 2017, said that their songs are banned from being performed at various competitions



In Navahrudak, participants of the tour dedicated to the Belarusian Gymnasium and Barys Kit were accompanied by several police officers; it's not the first time such Sunday tours are run under guard. The participants of the tour expressed solidarity with the convicted citizens all over Belarus by pinning yellow Jewish stars with the numbers "23.34" (the article of the Administrative Code under which the protesters are tried) to their clothes.



Anatol Hryškievič, professor at Viciebsk State College of Culture and Arts, joined the strike demanding Łukašenka's resignation.

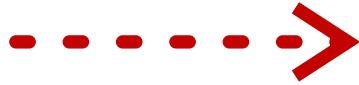
3. REPRESSIONS FOR THE SYMBOLS



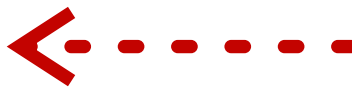
More than ten administrative cases have been registered in different cities of Belarus for **white-red-white symbols**, including balloons, a flag of Japan, blinds on the windows and three stripes on the pants. There is likely to have been more cases, but not all of them get into the media.



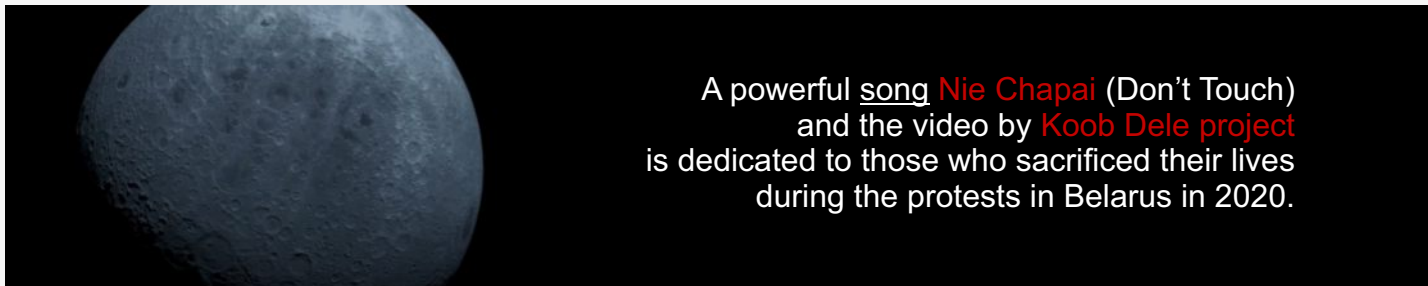
Such graffiti by two Belarusian artists appeared in the center of Minsk in late August.



In mid-January, utilities destroyed this and other related images on that wall.



4. CULTURAL RESISTANCE



New works of artists inspired by the current events in Belarus.



Stablility,
Lilia Kvabatskaya



aftahov



"Snow March",
Volha Jakuboŭskaja

Belarusian Culture Solidarity Foundation launched an online festival Victory Artists in support of Belarusian cultural figures, opened by **Tor Band**, whose song “We aren’t a little people” played during every Sunday march.



Children of residents of "Square of Change" made such **drawings in support of Ihar Łosik**, who has been on hunger strike for the second month.



(Ihar’s last name “Łosik” can be translated as “a little elk”, that’s why the children drew elks accompanied with words such as “We need you alive, uncle Ihar”.

5. VOICES OF BELARUSIAN CULTURE

Andrej Kurejčyk, playwright and film director, member of the Coordination Council.

"The government plunges the country into medieval obscurantism, into the burlesque of mercenary incompetent popsa. Instead of genuine art, freedom of creativity and self-expression, the destruction of the cultural code of Belarusians continues. But they will not succeed."



Photo: svaboda.org



Andrej Januškievič, publisher,
"The events of the last half of the year have shown that Belarusian book has great potential."

Aleh Trusaŭ, ex-deputy of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Belarus.

"What we see now happened in the Belarusian history before. During the years of [World War II] occupation, the Nazis could kill a person if they saw a red flag on their house because they considered him a partisan. Now white-red-white symbols are not banned, but their use is equated to violating the law."



Mikola Dziadok, an anarchist movement activist, political prisoner, laureate of PEN Belarus award in 2017 for the book The Colors of the Parallel World written in jail, political blogger, arrested on November 11, writes in one of his letters,

"Once again I am convinced that everything happens for a reason and, most importantly, it's all not in vain. They are trying to convince us that the system will crush everyone who dares to resist it and that no one supports us. That is why they imprison people, for isolation, for pessimistic thoughts to prevail over faith, to quench any optimism. But I stay optimistic and I'll keep that."

6. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

PEN/Opp, a magazine promoting freedom of expression, literature and culture, published by Swedish PEN, has published a poem by **Valzhyna Mort** with an introduction by **Inga-Lina Lindqvist**.



FESTIVAL
OF HOPE

A Global Virtual Poetry Initiative
by Versopolis

The poetry **Festival of Hope** organized by the **Versopolis** platform opened on January 21 with a round table discussion on the political and social situation in Belarus. Among the participants were Belarusian poets **Valzhyna Mort** and **Julija Cimafiejeva**, as well as public activist and professor **Volha Šparaha**.

A project **Echoes. Voices from Belarus** has launched; short artistic statements on the current situation in Belarus are created by Belarusian artists and activists in collaboration with music artists from numerous countries.



The **Union of German-speaking translators** of literary and scientific works expresses solidarity with Belarus and writes about the arrest of translator **Volha Kalackaja** and the persecution of **independent publishers**.





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