



Belarussian
PEN
Centre



Cultural Resistance in Belarus

Issue 4 (17)

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Particularly large-scale repressions have been carried out against the national symbols - they affect both individuals and businesses. The government want to take away our symbols, our heritage and culture, banning them and punishing us, but those will live and so will Belarus, live forever.

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STAND WITH BELARUSIAN ARTS AND CULTURE COMMUNITY

**DONATE TO
SAVE OUR SONGS CAMPAIGN
&
BELARUSIAN CULTURE SOLIDARITY FOUNDATION**

1. REPORT ON CULTURAL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

АРЫШТЫ

ARRESTS

АРЫШТЫ

FINES

ШТРАФЫ

FINES

**БЕЗ ПРАВА
НА КУЛЬТУРУ.
БЕЛАРУСЬ 2020**

**WITH NO RIGHT
TO THE CULTURE.
BELARUS 2020**

ЗВАЛЬНЕННІ

DISMISSALS

ЗВАЛЬНЕННІ

GEOGRAPHY OF VIOLATIONS

ГЕАГРАФІЯ ПАРУШЭННЯЎ

See [the link](#) for the detailed monitoring report of human rights violations against cultural workers and cultural rights in Belarus for 2020.

2. ARRESTS, CONVICTIONS, PROSECUTION



Dzianis Ivanou, an artist of the Belarusian State Philharmonic Chamber Choir, who was detained on January 25 and held for six days under two protocols, both of which are being finalized, was released on January 31, however, **Karyna Chackalova**, a producer and director who came to the walls of Akrestsina prison to meet him was detained.

Tuzinfm. Courtesy photo



Marharyta Novikava, a photographer, detained on January 24 in Minsk, during the action "Food Not Bombs", was sentenced to 15 days of administrative arrest on January 26.

Viktar Carykievič, a resident of Masty, who in September-October 2020 held a series of actions painting white-red-white flags on trees and hanging stuffed dolls in police uniform, received a year in a general regime penal colony; his car was confiscated.

Photo: spring96.org





On January 25, the staff of the Ministry of Emergencies came to the store **Moj Rodny Kut** in Minsk (known for the rich selection of goods with national symbols) with a check. **Alena Jesipionak**, the shop owner's wife, was detained "for selling goods with unregistered symbols." On January 28, **Valer Jesipionak**, the store's owner, was detained when he came to his wife's court hearing and was sentenced to 15 days of administrative arrest.



On January 26, the creator and director of the **Binocl** magazine in Brest as well as their editorial office were searched. According to preliminary information, they are suspected of tax evasion.



On January 27, the Department of Financial Investigations searched the Brest cultural space **Kryly Halopa** and its head **Aksana Hajko**. According to preliminary data, they are suspected of tax evasion.



Photo binkl.by

Fiodar Šylin, the owner of the **Vokladki** brand, was taken to questioning by officers of the Department for Combating Economic Crimes who were suspicious of the document covers





On January 29, police raided Hrodna's store **Admietnaść** selling goods with national symbols. **Siarhiej Vieramiejenka**, the store owner and activist, is said to have an administrative proceeding underway.

The financial police came to the store **Symbal.by**, confiscated all their equipment and goods, and the employees (**Ksienija Miklašeŭskaja**, **Volha Ihnatovič**, **Anastasija Trafimčyk**, **Mikita Broŭka**) were charged under Art. 17.1 (petty hooliganism).



Julij Iljuščanka, poet, was detained on January 31 on Independence Avenue in Minsk, on February 1 he was sentenced to 25 days of administrative arrest.



Alaksandr Bystryk, a retired former head of school №5 in Navahrudak, was detained on his way for a weekly city tour.

His house was searched. **Tamara Viaršyckaja**, a former director of the Museum of local history, was interrogated as a witness.



Photo svaboda.org

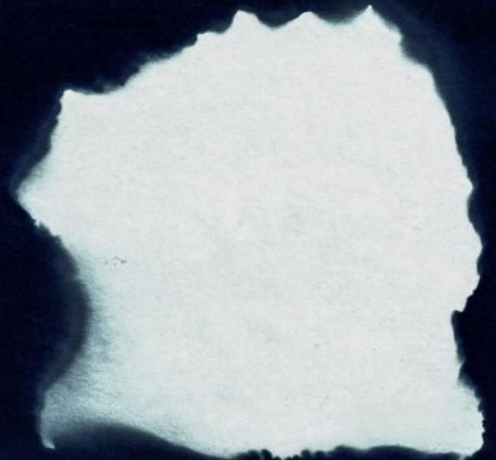
3. PRESSURE, DISMISSAL, BAN

The **Hilevič Private University**, which was to open by the Belarusian Language Society and teach in Belarusian, stopped the process of obtaining a license, as it does not seem possible to obtain it in the current political situation.



An internet store selling goods with symbols “**БЧБ.бел**” had to temporarily close down because of the check by the Department for Combating Economic Crime.

The exhibition “I can almost hear birds” opened in Brest on January 29. This is a project of photographer **Maksim Saryčaŭ** dedicated to Mały Traścianiec - the largest Nazi death camp in the former Soviet Union. However, the exhibition had to close immediately after the visit of the Ministry of Emergencies to the space **Kryly Halopa**



Labor protection inspection visited the shop **Moj Rodny Kut** selling goods with national symbols in Malaryta, Brest region. The reasons for the visit are not specified.

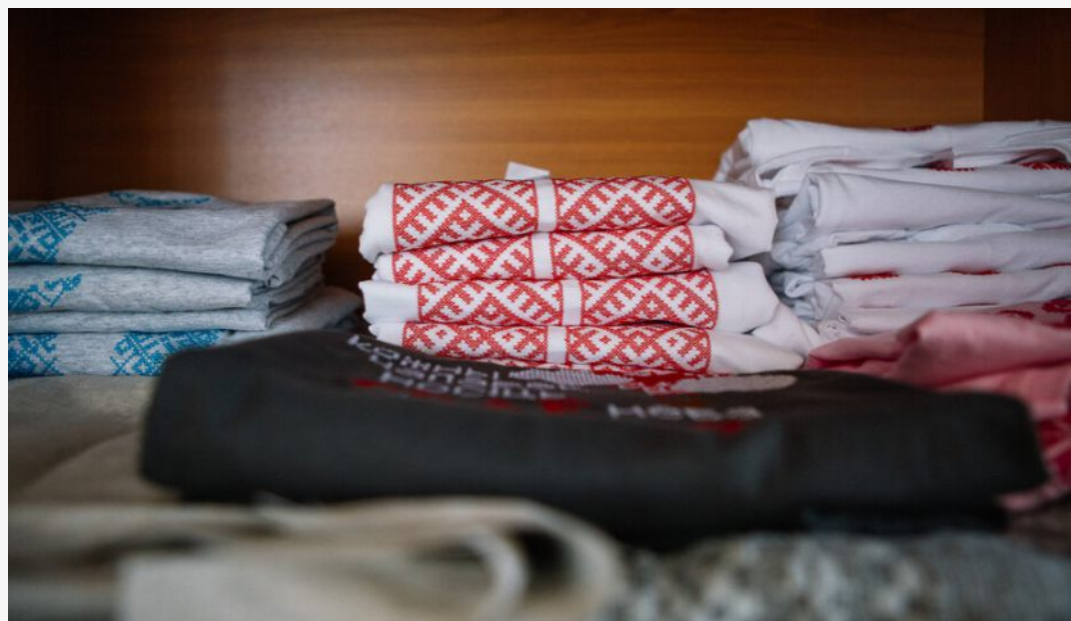


Photo binkl.by

4. REPRESSIONS FOR SYMBOLS



Photo: svaboda.org

Volha Babrova, a mother of five, was detained on January 22 and tried three days later, fined 30 basic units [EUR 280]. She was accused of unfolding a huge white-red-white flag together with others at the Dana Mall shopping center in Minsk on January 14.

People all over Belarus (Biaroza, Mahiloŭ, Svietlahorsk, Minsk, Viciebsk) keep being arrested and fined for **white-red-white** flags and even cloth of such colors on a balcony, for **white-red-white** balloons released from the balcony, for a photo with a flag that was not even posted publicly, for chrysanthemums - **white and red**.



The Prosecutor General's Office announced the recognition of the **white-red-white** flag as extremist. For one day the petition in support of the flag collected more than 50,000 signatures.



5. CULTURAL RESISTANCE



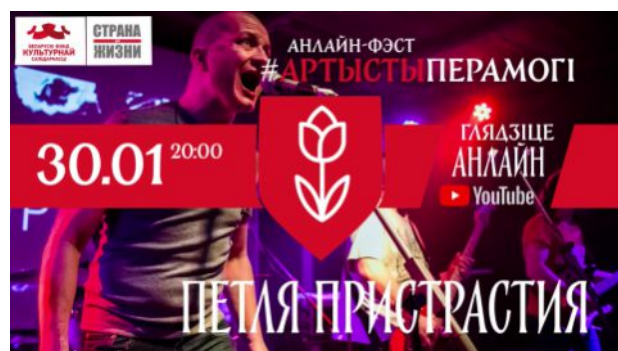
In the new issue of the video project **Words are more powerful** from Budzma, the Union of Belarusian Writers and PEN Belarus, poet and translator **Hanna Komar** reads an excerpt from the work "Soviet Inquisition" by Francišak Alachnovič.

Posters by **Natalla Žukava** about unfair detentions, referencing particular cases, appeared in various parts of Minsk, including near the institutions preparing professionals such as judges and police officers.

1. I was going to get a manicure – 15 days of arrest
2. Feeding students with pastry – 13 days of arrest
- 3 Scarf – 25 days of arrest
4. Lighting the roads with torches – 52 days of arrest for three people



A second gig within the series **Victory Artists** in support of Belarusian cultural figures, played by **Петля Престрастия**



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



Lilia Kvabatskaya



NikaEmerald



Ice under OMON's feet Arciom Baboŭnikaŭ

6. VOICES OF BELARUSIAN CULTURE



Alaksandr Čachoŭski, Executive Director of the **Belarusian Culture Solidarity Foundation**, about the campaign to have БТ (National State TV and Radio Company of the Republic of Belarus) lose their right to represent Belarus in the European Broadcasting Union, as well as the right to participate in Eurovision-2021: *"Belteleradiocompany today is a political instrument of Łukašenka's regime that promotes aggression, hostility and lies ... In our opinion, television that fires employees and censors artists for their civil position cannot be part of the European Broadcasting Union."*

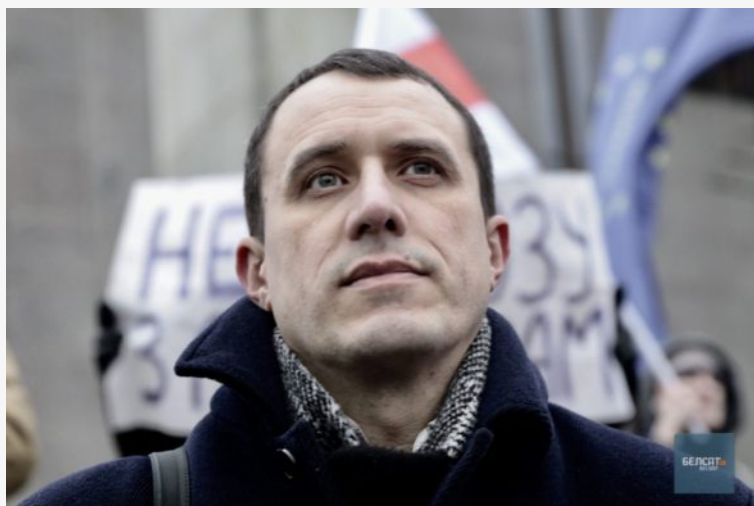


Uładzimir Niaklajeŭ, a poet, novelist, public and political activist, presidential candidate in the 2010 election, former political prisoner, spoke about the possible recognition of the white-red-white flag as extremist:

"Łukašenka doesn't care about the history of the past or the future. All his decisions concern his current goals. And the decision on the extremism of the national flag is of the same kind: it legitimizes a lot of blood which he is ready to shed in order to stay in power."



7. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY



Paviel Sieviaryniec was awarded the Mikhail Zhyznevsky Literary Prize "**Warrior of Light**". He has been in jail since June 7, under Art. 293 of the Criminal Code (Organization of mass riots).

Photo Belsat



A German platform **IndieRepublik** writing about independent culture published a large article in support of the Belarusian Culture Solidarity Foundation and called on international colleagues to support Belarusians.



Austrian literary community expresses solidarity with literary translator **Volha Kaŭackaja** and Belarus people.



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