



Belarussian
PEN
Centre

Cultural Resistance in Belarus

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As a metaphor for last week, we should take a quote from a letter from Alaksandr Reznik, political prisoner:

“I recently saw dandelions when we were out for a walk. They have grown through the concrete, on a tiny piece of soil...”

1. PERSECUTION, CONVICTIONS, CULTURAL POLICY
2. SYMBOLS
3. LIFE OF PEOPLE BEHIND BARS
4. DISSENT AND CULTURAL ACTIVISM
5. VOICES OF BELARUSIAN CULTURE
6. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

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1. PERSECUTION, CONVICTIONS, CULTURAL POLICY

Three Belarusian-speaking professors are forced to quit from Mahiloŭ State University, they are **Vital Jeŭmiańkoŭ** [Vitaly Eumenkov], an associate professor of the Faculty of Slavic Philology and the Faculty of History and Philology, who in the fall of 2020 defended students under pressure for exercising their right to freedom of assembly, as well as **Alaksandr Ahiejeŭ** [Ahieyeu] and **Ihar Šarucha** [Sharuha].



Alaksandr Ahiejeŭ, Vital Jeŭmiańkoŭ, Ihar Šarucha

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Anton Sasnoŭski, director of the event agency that organized the concert of the band Poshlaya Molly in Minsk, was fined 710 EUR for the crowd chanting "Long live Belarus!" during the concert.

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Mikoła Papieka [Mikola Papeka], a poet, was sentenced to 2 years of open air prison for the "karahod case". Another 12 people received terms up to 2 years in open air prison.



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Natalia Dyrman, a well-known cultural activist in the Brest region, was searched by security officers and detained.





The **Belarusian Social Democratic Party** received an official warning from the Ministry of Justice for illustrations by famous designer **Vladimir Tessler** published in the third issue of the party magazine "Position".

Ihnat Sidorčyk [Sidorchyk], a poet, director and actor, left for the open air prison settlement on June 13.



Ministry of Justice sent a letter demanding from **PEN Belarus** to provide a complete set of bookkeeping since 2018. Ministry of Justice wants to conduct a routine check on the compliance of the organization's activities with the legislation of Belarus and the statute of PEN Belarus

The Department of Financial Investigations of the State Control Committee **unblocked the accounts** of the publishing houses Knihazbor, Janusjkevich and the bookseller Knihi.by.



2. SYMBOLS

Volha Veramejenka [Volha Verameenka], who was forcibly detained on June 3 after a search in the store **Admietnaść** in Hrodna, feels unwell after three days spent in the Hrodna detention center – her blood pressure has risen significantly. But even in such a critical state of health, she was tried to be summoned by the police to sign the papers concerning the administrative case instituted about her alleged picketing in the store.



Siarhiej Burak [Siarhei Burak] was sentenced to 2 years in open air prison for several reposts involving images with the national symbols and insulting information against Lukashenko.



Natalla Iviandzikava [Natallia Iviandikova] was sentenced to 6 days of administrative arrest for allegedly hanging white-red-white ribbons on trees. A book by Svetlana Alexievich was confiscated in Natalla's apartment.



Alena Paŭtoŭskaja is threatened with dismissal for white-red-white **earrings**.



Jaŭhien Babak [Yauhen Babak], a former assistant prosecutor of the Pershamaiski district court of Minsk, received 15 days of administrative arrest for hanging a white-red-white flag.

3. LIFE OF PEOPLE BEHIND BARS

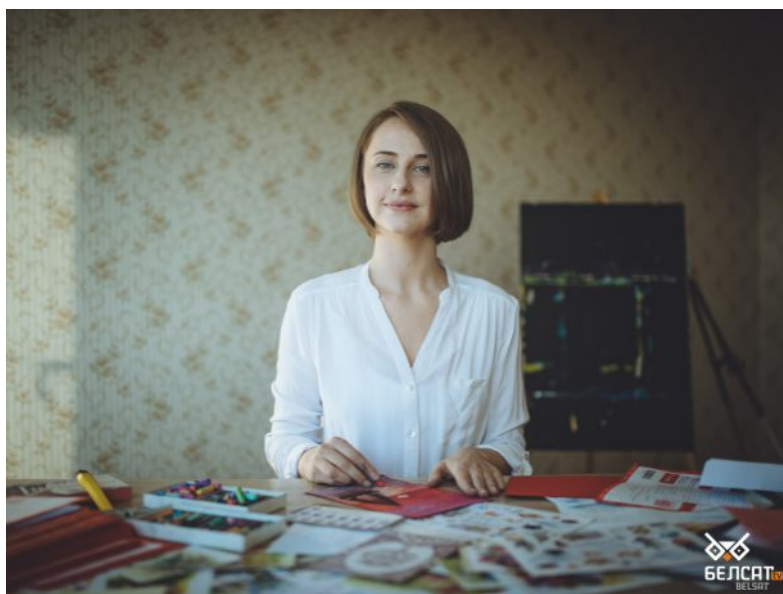


Andrzej Poczobut sent a letter to his family, he wrote that after he refused to be deported to Poland, the conditions of his detention in the prison deteriorated: he was transferred to another cell and has been subjected to constant checks and reports.

On June 11, he reported to have caught Covid-19.

4. DISSENT AND CULTURAL ACTIVISM

Iryna Svirid is an artist, she sends hand-made drawings and paintings to political prisoners, and also teaches others, including children, how to support prisoners.



The Nobel laureate, Belarusian writer **Svetlana Alexievich** has donated a signed copy of her book "Secondhand Time" to a charity auction.

Olga Yakubouskaya
to Paviel Sieviaryniec



Belarusian women held a **performative action** **Decolletage for Belarus** to draw attention to the problem of businesses cooperating with the regime.



Victory Artists: the music project **Partyzanski prasppekt**, which was formed in July 2020 as a reaction to the Belarusian reality, **played** in support of **Siarhiej Voŭkaŭ**, imprisoned actor and director.



Over the week, **musicians** have been supporting the participants of the rally of Belarusians on the borders of the countries neighbouring Belarus.

5. VOICES OF BELARUSIAN CULTURE



Natalka Babina, a writer, sent a deeply touching letter to 75 political prisoners in Brest, where she lives with three personal stories and made the letter public. *“A young man wrote from prison, ‘Mama, I used to think: why am I here? And now I think: what for am I here?’ What a deep thought! Sooner or later we all think about it: what for are we here in this world? All of us sooner or later have to answer this question in trial – whether on earth or in heaven, which is also called the Last Judgment. The moment of truth comes for everyone – for a prisoner, for a warden, for those giving orders and those following them.”*

Ihar Slučak [Sluchak], a language activist, on the attitudes of Belarusians in terms of usage of the Belarusian language in the sphere of services.

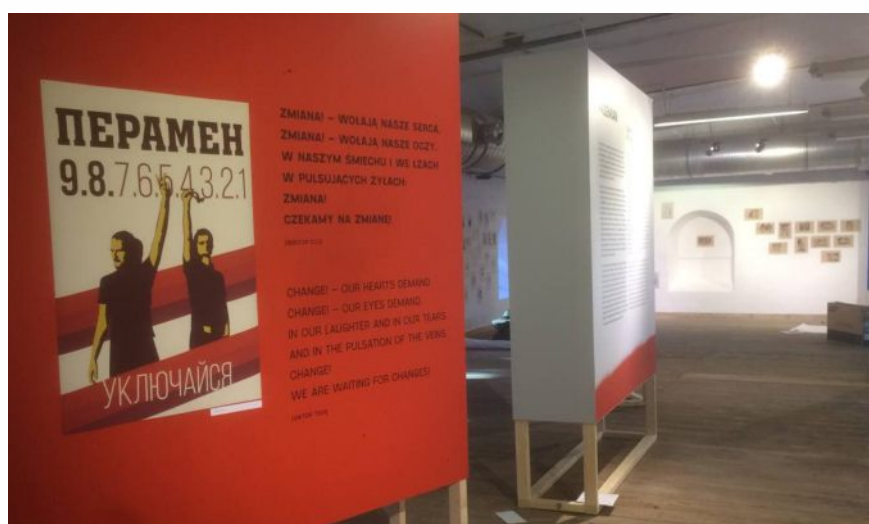
“A Belarusian who doesn’t protect his or her language rights creates conditions for discrimination against other Belarusians, thus becoming complicit in discrimination.”



Barys Chamajda, an activist from Viciebsk, released after 8 days of arrest for a white-red-white umbrella and ribbons. *“The main thing I’ve realized is that the end of this regime is close. It’s invisible to an eye, but I can sense it in the air.”*

6. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

An exhibition of the Belarusian artist who left Belarus, **Nadzieja Sajapina** [Nadezhda Sayapina] «Letter to Mom" opened in Kyiv.



An exhibition dedicated to the Belarusian protests "**Long live Belarus**" has opened in the Polish city of **Lodz**.



Belarusian artist **Hanna Zabrocka**, living in Poland, creates dolls in support of the Belarusian struggle for freedom.



French PEN Centre statement
on the situation in Belarus
(in the French language).

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The rector of Tallinn University appealed to the Belarusian authorities to allow the arrested **Alexandr Fiaduta** to speak online at the international conference to be held in Tallinn.

More than 50 well-known scholars, journalists, cultural and public figures have written an open letter to the European Commission requesting to establishment an EU-based Eastern European University where "repressed or forced to leave their countries" people will be able to study and work.

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