



Belarussian  
PEN  
Centre

# Cultural Resistance in Belarus

**Issue 27 (40)**

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*“Our culture can’t be forced out of us. Because it’s built on our deep, genuine notions of good and evil. Everything we once received with the touch of mother’s hands, with father’s voice, with the first fairy tales and songs, and remained forever. It’s hardly possible to flatten it down to asphalt. And the darker it is, the more noticeable and bright the light will inevitably come out.”*

*Uładzimir Puhač*

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donate to [Save Our Songs\\*](#)

\*SUPPORTED BY PEN BELARUS

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# 1. PERSECUTION, CONVICTIONS, CULTURAL POLICY

**Viktar Babaryka**, former presidential candidate and philanthropist, patron of Belarusian culture, was sentenced to 14 years in prison on July 6. He will not be able to appeal against the verdict.



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**Siarhiej Voklaŭ** [Siarhei Volkau], an actor, was sentenced to 4 years of imprisonment in a medium-security penal colony, charged in the case of mass riots (Part 2 of Article 293 of the Criminal Code) opened after the events of election night, August 9, 2020, in Pinsk.

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**Daniła Hančaroŭ** [Danila Hancharou], lighting designer who was fired from the New Drama Theater for participating in the strike, on July 9 was sentenced to two years in a penal colony for participating in group actions that grossly violated public order (Part 1, Article 342 of the Criminal Code) and complicity in such crime (Part 6, Article 16, Part 1, Article 342 of the Criminal Code).



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**Pavieł Łarčyk** [Pavel Larchyk], musician, was sentenced to three years in a maximum security penal colony on allegations of violence against a police officer in September 2020, which wasn't proved.

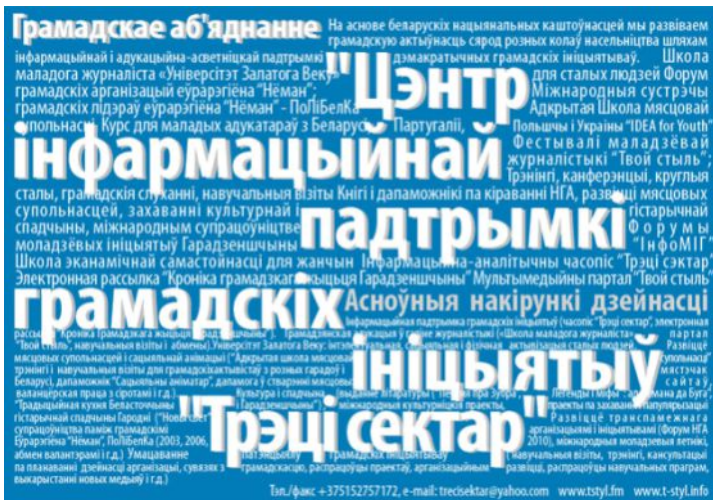




On July 8, Belarusian authorities blocked the website of a leading online media outlet **Naša Niva** and detained several of its journalists. Several other regional media outlets and independent journalists across the country have been attacked.



On July 9, raids targeting a dozen journalists from independent media across the country continued.



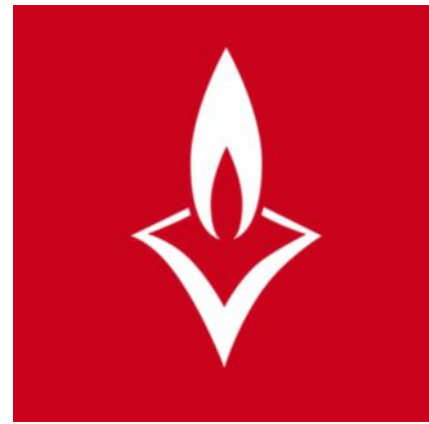
The Department of Justice started inspecting the Hrodna-based public organization **Third Sector**, engaged in educational activities in a number of fields, including culture. The institution must provide a lot of documents covering several years of their work.

The Ministry of Justice has launched an unscheduled inspection of the World **Association of Belarusians Baćkaŭščyna**, which cooperates with the Belarusian diaspora from more than 20 countries for promoting Belarusian culture in Belarus and abroad by publishing numerous books on Belarusian culture and the history of Belarusians abroad, organising conferences, including World Congresses of Belarusians every five years.



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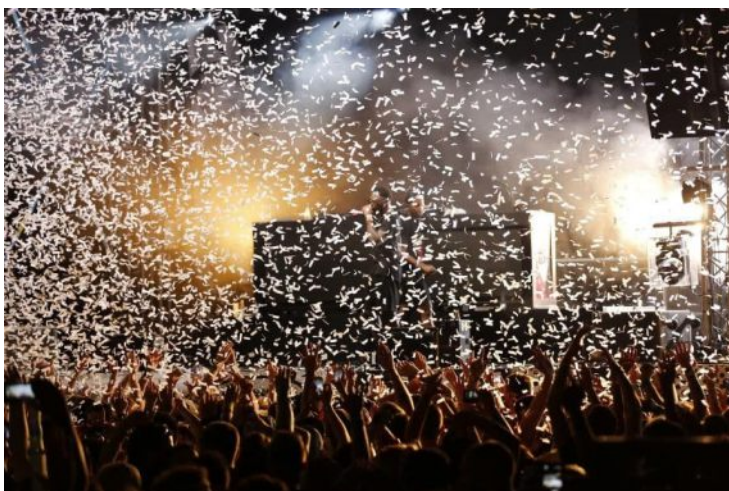
In Brest, the regional development agency **Dziedzič**, also engaged in the development of the cultural sphere, was liquidated.



**Zmicier Łukašuk** [Zmitser Lukashuk], a journalist and author of the book *Belarusian National Idea*, recognized by the regime as extremist, songwriter, left Belarus after the closure of the Euroradio correspondent office in Belarus and the wave of searches and detentions of journalists last week.

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**Janka Łajkoŭ** [Yanka Laikou], a poet, quit the newspaper *Litaratura i Mastactva* (Literature and Art) due to pressure for his active civil stance.



**The Vėska** music festival has been postponed to the summer of 2022 – according to the resolution of the Minsk City Executive Committee, at mass events the audience can only have seated places, no standing.

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## 2. SYMBOLS

**Searches and detentions for symbols, which periodically become a formal reason for arresting activists, continue.**

**Among the items confiscated during the searches books appear, they fall into the category of "printed products of destructive character."**



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## 3. LIFE OF PEOPLE BEHIND BARS

**Julija Čarniauskaja** [Yulia Charniauskaya] has been under house arrest for two months. Through her lawyer it became known that her health had deteriorated significantly.



## 4. DISSENT AND CULTURAL ACTIVISM

ТЫДЗЕНЬ  
БЕЛАРУСКАЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ

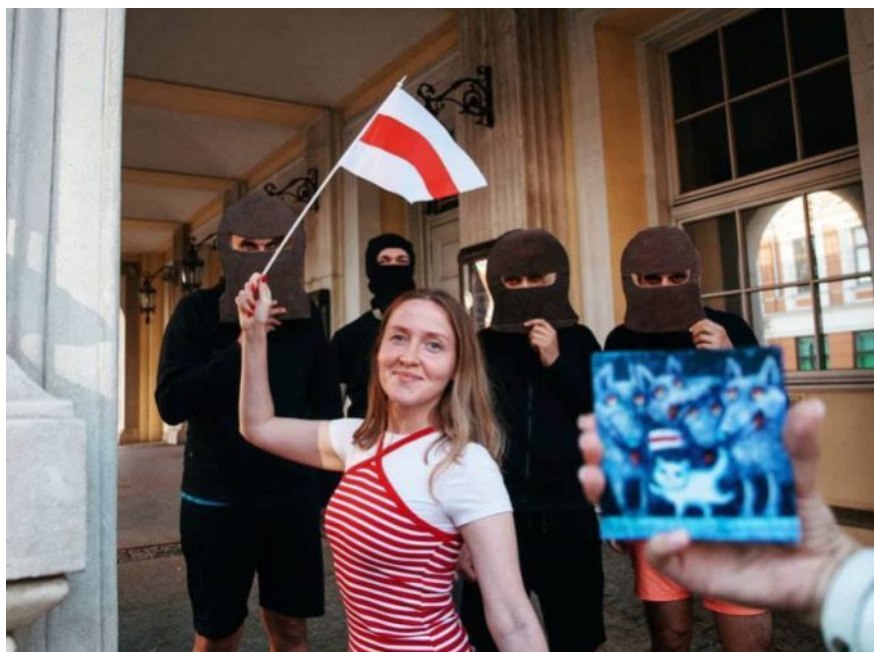


BY\_CULTURE  
GLOBAL WEEK

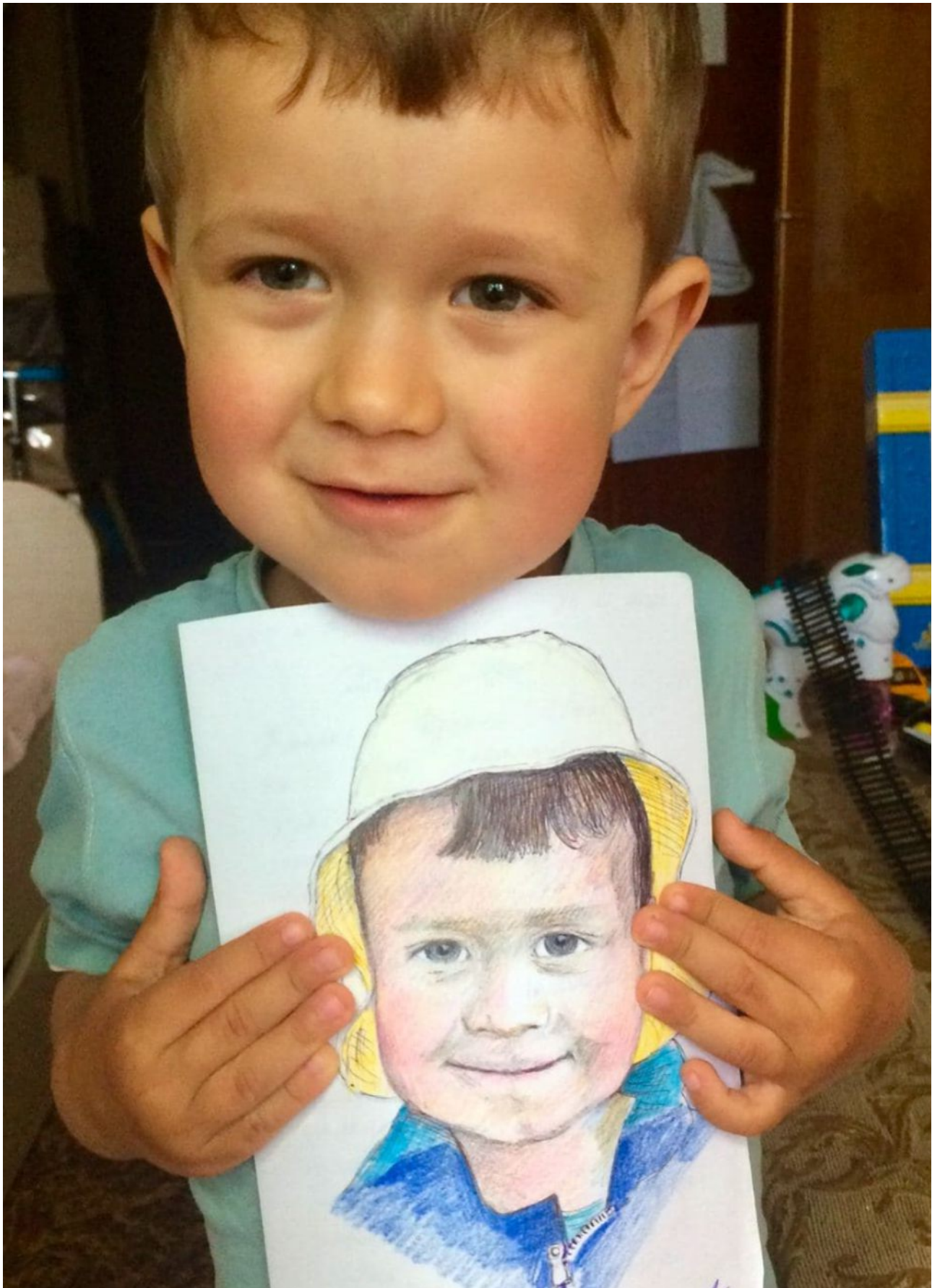
5-11.07.2021

**The International Week of Belarusian Culture** took place on July 5-11 and has been actively supported by Belarusian and international communities around the world. Concerts, readings, new music and book releases, performances and screenings, workshops and more have been contributed by many collectives and individuals around the world.

Famous paintings with lovely cats by Volha Jakuboŭskaja [Yakubouskaya] representing various episodes from the recent Belarusian reality have been staged by the **Belarusians of Wroclaw**.







**Paweł Sieviaryniec** sent a portrait of his son he'd drawn in prison.

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## 5. VOICES OF BELARUSIAN CULTURE

**Siarhiej Voklaŭ** in his last speech in court:  
*“Laws established by people should not contradict the laws of conscience. There is only one truth, while lies have thousands of masks.”*



**Anžalika Ahurbaš** [Angelika Agurbash], a Belarusian singer against whom a criminal case has been opened for insulting Łukašenka:  
*“I oppose violence. This is my civil stance. I am Belarusian, wherever I am, my heart and my soul will always be with the Belarusian people. I can’t be indifferent to what is happening in Belarus now. The repressive machine is so insane that it puts so many people in prisons for nothing, the repressive machine spares neither women, nor children, nor elderly people.”*

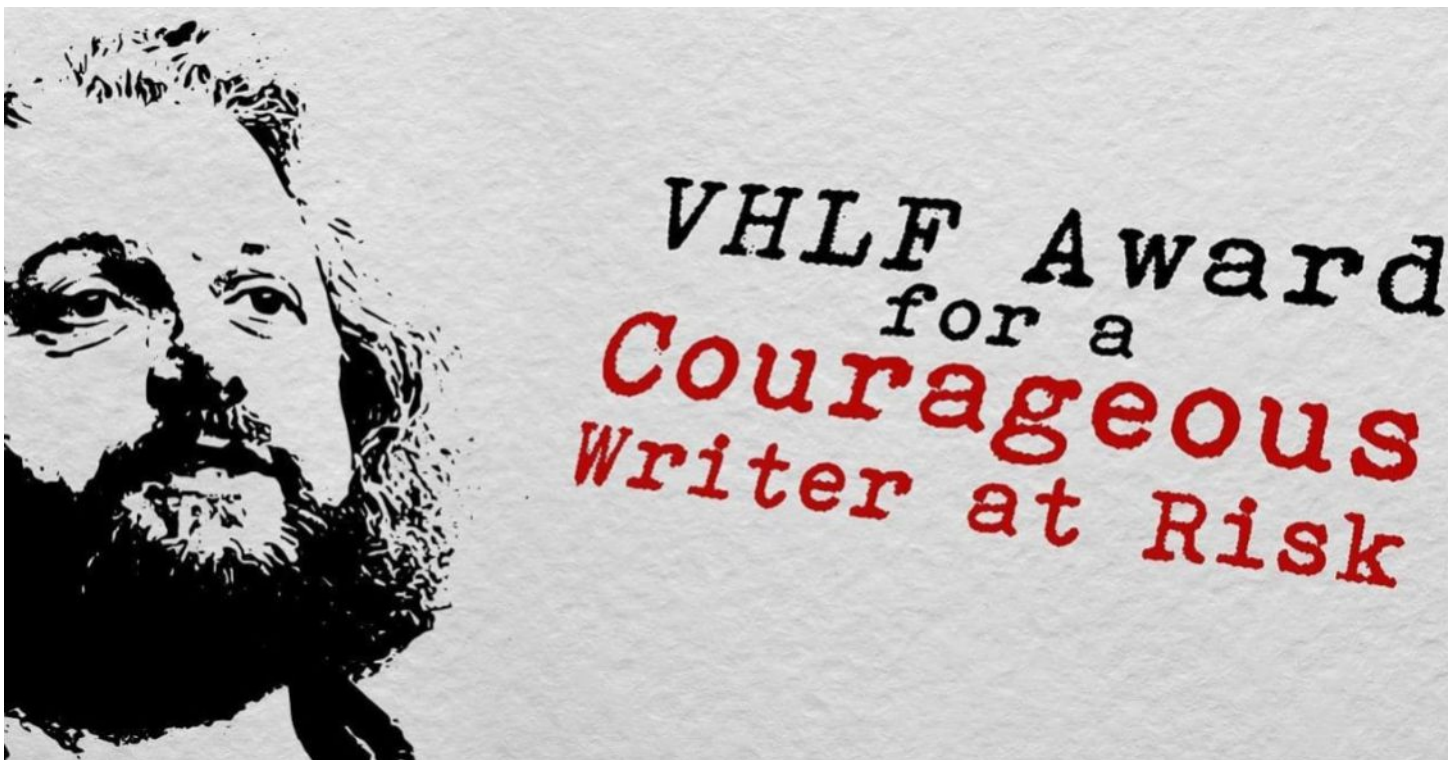
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## 6. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

A teaser of the film **MINSK** shot by a Russian film director **Boris Guts** about August 2020 in Minsk has been out.



**Dzmitry Strocaŭ** [Dmitri Strotsev] Wins the 2021 Disturbing the Peace Award to a Courageous Writer at Risk.



## 7. POLITICAL PRISONERS' BIRTHDAYS



In July, 3 people who are somehow involved in the cultural development of our country, will celebrate their birthdays behind bars. They are **Mikałaj Sasieŭ**, a choreographer (July 16), **Alaksiej Sančuk**, musician (July 18) **Ivan Viarbicki**, artist and designer (July 17) and **Viktar Łosik**, copywriter (July 22).

Letters can be sent to the following addresses (but only those written in Russian or Belarusian)

**Mikałaj Sasieŭ and Alaksiej Sančuk:**



Турма №4. 212011, г. Магілёў, вул. Крупскай, 99А

**Viktar Łosik:**

СІЗА-1. 220030, г. Мінск, вул. Валадарскага, 2

**Ivan Viarbicki:**

ПК №2. 213800, г. Бабруйск, вул. Сікорскага, 1

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