



Belarussian  
PEN  
Centre

# Cultural Resistance in Belarus

**Issue 29 (42)**

July 19-25, 2021

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*"Losing values, first of all in the field of law, which humanity has got by suffering throughout its history, feels horrifying. I would not wish for anyone to find themselves amidst a savage feast of lawlessness."*

*Sabina Brylo*

**1. RESULTS OF MONITORING OF CULTURAL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS**

**FOR JANUARY-JUNE 2021**

**2. PERSECUTION, CONVICTIONS, CULTURAL POLICY**

**3. LIFE OF THE IMPRISONED PEOPLE**

**4. DISSENT AND CULTURAL ACTIVISM**

**5. VOICES OF BELARUSIAN CULTURE**

**6. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY**

**7. POLITICAL PRISONERS' BIRTHDAYS**

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# 1. RESULTS OF MONITORING OF CULTURAL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS FOR JANUARY-JUNE 2021

During the first half of 2021, PEN Belarus recorded 621 cases of human and cultural rights violations.

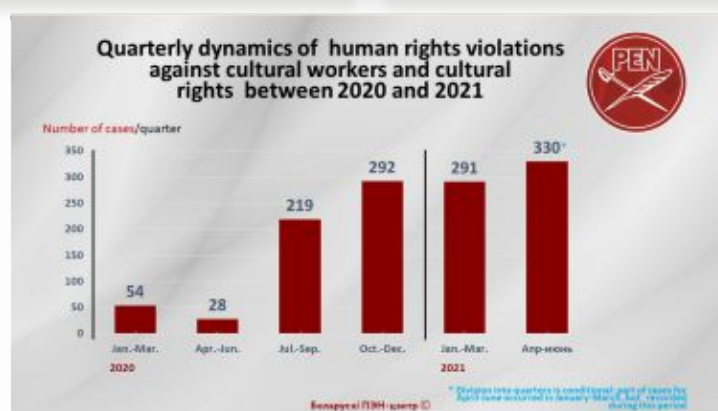


**JANUARY-JUNE 2021 POLITICAL PRISONERS AND ILLEGALLY CONVICTED**



Cultural figures	Total
<b>Political prisoners</b> <small>(as of 30.06.2021)</small>	39
<b>Recognized as political prisoners</b> <small>(during the first half of 2021)</small>	23
<b>Illegally convicted</b> <small>(sentenced to penal colony «khrimiy» or «house arrest»)</small>	24
<b>Are serving a «khimiya»</b> <small>(with a referral to an open-type correctional institution)</small>	4

Беларускі ПЭН-цэнтр ©



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## 2. PERSECUTION, CONVICTIONS, CULTURAL POLICY



**Nina Šydłoŭskaja** and **Alena Makoŭskaja**, heads of the World Association of Belarusians Baćkaŭščyna and coordinators of the public campaign Budzma, had to leave Belarus because of the persecution.

Photo: budzma.by



**Taćciana Mastyka**, a former head of the public association Historyka, and her husband, **Andruś Mastyka**, a historian and scholar, were detained after a search by the KGB on July 19.



Taćciana was later placed in the KGB prison, while the whereabouts of Andruś aren't known till now. A lawyer is not allowed to visit them.



**Maksim Subač**, musician, member of TonqiXod and Subtonans bands, was detained on July 20 in Minsk. The formal reason for the detention was a sticker on Maksim's car, to be more precise, its photo taken at the beginning of March 2021. He was sentenced to 15 days of administrative arrest.



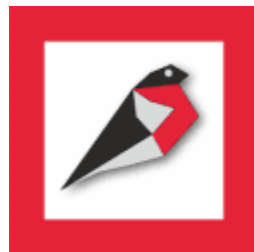
Photo: Polina Sharai

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On July 19, it became known that the bank account of **PEN Belarus** had been arrested. Next, The Ministry of Justice filed a lawsuit to **liquidate PEN Belarus**.



A shop of national symbols **Cudoŭnaja Krama** in Vorša has to be closed. In July 2021, **Ihar Kaźmierčak**, the shop owner and human rights activist, was detained twice, became a suspect in a criminal case of property damage, and his apartment was searched. On July 24, the charges were lifted off him.



The office of the **Niŭ Hilevič University** was searched on July 20.

**Andrej Dynko**, editor-in-chief of Naša Historyja magazine, was released from the Investigative Committee on July 21 on bail. He is likely to remain a suspect under Part 2 of Art. 216 of the Criminal Code (causing property damage without signs of theft).



**Hanna Sokur**, a dancer, was detained on July 22 and sentenced to 7 days of administrative arrest for the walks under white-red-white umbrellas.



**More than 40 non-governmental organizations** were eliminated in Belarus in one day of July 23, among them a number of those working in the sphere of culture: InicyArt Information and Cultural Center, Cultural centre Art Siadziba, Social Film Workshop, Belarusian Language Educational Initiative "Mova Nanova", Cultural and educational institution "Promotion of cultural development of cities", Cultural and educational institution "Kresy", Cultural and educational institution for work with the population and self-development "Common Future", Social and educational institution in the field of historical and cultural heritage "Unovis-FORUM", Private cultural and educational institution "Gender Response", Private cultural and educational institution "Leader of the new era", Cultural and educational institution "ASET".



**Ksienija Hałubovič** [Kseniya Halubovich], a photographer, was detained on July 23 during a photo shoot at a children's hospice. Her apartment was searched, and after an interrogation she was released on a non-disclosure agreement.



Фота: Наша Ніва



Police came to **Stasia Hubarevič** [Hubarevich], the ex-wife of the politician Jury Hubarevič, with a search, during which they found a flag, hung it on the balcony, forced Stasia to put on a shirt with red stripes and socks of the same color. Afterwards, they photographed her with the flag, took to the police department and fined 70 basic units [690 EUR].

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## 3. LIFE OF THE IMPRISONED PEOPLE

**Ihar Iljaš** [Iliash], journalist, co-author (together with Kaciaryna Andrejeva) of the book "Belarusian Donbass", was detained on July 16, under Part 1 of Art. 342 of the Criminal Code (Organization and preparation of actions that grossly violate public order, or active participation in them).



According to his relatives, he stays positive and calm. In the cell there are others detained on politically motivated charges. No mattresses and bed linen are given. Ihar sent a message to his colleagues, "Work, work and work three times harder! Don't stop and don't give up!"

Photo: Euroradio.fm



Letters from **Andrej Poczubut** started coming again. He says that he had a hard time with the coronavirus, but he doesn't feel the consequences yet and hopes there won't be many.

He calls a prison in the summer hell, saying that when it rains, it's easier to breathe. He is preparing for the trial, studying the case materials. Memories of his hometown of Hrodna help him emotionally.

# 4. DISSENT AND CULTURAL ACTIVISM



A sequel to the feature short film **Minsk 2020** has been released.

Presentations of the German edition of **Olga Shparaga's** new book – **Die Revolution hat ein weiblichest Gesicht** – and discussions with the philosopher take place in various cities in Germany.



Photo from Facebook page



**Volny Chor** performed a small concert in Poznan and Wroclaw.

**Andrej Chadanovič** [Khadanovich] launched his new book "Phantom Joys", published in Poland in the Belarusian and Polish languages.

Photo: Anastasia Kanarska





Drawings by political prisoners

**Andruš Vojnič**



**Dźmitry Duboŭski**



**Siarhieŭ Ramanaŭ**



**Jana Arabiejka**

## 5. VOICES OF BELARUSIAN CULTURE

**Alena Makoŭskaja,**

*“I want to hope that it is, albeit unplanned, but still a business trip, that it will end and I’ll be able to return to Belarus. I’m grateful to everyone who’s been helping.”*



**Nina Šydoŭskaja,**

*“I didn't think I would have to do that... But I had to... My beloved Belarus, wait for me! I'll be back. Thanks a lot to all the good people.”*



**Andrej Chadanovič [Khadanovich]** about his new book,

*“For many, a good poem is a little island of good news in the chaos of depression. When faced with this, you don’t immediately allow yourself to relax and write this story further. The end of the book is far from what a typical me is. These texts are more lyrical, more serious, more tragic. Although I try not to write texts that would not end in hope, because there’s enough depression.”*



## 6. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

**Swedish writers** have shown their support for **Barys Piatrovič**, a Belarusian novelist and chairman of the Union of Belarusian Writers, whose house was searched last week and who is under travel restrictions and non-disclosure agreement at the moment. As solidarity, they post videos on their social networks under the hashtag **#baryspjatrovitj**, reading excerpts from Piatrovič's book "Fresker", published in 2008 translated by Dmitry Plax.



Photo: euroradio.fm



On July 23, a concert of **TRIO vis-à-vis** dedicated to **Maria Kalesnikava** was held in Stuttgart as part of the Music for Belarus movement.



Support for Belarusian PEN and Belarusian civil society has been expressed by a number of international organizations:

**PEN Ukraine, PEN America, the European Writers Council and Publishing Perspectives, the UK Society of Authors, PEN International, PEN Moscow and the Free Word Association, Swedish PEN, The Association of German Writers and German PEN.**

## 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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