

# Cultural Resistance in Belarus

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*“It all stands on people willing to live better lives.”*

**Alena Lavončanka**

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# 1. PERSECUTION, CONVICTIONS, CULTURAL POLICY



The Minsk City Court canceled the registration of the public association [Zvyano](#). The pressure on the organization and personally on its founder Taćciana Hacura-Javorskaja began after the exhibition “Machine is breathing, but I’m not”, dedicated to Belarusian medical workers who helped people during the COVID-19 outbreak.



In Brest, the eighth group of defendants — six persons — in the “[karahod case](#)” were convicted to the terms from 1.5 years of open air prison and home imprisonment to 1 year and 7 months in colony.



In the penal colony in Škłoŭ political prisoners are **punished** by punitive confinement for replying to **letters of solidarity** they receive.

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## 2. LIFE OF THE IMPRISONED PEOPLE

**Aleś Bialacki** is charged under Article 2 of the Criminal Code, part 2 of Art. 243 (tax evasion) and is facing up to 5 years of custodial restraint or imprisonment for a term of 3 to 7 years.



**Uładzimir Mackievič**, philosopher and methodologist, founder of the Flying University, has been remanded in custody for another month. He will stay behind bars at least until November 4.

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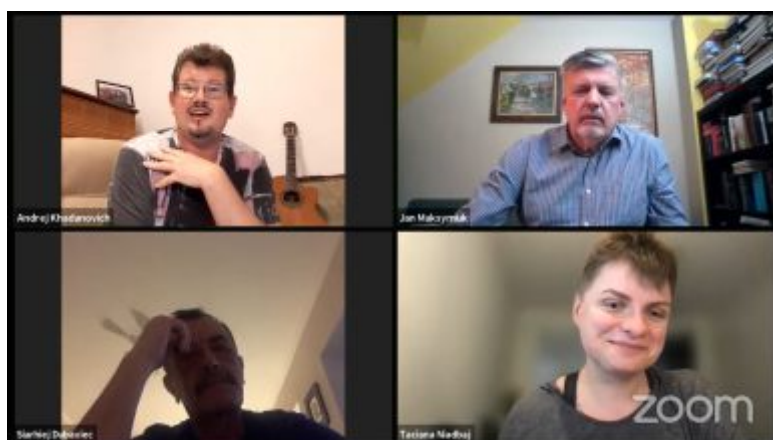
## 3. DISSENT AND CULTURAL ACTIVISM



**Hanna Jankuta**, a writer and translator, member of PEN Belarus, has published a new children's book in audio format.



The third online discussion within this year's **Jerzy Giedroyc Literary Award** was dedicated to the joint search for an answer to the question «Is there life after receiving Giedroyc?»



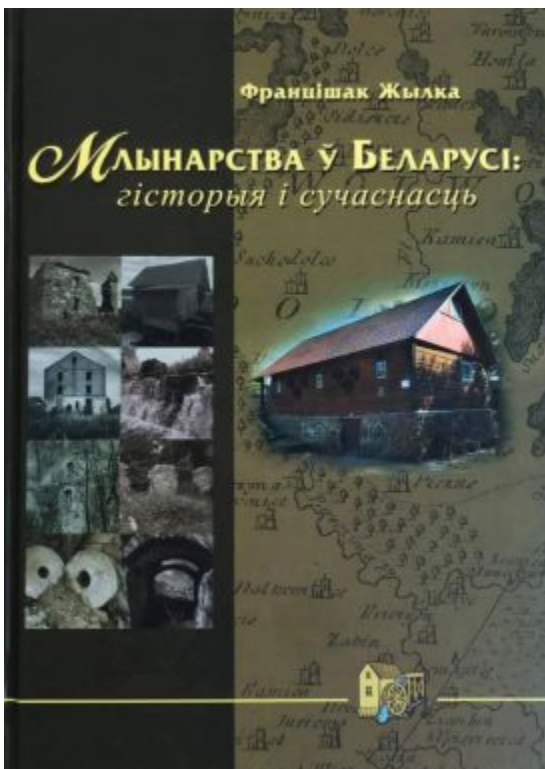
The best scientific publications of the **International Congress of Belarusian Researchers 2020** have been announced.



The premiere of the song "Beloved Is Let Go", a product of a creative collaboration between **Natalia Elson** and **Edvinas Minskstimas**.



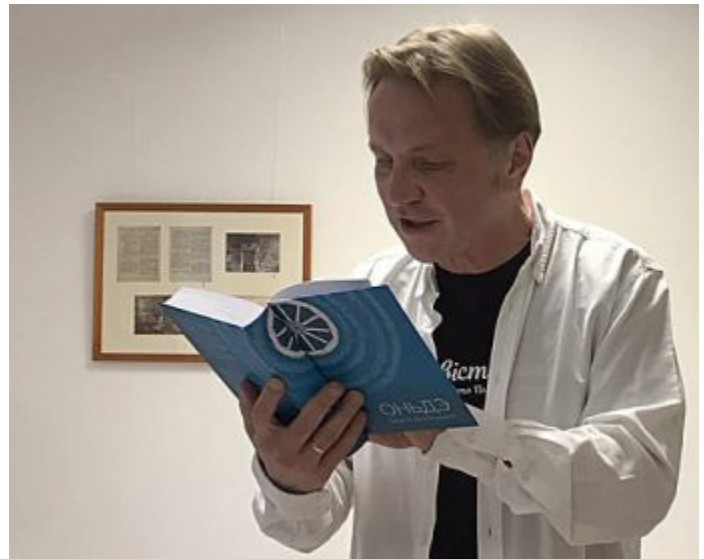
A **museum of painted carpets** will open in Zastaŭje.



**Francišk Žyłka**, a local historian, published the book "Mills in Belarus: History and Present".

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Presentation of the book of short stories and poems "Onde" in the dialect of Palessie, written by **Alaksiej Dzikavicki**, Belarusian journalist, took place in Vilnius.



An auction: a new piece by **Rufina Bazlova** — modern art created in the technique of hand embroidery — dedicated to Aleś Puškin, political prisoner artist, restorer, performer who is accused of "Nazism rehabilitating".



Free classes of the Belarusian language "**Mova Nanova**" started in Warsaw.





The short list of **Jerzy Giedroyc Literary Award** has been announced.



The jury announced a shortlist of nominees for the **Carlos Sherman Award** for Translators into the Belarusian language.



A music and dance event with the participation of Belarusian bands **Lity Taler** and **Javaryna**, as well as the "first violin of the Belarusian protest" **Taǰiana Hrynievič** took place in Warsaw.





**Kirył Vałošyn**, co-founder of Tut.by, together with **Valancina Čuduk**, a professional dancer and psychologist, started teaching social dances in Vilnius. It helps them get grounded and switch attention from the bad.



The premiere of **Halina Adamovič's** film "Arrow" about the "Burial of the Arrow" rite, which is celebrated in Belarusian villages, took place in Minsk.



The "**Face of Women's Protest**" project — refugees from Belarus sew designer clothes in Kyiv.

The independent theater group **Kupaŭcy** and the podcast **project 3** acts presented an audio performance based on the book by **Uładzimir Arłou** «The Order of White Mouse».



"Lost Fates of Belarus" — stories of 15 prominent historical figures and activists who were sentenced to death at different times and for various activities, which at that time were prohibited by law.

A new entertainment, educational, developmental channel for children "**Baybus**" has appeared.



**Victory Artists LIVE:**  
**Andrus Takindang** (RECHA).  
Support unconquered cultural figures and their new projects.

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## 4. VOICES OF BELARUSIAN CULTURE

**Vola lol**, musician and photographer, who had to leave Belarus,

*"I wasn't prepared for such changes mentally, physically or financially. When you go on a trip, you are ready to take risks and experience extreme conditions. Everything is perceived differently. But when you flee, you fall into a depressing hole. In Minsk I had a comfortable apartment, work in a model school and many private orders. I have none of these here."*



**Alaksandr Ždanovič**, actor and TV presenter,  
*"What is it like to be 'here'? It's like living in a room, knowing that there's a venomous snake under your bed, and it can bite at any moment. Can one live in such a room? Probably yes. What does this give? Probably, it brings up some existential attitude to fear, overcoming it."*

**Barys Piatrovič**, head of the Union of Belarusian Writers,  
*"Neither Stalin, nor Brezhnev, nor Andropov shut down the Writers' Union, and only the Belarusian government did."*





**Andrej Kuciła**, director of the documentary film «When Flowers Are Not Silent»,  
*“I am exhausted by working on the topic and wish I could take a break. But how, if every day you think about the fates of Belarusians, the repressions, that things continue...”*

**Lyavon Barshcheuski**, translator, member of PEN Belarus Board,  
*“An organization is needed for defence, it’s easier to fight together, and also to support each other when necessary. Symbolic character is also important. But I understand my colleagues who came to make this organization active, not just a closed club. I like it because there are real projects, real work and help for creative people. Therefore, I would say that the reformatting of PEN [Belarus] in this situation and the intensification of very practical aspects of its activity are necessary, and I wish success to the team, I’m sure that a lot will happen.”*



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## 5. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

The **European Writers' Council** stands with the Union of Belarusian Writers, shut down by the Supreme Court on October 1.



"**Invisible Trauma**" — a project presented at the festival in Ludwigsburg (Germany) — the second part of "Echoes. Voices from Belarus", created by Christine Fischer — a colleague of Maria Kalesnikava.

The **Belarusian Academy**, which opened at the beginning of the year and works remotely in partnership with three Polish educational institutions, has received an official permit to use Belarusian as a language of instruction.



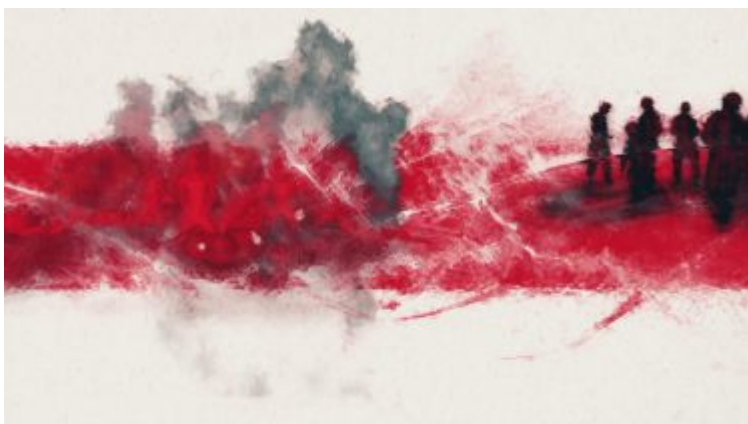
**Alaksiej Pałujan's** film **Courage** has been selected for the Amsterdam Documentary Film Festival.

**Andrej Kucila's** documentary "When Flowers Are Not Silent" was selected for the prestigious Warszawski Festiwal Filmowy, and it was screened at the **Warsaw Cinematheque** at the Palace of Culture and Science on October 9-11.



The documentary film "Limbo" by **Tania Svirepa**, a Belarusian director, about transit refugees in Brest, was selected for the MAX Diversity Film Festival.

The music of Belarusian composers **Kanstancin Jaškoŭ**, **Volha Padhajskaia** and a third composer whose name can't be revealed, as well as poetry by **Valzhyna Mort**, **Alhierd Bacharevič** and **Vera Žybul** were performed on October 9 in Munich's Herkulesaal, home to the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra.



A collaborative film **Animators For Belarus** is the prize winner 2021 at **Façade Video Festival** that took place at the end of September in Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

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## 6. POLITICAL PRISONERS' BIRTHDAYS



For October 10, 801 persons have been recognized as political prisoners in Belarus, and the number has been increasing steadily. This, of course, shows that repression by the authorities not just hasn't stopped, but is actually gaining strength.

PEN Belarus, as an association of writers, is particularly concerned about the fate of cultural workers who have been unjustly imprisoned.

In October, 4 political prisoners somehow involved in the process of cultural development of our country, will celebrate their birthdays behind bars. They are:

**Andrej Piatroŭski**, a former history and social studies teacher from Smarhoń (October 5);

**Alaksandr Nurdzinaŭ**, artist (October 11);

**Anžalika Borys**, chair of the Union of Poles in Belarus (October 14)

and **Pavieł Maźko**, designer of clothes (October 21).


Letters and postcards (in Belarusian or Russian) can be sent to the following address:

**Andrej Piatroŭski** (Андрэй Пятроўскі): Турма №1. 230023, г. Гродна, вул. Кірава, 1

**Alaksandr Nurdzinaŭ** (Аляксандр Нурдзінаў): ПК №1. 211440, г. Наваполацк, вул. Тэхнічная, 8

**Anžalika Borys** (Анжаліка Борыс): Следчая турма №8. 222163, г. Жодзіна, вул. Савецкая, 22А

**Pavieł Maźko** (Павел Мазько): СІЗА-7. 224030, г. Брэст, вул. Савецкіх памежнікаў, 37

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