

March 2022

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## REPRESSIONS

On March 25, another trial started against Tsikhan Osipau, a political prisoner, lecturer of Belarusian National Technical University, previously sentenced to 11 years of imprisonment. A court session took place in the colony where Tsikhan is serving his sentence. He was [convicted](#) of “malicious disobedience to the demands of the administration of the correctional institution” (article 411, part 2 of the Criminal Code) and sentenced to additional 7 months of imprisonment. The political prisoner’s wife was not allowed to the trial.

Anastasiya Vaitovich, a Belarusian State University History Faculty student, was [sentenced](#) to three years of restricted freedom in an open penal facility. Judge Anastasiya Achalava found Anastasiya guilty of “organizing and preparing actions that grossly violate public order” for participating in 2020 peaceful protests in Belarus. Before the trial, Anastasiya had spent almost 4 months in the pre-trial detention centre. Human rights defenders recognized Anastasiya as a [political prisoner](#) on December 14, 2021.

Maksim Tuzhyk, 19-years old student of Belarusian State Technological University, was [sentenced](#) to 4 years in maximum security penal colony for removing the state flag from the facade of a bus terminal building.

On March 28, the trial of the political prisoner Sofia Sapega, a student of European Humanities University, [began](#) in Hrodna. She is accused of seven articles of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus at once. The trial is held behind [closed](#) doors.

On March 23, Tatsiana Vadalazhskaya, a social scientist, coordinator at the [Flying University](#), and founder of various training and civic education projects, was [detained](#) in Minsk. After her previous detention on August 4, 2021, when Tatsiana spent 10 days under administrative arrest, she was released as a suspect under Art. 342 part 1 of the Criminal Code (“Organization and preparation of actions that

grossly violate public order”). It was reported that Tatsiana had appealed to the Investigative Committee of Belarus for permission to go to Lithuania for medical treatment, but instead of endorsing the application, the Committee detained Tatsiana. She is now in the pre-trial detention center in Minsk.

Professor Alla Kozhinava, a reputed specialist in Polish studies and former teacher of the Faculty of Philology at Belarusian State University, was [detained](#) and sentenced to 13 days of administrative arrest for “storage or transportation of extremist materials”. Earlier, the BSU administration [dismissed](#) Alla Kozhinava, who had worked at the university for 33 years, on political grounds.

The court [sentenced](#) Natallia Dulina, former Associate Professor of the Department of Italian Language at Minsk State Linguistic University, to 15 days of administrative arrest. Before that, Natallia, known for her protest activity, recorded a video of support for Ukraine.

A fourth-year Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics student Yauhen Maliauka was [detained](#) in his dormitory, allegedly on February 15–17. Yauhen is [charged](#) with Art. 342 of the Criminal Code (“Organization and preparation of actions that grossly violate public order”). The student is now in the pre-trial detention center in Minsk.

Belarusian National Technical University student Mikita Antanevich was [detained](#) and received arrest for 15 days. He took a photo of a woman protesting against the war in the central square of Minsk.

On March 31, the court of Babrujsk [found guilty](#) Larysa Sekiarzhytskaya, a school history teacher, of picketing with help of yellow-blue ribbon in her hair to express her “political and social attitude to the events in the Ukraine” (Larysa was detained on March 4 at school, being reported by her colleagues, she was move to police department, where they drew up the detention report, confiscated mobile phone, forced her to get off cloth and searched). As the result, the teacher was fined 2 240 Belarusian roubles.

A minor [faces](#) criminal charges of “facilitation of extremist activities” (Articles 361-4, Part 1 of the Criminal Code). A lyceum student was detained for taking pictures of Russian military equipment and reporting its movements in late February and early March. The student sent the photos to a Telegram channel recognized by the Belarusian authorities as “extremist”. The teenager faces up to three years in

prison. Also, three school students were detained for attempting to look at the place where Russian military equipment is located. The police drew up reports on the teenagers' parents for non-fulfillment of upbringing-related responsibilities (Article 10.3 part 2 of the Code of Administrative Offences).

In the Lahojsk district, two teenagers aged 14 and 15 were [detained](#). They wrote about Russia and Belarus' participation in the war against Ukraine on a memorial of the Great Patriotic war victims. The police are inspecting this case to give their actions a legal assessment.

In Navapolack, on February 27, the day of the "referendum", a student of Polack State University Aliaksandra Buka was [detained](#) at the polling station. The student came to vote with her friend, who took a photo of the ballot paper. For that, they both were detained. Aliaksandra spent three days in the pre-trial detention center but was released without trial.

On March 25, in the auditorium of Homiel Automechanical College, the police demonstratively [detained](#) a minor in the audience of 200 students.

The Hrodna State University administration [fired](#) Albina Semianchuk, Candidate of Historical Sciences, associate professor of the Belarusian culture department. On March 23, it was reported that her contract was not renewed. Politically motivated dismissals at Hrodna University started last year.

Aliaksei Lastouski, well-known Belarusian sociologist, Ph.D. in sociology, associate professor of the Department of Social Communications at Polack State University, [said](#) on his Facebook page that he was forced to resign from the university "by mutual consent of the parties". Given the circumstances of the dismissal, now Aliaksei is unlikely to find any other job in Belarus.

School teacher dismissed on political grounds and famous writer Hanna Seviaryniec's daughters Yauheniya and Lybou Subots [were expelled](#) for political reasons from the Faculty of Philology of the Belarusian State University. The girls were detained during an anti-war rally near the Minsk railway station on February 28 and [sentenced](#) to 15 days.

The pro-regime Telegram channels [shared](#) videos of two students of the Homiel College of Cooking saying they are "sorry" for publishing videos of military equipment movements on TikTok.

March 7 was the birthday of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Representative for Youth and Student Affairs, [political prisoner](#) Alana Gebremariam. She has been behind bars on a trumped-up case since November 12, 2020. To send Alana a letter and congratulate her on her birthday, use [vkletochku.org](http://vkletochku.org).

## REGIME'S POLICY

On September 1, all universities and colleges in Belarus will [introduce](#) three new compulsory courses: History of Belarusian Statehood, Modern Political Economy, and Philosophy. Students will have to study them regardless of their major. Minister of Education Andrei Ivanets, commenting on the new features, said that now "first-year students will be able to view the well-known historical facts in the context of social and political developments".

Belarus' government agencies [resumed](#) affixing Apostilles necessary to confirm documents abroad, including when applying to foreign educational institutions. The service had been unavailable since March 10, and after the agencies resumed acceptance of documents, its cost increased tenfold, following the March 21 [resolution](#) of the Council of Ministers.

The Belarusian State University official labour union [offers](#) to join the discussion of the new bargaining agreement draft. Whereas, the Free BSU Union [started](#) compiling another report on violations of the running bargaining agreement, emphasizing the massive illegal dismissals of faculty staff and the failure of the official BSU union to fulfill its duties.

Academics dismissed on political grounds [spoke](#) about political pressure at universities and colleges. They claim that the KGB instructs the university administrations to deal with "unreliable" employees.

On March 24, Belarusian schools [held](#) lectures on the events in Ukraine, titled "Belarus as a country of peace, friendship and good neighbourliness". The lectures were held "to form students' understanding of Belarus' peaceful policy", as evidenced by the lesson plans [published](#) on the National Educational Portal website. Schoolchildren are offered to read interviews and publications of a pro-governmental historian and propagandist as a verified source of information.

Belarusian schools are [hiring](#) people for the heads of military-patriotic education. New ideological classes might appear in the school schedules soon. It is noteworthy that the job advertising in most cases does not include work experience requirements.

Educational institutions of the Homiel region in their social media profiles [warn](#) parents that children may be liable under criminal or administrative law for public comments “about various political and international events”.

On March 25, Belarusian National Technical University [hosted](#) a students’ meeting with a propagandist, who spoke about the strengths of Lukashenka’s regime and touched upon Russia’s war against Ukraine, saying that it was Ukraine that started the aggression first.

On March 17, a school in Minsk [held](#) an uncommon lesson for 9th graders. The local Department of Education announced that the children were taught the forms and methods of underground military resistance, including sabotage, raids and terrorist attacks against occupying authorities, anti-fascist propaganda, and attracting people into partisan units.

Students of a school in Hrodna met with a military ideologist from Minsk, who [spoke](#) about the negative attitude towards Belarus in all neighbouring countries, except for Russia. Especially groundless, according to the speaker, is Ukraine’s enmity towards Belarus.

In the Homiel region, school students were asked to fill out a [questionnaire](#) on patriotic topics, agreeing or disagreeing with various statements. The statements varied from “those who criticise what is happening in the country cannot be considered real patriots” to “judging against “our” athletes at international competitions is often unfair, because no one likes Belarusians”.

Students of Baranavichy Palace of Children’s Art were [forced to take part](#) in the ceremonial reception of the “historical memory train” in which the employees of law enforcement agencies were heading to a memorial event in the Brest Fortress. The pro-regime Youth Union members, as well as staff of Baranavichy police, local detention center, military commandant’s office, and other security bodies also joined the ceremony.

Belarusian school students [shared](#) what teachers told them about the war in Ukraine. Their explanations vary from “Ukraine attacked Belarus and Russia, and we are just defending ourselves” to “Let’s have a minute of silence for the children of Ukraine”.

Uladzimir Aliaksandrau, a philosopher in Minsk and former Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics lecturer, in an [interview](#) spoke about how he was dismissed from the university in 2018 because he was teaching classes in the Belarusian language and attempting to defend his rights. He also talked about his emigration to Israel.

## **SANCTIONS AGAINST BELARUS**

On March 8, OECD Council [has decided](#) to immediately suspend the participation of Belarus in OECD bodies including Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) as a “response to Russia’s large-scale aggression against Ukraine

For the same reason, World Skills International, an international non-commercial association organizing championships of vocational skills among young people, suspended cooperation with World Skills Belarus. The latter responded by [saying](#) they are “peaceful people”.

The World Bank, which actively supports programs aimed at modernizing the education system, [decided](#) to immediately suspend all assistance programs in Russia and Belarus because of the situation in Ukraine.

Rector of the University of Vaasa (Finland) Jari Kuusisto [said](#) that his educational institution, following the ordinance of the Ministry of Education and Culture, suspended all joint projects and cooperation with Belarusian and Russian universities and scientific institutions. Students and scientists from the two countries will still be eligible to study and work at the university.

The University of Gdansk [suspended](#) cooperation with Belarusian universities and research centers because of the Belarus regime’s involvement in Russia’s military invasion of Ukraine.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND EDUCATION

More than a thousand representatives of the Belarusian professional communities signed the [petition](#) expressing strong protest to the war unleashed by Russia's leadership.

Representatives of the international Russian-speaking academic community [published](#) a petition to support Ukrainian, Russian, and Belarusian free scientists affected by Russia's war against Ukraine. More than 100 professors from universities in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Finland [signed](#) the petition.

The Community of independent researchers of Belarus in Germany [launched](#) a petition to support independent scientists working in Belarus or of Belarusian descent. The petition authors urge the international scientific community to abstain from breaking off relations with those Belarusian scientists within and outside Belarus who do not support the Lukashenka regime.

The Organizing Committee of the International Congress of Belarusian Studies published an [appeal](#) regarding the military aggression against Ukraine. On behalf of the Belarusian academic community, the ICBS strongly condemns "Russia's military aggression against independent and sovereign Ukraine". It also notes that "the measures aimed at the complete disruption of cooperation between Ukraine, the EU and the United States on one side and the Belarusian academic community on the other side are wrong" as it is the regime that assists the Russian troops.

Belarus' prominent historians – Henadz Sahanovich, Ales Smalyanchuk, Ales Krautsevich, Andrei Charniakevich – recorded a video [address](#) to their Ukrainian colleagues and all Ukrainians expressing solidarity and support in the struggle for the right to live in an independent and free country.

Office of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Representative on Education and Science, Ph.D. Tatsiana Shchytsova [addressed](#) the international academic community calling not to suspend cooperation with Belarusian scientists.

The Belarusian Students Association, on behalf of the Belarusian student community, [joined](#) the statement of civil society regarding the regime's involvement in the war against Ukraine: "The current illegitimate government is pursuing a policy which contradicts the Constitution and international norms".

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya held a [call with the Estonian Ambassador](#) and touched upon the decision of the University of Tartu to [suspend](#) admission of Belarusian and Russian students. The Ambassador assured Ms. Tsikhanouskaya that the government did not call on Estonian universities to suspend admission of Belarusian students and noted that the President of Estonia Alar Karis called the University administration to revise this decision. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Office [called](#) this restrictive measure "national origin discrimination".

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Representative on Education and Science, Ph.D. Tatsiana Shchyttsova [assessed](#) the new Education Code. In her analysis, it makes education "a disguised form of social slavery".

European Humanities University [hosted](#) a charity event in support of Ukraine. The event featured performances from University students and Belarusian musicians and a fundraiser for the BlueYellow Lithuanian foundation, which collects and delivers ammunition and medical equipment to Ukraine.

## EDUCATIONAL REFORM DEVELOPMENT

On February 23, the Belarusian Education on the Way of Changes project held a discussion about how to transform the ideology-centered Belarusian education system into a democratic system. The participants of the discussion, experts Tatsiana Pashavalava and Andrei Laurukhin, [discussed](#) civic education in new Belarus and in democratic countries and showed its fundamental difference from the ideology-centered education of modern Belarus.