

May 2022

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REPRESSIONS

The court in Hrodna passed [sentence](#) upon Sofia Sapega, a European Humanities University student who flew with Raman Pratasevich at the time of the Ryanair jetliner forced landing in Minsk and was detained with him. She was charged under seven articles of the Criminal Code at once, but had nothing to do with Pratasevich's case. As a result of the closed court hearings, she was sentenced to 6 years of imprisonment in a general-regime penal colony, and was ordered to pay the damages in the amount of 167,500 rubles (47,000 euros).

On May 6, 18-year-old student Kiryl Kiaturka was [found](#) guilty of violating Part 1 of Art. 342 of the Criminal Code. Judge Marharyta Lantsevich in Hrodna sentenced Kiryl to 2,5 years of restricted freedom under home confinement.

On May 6, the court in Minsk passed the [verdict](#) to the Belarusian State Pedagogical University graduate student Anastasiya Kukharava. Judge Volha Malashenka found her guilty of committing a crime under Art. 342-1 of the Criminal Code ("Organization and preparation of actions that grossly violate public order") and sentenced Anastasia to three years of restricted freedom under home confinement. She was released in the courtroom.

The court in Minsk [found](#) Yauhen Maliauka, student of Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics, detained on 21 March 2022, guilty of violating Art. 342 of Belarus' Criminal Code. Yauhen was sentenced to three years of restricted freedom under home confinement and released in the courtroom.

On June 7, the court in Minsk [will](#) hear the case of social scientist and coordinator at the "Flying University" Tatsiana Vadalazhskaya, recognized as a political prisoner. After her detention in August 2021, she was a suspect under Art. 342-1 of the Criminal Code (Organization and preparation of actions that grossly violate public order). Tatsiana was taken into custody on March 23, 2022, when she came to the Investigative Committee to get reply to her request to go to Lithuania for medical treatment.

Human rights defenders [recognized](#) Kanstantsin Rudnitski, a student of Brest State Technical University, as a political prisoner. Kanstantsin has been a suspect since December 2021. He is accused of taking part in developing the [Black Map of Belarus](#), a platform that compiles personal data of people responsible for repressions. Kanstantsin was taken into custody in February 2022.

Andrei Darakhovich, a 31-year-old history teacher at Minsk Language and Humanities College, [was detained](#) and accused of signing up for the Peramoga plan in Telegram, taking part in protests while bringing his children with him. Andrei is known to have a wife and two minor children. He had previously been detained at a protest rally on July 14, 2020.

On May 18, Volha Afanasyeva, a research assistant at the Vetka Museum, [was detained](#) at her workplace in Homiel on administrative charges. The court verdict is unknown yet.

On May 27, a 37-year-old employee of the Radiophysics Faculty of Belarusian State University Pavel Piatrou was [detained](#) at his workplace. Pavel is reported to be a postgraduate student seeking a Ph.D. degree in Mathematical Physics.

Human rights defenders reported the [detention](#) of Aliaksandr Builitski, a fourth-year Business Administration student at the Belarusian State University Institute of Business and active member of the local pro-regime student union. Aliaksandr is charged with two articles of the Criminal Code.

A mathematics teacher was [detained](#) for sharing information on the movement of Russian military equipment with the Belsat TV channel, designated an “extremist formation” by the regime. He is accused of violating Art. 361-4 of the Criminal Code (Promoting extremist activities), under which he faces up to six years in prison.

A student and IT company employee working with advertising in social media, was detained “for insulting the administrators of pro-government Telegram channels”. Her “confession” video released allegedly by security forces suggests the “insult” consisted, among other things, of ignoring messages from pro-Lukashenka Telegram channels administrators and sending advertising proposals to channels deemed “extremist” – Realnaya Belarus and Deutsche Welle.

A third-year student of the Belarusian State University Faculty of History Dzmitry Niachayau was [detained](#) in Minsk for his Instagram posts.

Human rights activists and Belarusian parents [commented on](#) the new [documentary](#) by [Platform 375](#), “Upbringing by Prison. Lukashenka vs. Youth”. It tells about the conditions of detention of juvenile political prisoners in a penal colony: they are denied access to higher education and obliged to wear yellow “extremist” tags. A human rights defender commented that the regime wants “to keep the teenagers in the colony for as long as possible, as they are used as slaves there”.

The relatives and students of Aliaksandr Danilevich, a dismissed lecturer at the Law Faculty of Belarusian State University, associate professor, Ph.D. in Law, [shared](#) details of his detention and spoke about professional reputation. They called him “the most talented lecturer” and mentioned he had won the most prestigious public legal award in Belarus. Aliaksandr has been kept in the KGB Detention Center for a week and a half already after he had signed the open letter of lawyers against the war in Ukraine.

Natallia Dulina, a former associate professor at Minsk State Linguistic University and a well-known teacher, was released after her fourth administrative arrest. She [spoke](#) about the conditions of detention in Minsk and Mahilou: “There, I saw what torture is like.”

REGIME’S POLICY

Deputy Minister of Education Aliaksandr Kadlubai [announced](#) changes in history teaching for 9th graders. In particular, the Ministry is planning to introduce a compulsory course on the history of the Soviet Union participation in the Second World War (Great Patriotic War), as well as include questions on this topic in every History of Belarus examination paper.

Lukashenka signed [a decree](#) on the military and patriotic clubs. The document stipulates such clubs for children and young people within the military units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Armed Forces, other troops and military formations. The decree [suggests](#) that “the activities of the clubs will promote civil and patriotic upbringing of children and youth and increase their motivation for military service”.

Cut-off scores for 2022 university applicants were [announced](#). 7 points out of 100 will be enough for admission to the Military Academy, the University of Civil Protection, the Border Guard Service Institute, military departments at civilian universities. Other universities will require 10 points out of 100 in Russian or Belarusian

(25 points for philological majors), 20 points in mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology, 25 points – in history, social sciences, geography and foreign languages.

Major General Aleh Voinau [was appointed](#) Director of the National Historical Archives of Belarus. Until recently he had been an assistant to the Minister of Defense for international military cooperation. A month earlier the famous historian Dzmitry Yatsevich, who had been the head of the archive for 10 years, was dismissed from this position.

MP Hienadz Davydzka [suggested](#) introducing a school subject on the genocide of the Belarusian people, so that children would learn to be proud of their ancestors who passed through the «road of suffering». In this way, the official wants to “save” the young generation “from ignorance, disbelief and improper actions in the future”.

The Department of Education of Hrodna regional administration [sent](#) a document to local kindergartens, advising them to hold “patriotic” events. The document requires that the anthem plays when classes at kindergartens start, children once a month visit museums and memorial places, mainly dedicated to the Great Patriotic War, and an “Our Emblem. Our Flag. Our Anthem” class is held on the eve of state holidays. Educational institutions will have to report on the implementation of these requirements quarterly.

The Special Operations Forces military of Belarus’ Armed Forces, which are now “securing” the Belarusian-Ukrainian border, [visited](#) a rural school in the border area to demonstrate weapons to schoolchildren. It is also [reported](#) that soon the soldiers of the unit will visit all schools and lyceums of Zhytkavichy district with a military patriotic campaign “Proud of our army”.

Yury Karayeu, former Minister of Internal Affairs, regime’s inspector for Hrodna region, [held](#) a lesson at a school in Hrodna on historical memory and peace. At the lesson he taught the children army forming-up and discussed World War II, stating that the US authorities target the world with information warfare, preventing a lot of people from knowing who really won the war.

Hrodna [hosted](#) the all-Belarusian three-day School Olympics, “Defender of the Fatherland”. The competition, which included target practice, grenade throwing, running, swimming and pulling up, involved young men of “pre-conscription” (15–16 years) and “conscription age” (17–18 years).

Minsk faces an acute [shortage](#) of elementary school and kindergarten teachers. Uladzimir Kukharau, chairman of the Minsk City administration, said kindergartens are hiring more than 450, and elementary schools about 50 teachers. The authorities want to solve the problem by increasing admission to Minsk Pedagogical College.

Teachers and kindergarten staff [spoke](#) about their working conditions and the causes of pervasive staff shortages: low pay, high workload, “stagnation” of the education system, and disrespectful treatment by superiors.

On the eve of May 9, parents and teachers [shared](#) information on the mandatory ideological events held for children at schools and kindergartens: “they will speak about the anthem, draw flags, discuss the Day of Unity with Russia, as well as talk about Russia’s “special operation”.

At a meeting with activists of the state-controlled young pioneer movement, A. Lukashenka [urged](#) them to “drag” the children of “opposition parents” into the organization.

The pro-regime Youth Union in Belarus will organize summer work trips for students to Russia, its representative [announced](#). Students’ labor will be used mostly in construction, including in the Krasnodar region, Sakha (Yakutia), Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District, and Kemerovo region, as well as the Vostochny Cosmodrome in the Amur region.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND EDUCATION

As a result of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya’s visit to Czechia, the Czech Ministry for Education [assured](#) the Belarusian side that Czech universities will continue to admit Belarusian applicants who meet the required terms. Following the meeting between Ms. Tsikhanouskaya and Czech Education Minister Petr Gazdik, they issued a joint [statement](#) saying the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports fully supports the endeavors of Belarusian civil society and will continue to assist the repressed students and researchers dismissed on political grounds by providing scholarships and residence permits for study or internships. Prior to the meeting, Czech authorities [had been discussing](#) suspending the admission of Belarusian students to Czech universities and studies of those already enrolled in some technical majors.

The Institute for Development and Social Market in Belarus and Eastern Europe held an online conference, “Education during War and Repression”, as part of the “Reforming the Education System Together!” initiative. Education expert Andrei Laurukhin moderated the discussion; renown teachers, scientists, coordinators of civil initiatives delivered their remarks, including Roza Turarbekova, Alena Anisim, Pavel Tsierashkovich, Sviatlana Matskevich, and others. Belarusian Christian Democracy shared [the record](#) of the conference on its YouTube channel.

Humanities scholars from different countries held the third webinar in the framework of the Anti-War [Marathon](#). The webinar discussed how to address the war in Ukraine in schools. Teachers and scholars from Ukraine, Belarus, and Germany participated in the discussion. The webinar was organized by the Giessen Center for East European Studies (GiZo), Justus Liebig University in cooperation with the European Humanities University. Watch [the recording](#) of the webinar on the European Humanities University channel.

Tatiana Shchytsova, P.h.D, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya’s Representative on Education and Science, [addressed](#) Belarusian teachers and professors, emphasizing the importance of confronting militaristic propaganda and discussing the relevant educational agenda.

Youth Bloc, a nationwide movement of young activists, in partnership with the Nizkaya Teoriya blog conducted a pilot [opinion poll](#) among young people on the attitude to the acting government, Belarusian political leaders, neighboring countries, and the war against Ukraine: 83% of respondents support the protest movement in Belarus, 73% have a negative attitude to Russia.

The Budzma Belarusami public and cultural campaign, in partnership with historian and archaeologist Ales Krautsevich, [launched](#) a series of educational video lectures, History of Belarus in 5 minutes. The first episode is already [out](#), and new lectures will be released every Tuesday on the YouTube channel and [Budzma Belarusami](#) website.

The Belarus Interdisciplinary Seminar [holds](#) Zoom webinars on various scientific issues to develop cross-disciplinary links in Belarusian science and consolidate the Belarusian academic community. Register for [nearest events](#):

- June 12, 9 p.m. (COVID-19 Vaccines or Quantum Leap Vaccinology);
- June 19, 5 p.m. (Introduction to Belarusian Gay and Lesbian Studies).

Kirill Kiaturka, an 18-year-old student at a college in Hrodna recently sentenced to 2.5 years of restricted freedom [spoke](#) on how to stay positive in prison and how he plans to continue studies after his release: “I’m going to re-register next year – this year I won’t be able to do my internship”.

Ph.D. in History, associate professor at the Faculty of International Relations of Belarusian State University Roza Turarbekova, dismissed in February 2022, [told](#) about the circumstances of the mass dismissals, which are “systematic” and “lengthy”, and prospects for the future: “They intimidated us to make us obey”, “50 people were fired in two months. And in fact considerably more, <...> so many that we can now establish a parallel National University”.

Uladzislau Bokhan, a history teacher from Minsk, [spoke](#) about the changes in the history textbooks after the events of 2020. The changes mainly affected the subject of the Great Patriotic War, as well as contemporary history. The name of Sviatlana Alexievich is no longer mentioned in the textbooks, and the information about the reasons for the 1996 referendum became even more distorted.

Sviatlana Kul-Sialvestrava, Professor at Bialystok University of Technology, Ph.D. in History, [spoke](#) about the catastrophic drop in the number of researchers in Belarus since 1990s, and shared her view on the current state of the Belarusian science, including history: “Let propaganda write [its own version of history], and we will write our own and see who will do better”.