

# BelarusBrief

News from the Belarusian Diaspora in the USA, FEBRUARY 2021

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Human rights organizations observe “a continuation of the trend towards intensified repression and, as a result, a further deterioration of the general human rights situation.” (via [Spring96](#))

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## international response

On Feb 18, the **U.S. Department of State** imposed visa restrictions on 43 additional individuals for undermining Belarusian democracy. (via [State.gov](#))

The U.S. Congress will consider the **House Resolution 124**, “Supporting the people of Belarus and their democratic aspirations and condemning the election rigging and subsequent violent crackdowns on peaceful protesters by the illegitimate Lukashenka regime.” (via [GovTrack](#))

**Three U.S. senators and nine representatives** recognized the International Day of Solidarity with Belarus on Feb 7 by joining PEN America and expressing their commitment to the support of human rights in Belarus.(via [Pen.org](#))

**The International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus** released its report for Sept-Nov 2020. Torture of detainees started escalating in September, culminating in the murder of Raman Bandarenka in November. Arrests were carried out as abductions by militia with no signs of identification. Protesters also faced deliberately inhumane conditions of detention. (location: [google drive](#)).

Belarusian groups in the USA held multiple rallies in support of people in Belarus.

## reign of terror

**Protesters detained in Belarus since August: over 35,000**  
“Political prisoners”: **258**  
Detained in February: **at least 511** (via [Spring96](#))

**Journalists and human rights defenders were targeted in police raids** across Belarus on Feb 16. (via [IFJ](#))

Two women journalists received **2-year prison sentences for live-streaming** from a protest rally. (via [HRW](#))

Three workers at the BMZ metals plant were sentenced to prison terms of **2.5 and 3 years for organizing a strike**. (via [ITUC-CSI](#))

In Gomel, a **16-year-old teenager with epilepsy was sentenced to 5 years** for “mass riots.” (via [RFERL](#))

**Businessman Aleksandr Trotski [Trocki] is facing from ten years in prison to the death penalty**. On Aug 12, Trotski's car was stopped by black-clad policemen in balaclavas, who threatened him with a gun. He attempted to drive away. A police officer trying to retrieve Trotski from his car suffered minor injuries. Trotski was severely beaten and tortured and suffered brain injuries and permanent hearing loss. (via [Spring96](#) in Russian only)

## future dates & how to help

March 8: Belarusians will celebrate **International Women's Day**.

March 25: Belarusians will celebrate **Freedom Day**. On that day 102 years ago, Belarus first declared its independence. Belarusians in the U.S. urge their states' governors to show solidarity with the people of Belarus and recognize March 25 as Belarusian Independence Day.(via [BelarusChicago](#))

**Write to political prisoners** on their birthdays using the online service ["Pisma v kletochku"](#). Find the list of birthdays from the Telegram channel [@dissidentBY](#).

**Support the workers** of BelarusKali, GrodnoAzot, Naftan in their strike. (via [BelarusTogether](#))

**Buy food** for repressed people of Belarus via [ineedhelpby.com](#) (in Russian only).

**The Belarusian Student Support Association** is looking for educational opportunities for persecuted students and professors. (via [bystudentsol](#))

Show your **solidarity on social media**. Amnesty International launched its online global solidarity action [#StandwithBelarus](#). (via [amnesty](#))

BelarusTogether.org is collecting assistance for victims of repressions. (via [BelarusTogether](#))

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In February, the Belarusian diaspora held **regular rallies across the U.S. to express solidarity** with the people of Belarus. The demonstrations appealed for **supporting House Resolution 124** and included testimonies of the horrors that our families and friends endured under Alexander Lukashenko's regime.



In **Portland, OR**, Belarusians celebrated the International Day of Solidarity by marching from the Waterfront to the Pioneer Square.



In **Boston, MA**, over 60 people gathered next to the Massachusetts State House on the Day of Solidarity with Belarus.



Belarusians of **Los Angeles, CA**, and allies of the community ran the 2,334 m (1.45 mi)-long “Marathon for Freedom” along the Santa Monica beach. The distance refers to the notorious Article 23.34 of the Code of the Administrative Offenses routinely and liberally used by the regime to persecute protesters.



Belarusians from **Philadelphia, PA**, and **New Jersey** and allies of the community got together on the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art to celebrate Valentine’s Day and express our solidarity with political prisoners in Belarus and the Naftan strike.



**Seattle, WA**, sent postcards to political prisoners who had birthdays, listened to a famous opera singer, read poems, and sang together. About 150 people came, including allies from Russia, Ukraine, and Poland.



**Pittsburgh, PA**, rallied on the steps of majestic Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall.