

BelarusBrief

News from the Belarusian Diaspora in the USA, SEPTEMBER 2021 aba-together.org

"Criminal prosecution for political reasons continues" continues as a main form of repressions in Belarus, and it "affecting new social groups while maintaining a massive and widespread character." (via Viasna)

BELARUS

Political prisoners: 881

Convicted in politically motivated criminal trials: [at least 958](#)

Up to 473 attempts at crossing the Belarusian-Polish border were attempted daily in September, as **the Belarusian regime continued using migrants to retaliate against Poland and Lithuania.**

Pushed back from EU borders, migrants end up in limbo in neighboring forests.

A group of migrants remained stuck between Belarusian and Polish border patrols near Usnarez Gorny with little access to shelter or food since early August. **At least 5 migrants died from hypothermia in September.** (via [Washington Post](#), [CNN](#), [Boston Globe](#), [Reuters](#))

Pro-democracy leader Maria Kolesnikova was sentenced to 11 years in prison. (via [Washington Post](#), [New York Times](#))

A raid by special forces resulted in a shooting and deaths of IT worker **Andrei Zeltser, shot in his apartment**, and a security forces member. Over a hundred people were **arrested for commenting on social media** about the shooting (via [BBC](#), [the Guardian](#), [Reuters](#), and [Viasna](#))

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The Helsinki Commission--an independent commission of the U.S. Federal Government--held a hearing on "Seeking Justice and Freedom in Belarus." The former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor **David Kramer** called for additional sanctions on Lukashenko's "wallets" and called the Middle East partners to choose between business with the U.S. or with Lukashenko. Kramer noted that the IMF should not have provided the lifeline to Lukashenko's regime. (via [CSCE.GOV](#))

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) refused to recognize the last presidential election in Belarus.

PACE set up an international investigative body to secure evidence on human rights crimes in Belarus. (via [PACE.COE.INT](#))

The international unions ITUC and IndustriALL condemned the Belarusian regime's intensified raids against and arrests of union activists. (via [ITUC-csi.org](#))

Watch [Last Week Tonight with John Oliver](#) on Lukashenko and Belarus

BELARUSIAN DIASPORA



40 Belarusian activist organizations from 27 countries, including ABA, attended a [conference](#) organized by pro-democracy leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's headquarters in Vilnius, Lithuania.

Belarusian diaspora appeals to [CNN](#) and other international news media to avoid referring to Lukashenko as "president" of Belarus.

SUPPORT & [help raise funds for "Rabochi Ruh,"](#) the nationwide movement of workers of Belarus to protect their civil and labor rights. **At least 16 factory workers who had participated in strikes were arrested in September.** (via [Belsat](#), [Viasna](#)).

[#FREEVIASNA](#): Members of the human rights organization Viasna, including **Ales Bialiatski**, are among the regime's political prisoners.

For weekly news on Belarus, visit BelarusFF.org. You can [add your email](#) to receive weekly news summaries.

BelarusBrief SEPTEMBER 2021

In September, Belarusian-American communities continued their advocacy work and organized picnics and festivals (see [BelarusTogether.com](https://belarus-together.com)).



On September 8, **Los Angeles, CA**, lighted up the City Hall building in **white-red-white**. Local activists held a candlelight vigil in front of it.



Belarus Together, club "Siabry," and Belarus Freedom-Philadelphia held a **festival of Belarusian culture, BelFest**, in **Philadelphia, PA**.



Belarusian activists ran a **San Francisco** marathon in support of a human-rights organization **Viasna**.



Belarusians in **Chicago** organized a **Belarus Festival** that attracted a multi-generational crowd and included children and grandchildren of Belarusian immigrants.



Belarusian communities, including in **Seattle, WA**, continue to write letters to political prisoners in Belarus.



Belarusians of **New York** celebrated the fall harvest with the Belarusian tradition called **Bahach**.