

BelarusBrief

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

“It is not just that the regime is trying to keep the citizens in fear, intimidate people, deprive them of their instinct for freedom and self-belief, but it is also about **destroying the country’s civil society and cultural life**” (Nobel Laureate Svetlana Alexievich, via [Belsat](#)).

BELARUS

Political prisoners: 831 (via [Viasna](#))

Lukashenka’s regime continued to lure migrants from the Middle East and deliver them to the EU border in retaliation for sanctions. Polish authorities prevented hundreds of border-crossing attempts daily. Growing numbers of migrants are **stranded on the border in freezing temperatures**. At least eight migrants died (via [DW](#), [NPR](#), [The Guardian](#), [Bloomberg](#)).

Belarusian authorities **removed all requirements and reminders to wear masks**, even as the country faces another wave of COVID infections (via [Belsat](#), [AP](#))

KGB raids and arrests continue. Husband and wife Anastasiya and Siarhei Krupenich spent more than 3.5 months in prison for **forwarding each other posts from “extremist” Telegram channels** (via [DW](#), [Belsat](#), and [Washington Post](#)). Incidentally, German DW and Poland-based Belsat are also on the Belarusian authorities' list of "extremist" media (via [AP](#), [Washington Post](#), [Reuters](#)).

At least 275 NGO-s have been “liquidated” since July, including the last three officially registered human rights organizations in Belarus (via [Human Rights Watch](#), [Viasna](#)).

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The political situation in Belarus was the subject of a resolution passed by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, resolution of the EU Parliament, UN Security Council meeting, and UN conference (via [US Congress](#), [European Parliament](#), [UN](#), and [Belsat](#)).

Talking about the Belarus-EU border crisis, German Interior Minister Horst Seehofer argued that **“the key to the problem likely lies in Moscow”** (via [DW](#)).

Due to sanctions, Google blocked the YouTube channel of the Belarusian KGB's Investigative Committee (via [Meduza](#)).

A criminal complaint was filed in Germany against six high-ranking members of the Belarusian security forces for crimes against humanity, including the use of mass detentions, torture, and sexual violence. The crimes can be prosecuted in Germany due to its principle of “universal jurisdiction” (via [DW](#), [World Organisation against Torture](#)).

Member states of the UN’s Aarhus Convention on justice in environmental matters adopted a resolution recognizing the liquidation of the green NGO Ekadom as a violation and threatening Belarus’s rights and privileges (via [Belsat](#) and [Politico](#)).

BELARUSIAN DIASPORA

World Belarus Congress 2.0 / Сусветны Кангрэс Беларусаў 2021 took place on Oct 30, 2021. See on [YouTube](#).

Association of Belarusians in America (ABA) joins Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and ByPol in urging INTERPOL to halt fulfillment of requests for information and arrests originating from Belarus. According to Tsikhanouskaya and ByPol's letter, "INTERPOL does not facilitate the search of persons persecuted on political grounds." Yet, the Belarusian authorities increasingly use Interpol mechanisms against Belarusian activists and members of Belarusian civil society (via [tsikhanouskaya.org](#) and [BelarusDigest](#)).

Among the recently detained is 20-year old student Zlata Yanukovych, arrested based on her appearance in the iconic picture from Aug 9, 2020 (below).



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In October, Belarusian-American communities commemorated **the Night of the Shot Poets** (Oct 29-30) and **Dziady**, the Remembrance of Ancestors Day, and organized cultural events in support of the music community back in Belarus (see [BelarusTogether.com](https://belarus.together.com)). 108 statespeople, scientists, and cultural figures—including 22 writers—were executed in Minsk on the night of October 29-30, 1937, as part of the broader wave of repressions against Belarusian national intelligentsia.



Activists of Belarus FREEDOM - **Philadelphia** met with Council member David Oh and Constituent Services Representative Victoria Lyga in Philadelphia City Hall.



Belarusians of **Boston, MA**, commemorated the Night of the Shot Poets near the sculpture of Tadeusz Kościuszko in Public Garden.



In **San Francisco, CA**, Belarusians created an installation, "The Cross of Kurapaty," and read poetry by writers who went through political repressions then and now.



Belarusian communities of **Portland, OR**, and **San Francisco, CA**, ran a marathon in support of political prisoners in Belarus.



Belarusians of **San Diego** met in Joshua Tree State Park.



Belarusians of **Tampa, FL**, met for a picnic in Fort DeSoto Park.