



## 1.1.2. Legislative branch and local governance

The National Assembly of Belarus is a bicameral parliament, consisting of the Council of the Republic (upper chamber) and the House of Representatives (lower chamber).<sup>[33](#)</sup> Members of the Council of the Republic are elected for a four-year term through an indirect election process where deputies are elected by regional councils,<sup>[34](#)</sup> combined with presidential appointments of a small number of deputies.<sup>[35](#)</sup> The most recent elections for the Council of the Republic took place on 4 April 2024.<sup>[36](#)</sup> The members of the House of Representatives are elected for a four-year term by popular vote.<sup>[37](#)</sup> The most recent elections to the House of Representatives were conducted on 25 February 2024, concurrently with elections for local councils of deputies.<sup>[38](#)</sup>

Similarly to the 2025 presidential elections,<sup>[39](#)</sup> the parliamentary and local elections were conducted in a highly restricted political atmosphere,<sup>[40](#)</sup> amidst numerous violations of international standards for free and fair elections,<sup>[41](#)</sup> a low level of public engagement, and manipulation and falsification of voter turnout and results.<sup>[42](#)</sup> Opposition candidates were not allowed to register for the ballot, and the elections lacked independent local or international election monitors<sup>[43](#)</sup> or OSCE observers.<sup>[44](#)</sup> Furthermore, reports indicated ‘a heavy presence’ of security services at polling stations,<sup>[45](#)</sup> which effectively prevented any possible manifestation of a public protest.<sup>[46](#)</sup>

As noted by independent foundation Bertelsmann Stiftung, both the National Assembly and the Council of Republic lack real authority and are dependent on the presidency. Likewise, locally elected councils at regional, district, city, and village levels are fully dependent on ‘local executive bodies and higher councils,’ despite being formally elected through direct vote.<sup>[47](#)</sup> Executive bodies at local level are organised in a three-tier structure: the primary level (village, town, and city authorities), the basic level (districts and cities within administrative regions), and the oblast level (the regional authorities and Minsk city). There are also over 1 300 local councils of deputies operating at these levels.<sup>[48](#)</sup>

The 2022 constitutional amendment established the All-Belarusian People’s Assembly (ABPA), designed to serve as the highest representative body.<sup>[49](#)</sup> Inaugurated in April 2024,<sup>[50](#)</sup> the ABPA is composed of around 1 200 delegates appointed by government officials, members of the parliament and local councils, and pro-government civil society organisations. The ABPA has been granted broad powers, including setting the main directions of domestic and foreign policy, initiating legislation, overseeing elections, deciding on the appointment and dismissal of key judicial and electoral officials.<sup>[51](#)</sup> It also has the authority to remove the president in cases of criminal conduct or violation of the Constitution.<sup>[52](#)</sup> However, despite its broad powers, the assembly’s independence is severely limited in practice, as the President Lukashenka serves

both as its president and chairman.[53](#)

- [33](#)

Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2026 Country Report – Belarus, 26 March 2026, [url](#), p. 15

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Belarus, President of the Republic of Belarus, Elections, n.d., [url](#)

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Encyclopaedia Britannica, Belarus, 20 January 2026, [url](#)

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UN Human Rights Council, Report of Human Rights in Belarus, 22 April 2025, [url](#), para. 48

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Encyclopaedia Britannica, Belarus, 20 January 2026, [url](#)

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HRW, Belarus – Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

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Kłysiński, K. and Żochowski, P., Voting with no alternative. Parliamentary and local ‘elections’ in Belarus, OSW, 27 February 2024, [url](#); Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2026 Country Report – Belarus, 2026, [url](#), p. 10

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EP, Joint statement by the Chair of [...] on the parliamentary and local “elections” held in Belarus on 25 February 2024, 26 February 2024, [url](#), p. 1; Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Belarus, February 2025, [url](#)

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HRW, Belarus – Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

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EP, Joint statement by the Chair of [...] on the parliamentary and local “elections” held in Belarus on 25 February 2024, 26 February 2024, [url](#), p. 1; Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Belarus, February 2025, [url](#)

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Barometer of Local Institutional Reforms in Europe, The Republic of Belarus, n.d., [url](#)

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Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2026 Country Report – Belarus, 2026, [url](#), p. 10

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Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2026 Country Report – Belarus, 2026, [url](#), pp. 10, 12

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COE, European Commission for Democracy through Law of the Council of Europe (Venice Commission), Updated Compilation of Venice Commission Opinions and Reports Relating to Qualified Majorities and Ant-deadlock Mechanisms, 19 December 2025, [url](#); Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2026 Country Report – Belarus, 2026, [url](#), p. 12