



2.1.1. Freedom of expression

Freedom of expression in Belarus is ‘severely curtailed’.¹⁴² The Ministry of Information is the main body that regulates media in the country.¹⁴³ The authorities suppress free speech and independent press and deny opposition figures access to state media.¹⁴⁴ Governmental control over digital platforms was expanded through a presidential decree of October 2022, which requires email providers and messaging apps to store user data and grant law enforcement and security agencies direct remote access, strengthening the state’s capacity to track and restrict online activity.¹⁴⁵

The authorities have developed ‘a consistent practice of punishing online activity’ by relying on broad and vague anti-extremism provisions, including those concerning activities deemed to threaten national security, participation in an extremist formation, and the financing of extremist activity.¹⁴⁶ As a result, the legal system ‘functions as a mechanism of digital intimidation’ and punishes ‘likes’ and reposts with administrative fines.¹⁴⁷

Expressing any criticism of the authorities, including online, can result in administrative or criminal charges, as noted by a representative of human rights group Human Constanta in the interview with EUAA.¹⁴⁸ According to the same source, individuals may be prosecuted for sharing an opinion online or being linked to political or human rights activities, which are defined very broadly. Consequently, even minor criticism, such as complaints about local road conditions and criticising of the work of local governance, can be punished. Enforcement in these cases is often selective and depends on whether such content is noticed by law enforcement, which may then investigate the person who wrote it, review their online activity, call the person for questioning, and then decide whether to initiate prosecution.¹⁴⁹

Between 2020 and December 2025, the authorities initiated nearly 3 500 criminal cases in relations to online activities, whereas almost 2 900 individuals were found guilty. Additionally, nearly 8 700 administrative cases were initiated for the online distribution of extremist materials (Article 19.11 of the Code of Administrative Offences).¹⁵⁰

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AI, Belarus 2024, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

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EPRS, Media environment in Belarus, February 2022, [url](#), p. 2

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BBC News, Belarus country profile, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

- [145](#)

ICNL, Belarus, 4 October 2025, [url](#)

- [146](#)

Dissidentby and Human Constanta, From streets to screens: digital repression in Belarus (2020-2025), 12 December 2025, [url](#), pp. 4-5

- [147](#)

Dissidentby and Human Constanta, From streets to screens: digital repression in Belarus (2020-2025), 12 December 2025, [url](#), p. 4

- [148](#)

Human Constanta, Online interview with EUAA, 25 February 2026

- [149](#)

Human Constanta, Online interview with EUAA, 25 February 2026

- [150](#)

Dissidentby and Human Constanta, From streets to screens: digital repression in Belarus (2020-2025), 12 December 2025, [url](#), p. 4