



## 2.2.3. Criminal and administrative prosecution

### ○ **Prosecution for dissemination of extremist content**

In 2024, there was a significant increase in administrative charges for the ‘dissemination of extremist materials,’ with thousands of people fined or sentenced to up to 15 days in detention for subscribing to, liking, or sharing content classified as extremist, including content promoting the Belarusian language or ‘sharing a post about broken traffic lights.’[242](#) In May 2024, the first criminal case was opened under article 361-4 for sharing information in messaging apps, an act previously subject only to administrative prosecution.[243](#)

In many cases, reposting or sharing of online content was made prior to the designation of the website or social media channel as extremist.[244](#)

### ○ **Prosecution of financial contributions and donations**

Using the legal system, the authorities have criminalised acts of solidarity with human rights initiatives, using financial support and civic engagement as political disloyalty and evidence of involvement in extremist activity.[245](#) Authorities have prosecuted individuals for financing terrorism[246](#) and extremism for donations to civil resistance funds and organisations providing aid to political prisoners – as well as to civic initiatives, humanitarian projects, and media outlets[247](#)– after organisations were classified as extremist.[248](#)

Prosecution often involves the retroactive application of the law, where transfers made before an organisation was classified as extremist result in criminal charges.

Punishments are often disproportional. For instance, an attempted donation of approximately 16 US dollars to Kastuś Kalinoŭski Regiment, a Belarusian volunteer formation within the Ukrainian armed forces, resulted in three-year prison sentence for ‘attempting to facilitate extremist activity.’[249](#)

According to a human rights specialist interviewed by EUAA, the authorities can easily trace donations made through domestic banking channels. For this reason, people generally avoid using these channels, relying instead on external payment systems or cryptocurrencies, where traceability is much more limited.[250](#)

Law enforcement officers force individuals to pay bribes to avoid prosecution.[251](#) Individuals identified as having made financial transfers to an extremist entity are reportedly summoned by the KGB and are pressured to admit guilt and ‘compensate the damage’ to avoid prosecution. This payment is typically set at ten times the original donation. However, those who pay this compensation can still be subsequently detained and convicted for the same donation.[252](#)

## ○ **Prosecution of individuals supporting Ukraine**

Following the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Belarusian authorities have used anti-extremist legislation to prosecute individuals for anti-war speech activism and speech.[253](#) The suppression of anti-war opinions has become ‘one of the most widespread directions of criminal prosecution.’[254](#) Concurrently, Belarusian courts adopted Russian state propaganda narratives, integrating phrases such as ‘special military operation,’ ‘denazification’, and ‘protection of civilian population’ into court judgements.[255](#)

The authorities perceive anti-war statements as ‘discrediting the state’ or ‘inciting hostility’[256](#) and punish both expression of support for Ukraine[257](#) and donations to organisations supporting Ukraine, which are classified as financing of extremism,[258](#) including donations to the Kastuś Kalinoŭski Regiment.[259](#)

According to Viasna, as of February 2026, at least 403 individuals, including Belarusian and foreign citizens, have been convicted for expressing support to Ukraine. This includes 213 individuals convicted for ‘facilitating extremist activities’, including through sharing of photos and videos about Russian military equipment movement, 41 for treason, and 34 for an ‘act of terrorism’ (Article 289 of the Criminal Code), including cases of sabotage, such as on the railway and the Mačulišchy airfield.[260](#)

In addition, as of February 2026, over 200 political prisoners were held in detention for expressing solidarity with Ukraine, comprising those who had fought or intended to fight on the side of Ukraine, persons who carried out sabotage on the railway to prevent military equipment movement, persons who made donations or spoke publicly against the war, and persons who shared information about military equipment movement.[261](#)

Since summer 2025, the authorities have increasingly used so-called 'charitable contributions',[262](#) offering individuals who have made donations in support of Ukraine the opportunity to avoid criminal prosecution by making payments to state-designated organisations. The practice is formalised through the Prosecutor's decision to decline initiating criminal proceedings 'upon voluntary disclosure of the offense and compensation of damages.'[263](#) Payments are requested before trial or during detention, 'in exchange for a lighter sentence or dropped charges' and release.[264](#) While the payments and an expression of repentance are considered mitigating circumstances at trial, they reportedly not always result in lighter sentences, such as home confinement. In some cases, there have been reports of individuals making such payments and, nevertheless, being convicted.[265](#)

## ○ Prosecutions related to Belaruski Hajun case

The *Belaruski Hajun* project, a Telegram-based initiative, was established to collect open-source data[266](#) regarding the movement of Russian troops[267](#) and military equipment,[268](#) including railway transportation and aircraft flights.[269](#) The project had reportedly around 345 000 subscribers and the collected information was accessible to the public, journalists, and analysts.[270](#) In early February 2025, security forces gained access to the project's chat and part of its users' personal data,[271](#) leading to detentions of individuals who had shared photos and videos under charges of 'aiding extremism'[272](#) and forcing the project to terminate its activities.[273](#)

Detentions related to the *Belaruski Hajun* case continued throughout 2025 and into 2026, serving as a primary tool for the punishment of anti-war positions and support for Ukraine.[274](#) According to a human rights specialist, individuals who sent information to the project became targets of searches and prosecution: in such cases, even a single message sent via the channel is reportedly sufficient to attract the attention of the authorities.[275](#) As noted by Viasna, these cases indicate the growing pattern of 'digital repression', with criminal proceedings grounded on digital evidence, such as messages and data retrieved from Telegram.[276](#)

As of February 2026, at least 183 individuals were reportedly detained or convicted in connection with the *Belaruski Hajun* case. Detentions and trials remained ongoing as of February 2026 and were held almost weekly,<sup>[277](#)</sup> with defendants prosecuted for ‘assistance to extremist activities’ (Article 361-4 of the Criminal Code), carrying a maximum penalty of up to five years’ imprisonment.<sup>[278](#)</sup> Also in these cases, the authorities reportedly offered detainees to make ‘voluntary donations’ to public institutions in exchange for the termination of criminal proceedings.<sup>[279](#)</sup>

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