



3.1.1. Operational methods and surveillance

Human rights organisations noted that security officers employ ‘proactive methods’ and digital tools, to identify critics of the government.[298](#) This include the use of anonymous video chats (chat-roulette), where conversations are deliberately steered toward politically sensitive topics, such as government actions or the war in Ukraine, in order to provoke critical statements. These conversations are recorded, and participants are identified through Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT), which can lead to criminal proceedings. At least 12 such cases were documented as of December 2025.[299](#)

The authorities carry out extensive monitoring of online activity. Individuals trying to remain anonymous online can be identified through phone numbers linked to their accounts, IP addresses, and cooperation between law enforcement agencies and telecommunications providers.[300](#) Security services also monitor foreign online communities actively used by Belarusians, such as social media accounts run by Ukrainian bloggers.[301](#)

During home searches, law enforcement officers demand access to personal electronic devices, sometimes using violence or threats to force people to unlock them. It was also reported that they were able to extract previously erased information, such as photos of conversations.[302](#) In addition, security agencies reportedly accessed detainees’ phones to generate grounds for prosecution, including by initiating interactions with civil initiative chatbots or by subscribing users to Telegram channels linked to alleged extremist activities. Another tactic noted by human rights organisations involves the creation of fake chatbots that replicate legitimate channels in order to collect user data for the purpose of subsequent detentions.[303](#)

During the 2020 protests, authorities collected photographic evidence and used mobile phone location data to track individuals. Such data is used as evidence in criminal proceedings.[304](#) Since 2020, the authorities have employed software to analyse video footage, including through facial and license plate recognition, which they used to identify persons involved in the 2020 protests.[305](#) As of March 2025, according to the Ministry of Interior, there were 60 000 cameras equipped with facial recognition and vehicle number plate recognition functions nationwide.[306](#)

In 2024, digital surveillance capabilities of law enforcement expanded through a presidential decree requiring transport carriers, such as taxis and minibuses, to remotely share passenger data with the authorities and install in-vehicle cameras. The same year, the Investigative Committee was granted authority to access remotely information systems with personal data.[307](#)

The authorities have significantly intensified pressure on Belarusians living in exile, perceiving the diaspora as a primary source of dissent. In 2025, President Lukashenka explicitly threatened Belarusians abroad by stating that security services hold ‘complete files’ on activists and warning that their relatives in Belarus could face retaliatory measures.[308](#)

The security services reportedly monitor Belarusian citizens abroad,[309](#) including by hacking their email and social media accounts and threatening them online.[310](#) At demonstrations abroad, presence of individuals suspected of monitoring participants, photographing attendees, or gathering information is often reported.[311](#) According to a human rights specialist interviewed by EUAA, Belarusian special services attempt to infiltrate civil society groups in neighbouring countries, including by joining online meetings and collecting information and photographs from events abroad, although the full extent of such surveillance is difficult to determine.[312](#) In addition, human rights organisations have noted an increase in security services’ attempts to recruit Belarusians abroad.[313](#)

- [298](#)

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