



3.3. Treatment of political prisoners in detention

Sources noted on inhumane conditions of detention',[396](#) ill-treatment,[397](#) torture, and inhumane or degrading treatment in detention.[398](#) The UN Group of Independent Experts concluded that Belarus continues to systematically violate the country's international obligations – Article 10 of ICCPR and UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment Prisoners – in relation to detainees held in various types of detention facilities across the country, such as prisons, penal colonies, pretrial detention facilities and temporary detention centres.[399](#) General reported conditions included lack of proper hygiene and healthcare,[400](#) overcrowding,[401](#) inadequate provision of food and clothing, and forced labour regardless of detainees' health condition.[402](#)

In the aftermath of the 2020 protests, law enforcement and security force officers reportedly used excessive physical force against protesters and ill-treatment and torture against individuals detained during the protests. Allegations of sexual violence have also been reported. According to the UN Group of Independent Experts, injuries sustained by the protesters 'were usually not recorded by law enforcement officials, judicial authorities or medical personnel within detention facilities.'[403](#)

Individuals arrested on politically motivated charges have reportedly faced ill-treatment and torture at all stages of detention, including at the time of their arrest and during transportation, interrogation, and detention[404](#) as well as at the stage of the investigation of politically motivated criminal cases.[405](#) Individuals included in the lists of persons involved in extremist or terrorist activities face intentional ill-treatment[406](#) and 'particularly tough prison conditions.'[407](#)

Sources noted that persons imprisoned on politically motivated charges have been subjected to harsher conditions of detention compared to other prisoners[408](#) and various restrictions, including on access to religious services, exercise facilities, and prison library.[409](#) They are reportedly also identifiable in prisons by yellow badges on their prison uniforms.[410](#) Political prisoners face prolonged isolation,[411](#) including *incommunicado* detention[412](#) and detention in solitary punishment cells.[413](#)

Many political prisoners have faced 'disciplinary deprivation of privileges, including care packages containing medicines,'[414](#) contact with family members and legal counsel,[415](#) and money transfers.[416](#) Furthermore, correspondence by political prisoners is subject to arbitrary restrictions[417](#) and 'their ability to receive parcels and correspondence was limited to close relatives only'.[418](#)

The authorities use 'harsh disciplinary measures' to punish political prisoners 'for minor or fabricated transgressions.'⁴¹⁹ Particularly, Article 411 of the Criminal Code, which establishes criminal liability for 'malicious disobedience' to the penitentiary administration⁴²⁰ has been used to impose additional prison sentences, enabling repeated conviction and extension of detention.⁴²¹ In addition, political prisoners are 'systematically denied eligibility for early release on parole.'⁴²²

Political prisoners are continuously prevented from receiving timely and adequate medical care.⁴²³ As of January 2026, more than 170 political prisoners were reportedly 'in a particularly vulnerable situation.'⁴²⁴ Since 2020, nine political prisoners reportedly died in detention,⁴²⁵ including four in 2024⁴²⁶ and two in 2025.⁴²⁷ At least eight of nine reported deaths in custody 'resulted from a failure to protect life in detention'. All eight were serving prison sentences in relation with the 2020 protests and some of them 'had serious pre-existing mental and physical health conditions that were known to the authorities.'⁴²⁸

The UN Group of Independent Experts recorded 'several cases in which penitentiary officers, members of the Special Purpose Police Detachment or representatives of the Office of the Prosecutor General pressured detainees on politically motivated grounds' to request pardons.⁴²⁹ In several instances, those who refused to sign such request 'were subjected to severe psychological violence', including being 'transferred to punitive isolation cells.'⁴³⁰

- ³⁹⁶

UN Human Rights Council, Report of Human Rights in Belarus, 22 April 2025, [url](#), para. 19; UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Belarus, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 6 February 2026, [url](#), para. 26

- ³⁹⁷

Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, Belarus, 14 November 2025, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Report of Human Rights in Belarus, 22 April 2025, [url](#), para. 3

- ³⁹⁸

AI, Belarus 2024, 28 April 2025, [url](#); Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, Belarus, 14 November 2025, [url](#)

- ³⁹⁹

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Belarus, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 6 February 2026, [url](#), para. 26

- ⁴⁰⁰

UN Human Rights Council, Report of Human Rights in Belarus, 22 April 2025, [url](#), para. 19; UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Belarus, Report of the Group of

Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 6 February 2026, [url](#), para. 26

- [401](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Belarus, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 6 February 2026, [url](#), para. 26

- [402](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Report of Human Rights in Belarus, 22 April 2025, [url](#), para. 19

- [403](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Belarus, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 6 February 2026, [url](#), para. 36

- [404](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 7 February 2025, [url](#), para. 42

- [405](#)

Viasna, Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026, 3 March 2026, [url](#)

- [406](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Report of Human Rights in Belarus, 22 April 2025, [url](#), para. 73

- [407](#)

AP, A political prisoner dies in Belarusian prison, human rights activists say, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

- [408](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 7 February 2025, [url](#), para. 42; Viasna, Human rights situation in Belarus in 2025, 13 January 2026, [url](#)

- [409](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Belarus, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 6 February 2026, [url](#), para. 28

- [410](#)

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

- [411](#)

HRW, Belarus – Events of 2025, 4 February 2026, [url](#)

- [412](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Report of Human Rights in Belarus, 22 April 2025, [url](#), para. 19;
HRW, Belarus Releases Opposition Politician, 13 Other Political Prisoners, 23 June 2025, [url](#)

- [413](#)

AI, Belarus 2024, 28 April 2025, [url](#); HRW, Belarus – Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, [url](#);
Viasna, Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026, 3 March 2026, [url](#)

- [414](#)

Viasna, Human rights situation in Belarus in 2025, 13 January 2026, [url](#); Viasna, Human rights situation in Belarus. January 2026, 4 February 2026, [url](#)

- [415](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Belarus, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 6 February 2026, [url](#), para. 26; Viasna, Human rights situation in Belarus in 2025, 13 January 2026, [url](#)

- [416](#)

Viasna, Human rights situation in Belarus. January 2026, 4 February 2026, [url](#)

- [417](#)

Viasna, Human rights situation in Belarus in 2025, 13 January 2026, [url](#)

- [418](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Belarus, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 6 February 2026, [url](#), para. 28

- [419](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Report of Human Rights in Belarus, 22 April 2025, [url](#), para. 19

- [420](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Report of Human Rights in Belarus, 22 April 2025, [url](#), para. 3;
UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Belarus, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 6 February 2026, [url](#), para. 32

- [421](#)

HRW, Belarus – Events of 2025, 4 February 2026, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Belarus, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 6 February 2026, [url](#), para. 33; Human rights specialist, Interview with EUAA, 20 March 2026

- [422](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Belarus, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 6 February 2026, [url](#), para. 28

- [423](#)

HRW, Belarus – Events of 2024, 16 January; Viasna, Human rights situation in Belarus. January 2026, 4 February 2026, [url](#); Viasna, Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026, 3 March 2026, [url](#)

- [424](#)

Viasna, Human rights situation in Belarus. January 2026, 4 February 2026, [url](#)

- [425](#)

Viasna, Human rights situation in Belarus in 2025, 13 January 2026, [url](#)

- [426](#)

Viasna, Как беларусы умирают из-за политического преследования [How Belarusians are dying due to political persecution], 9 September 2025, [url](#)

- [427](#)

HRW, Belarus – Events of 2025, 4 February 2026, [url](#); Viasna, Human rights situation in Belarus in 2025, 13 January 2026, [url](#)

- [428](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Belarus, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 6 February 2026, [url](#), para. 38

- [429](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Belarus, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 6 February 2026, [url](#), para. 63

- [430](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Belarus, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 6 February 2026, [url](#), para. 64

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu