



4.4.2. Lawyers

Bar associations in Belarus lack independence⁵³⁴ and are fully controlled by the authorities.⁵³⁵ The legal profession is 'under severe threat', as the authorities exert pressure on independent lawyers,⁵³⁶ bar their access to the profession, and subject them to politically motivated administrative and criminal prosecution⁵³⁷ and detention, creating a situation in which lawyers become political prisoners themselves.⁵³⁸

Between 2020 and May 2024, at least 140 lawyers were disbarred by regional bar associations or had their licenses arbitrarily revoked by the Ministry of Justice. While the Ministry of Justice formally justifies such revocations as based on decisions of its Qualification Commission – citing regulatory violations or insufficient qualifications – the affected lawyers had, on average, more than 13.5 years of professional experience. Many had practiced for over two decades and some had previously been 'recognised by bar associations for their excellence.'⁵³⁹

Retaliatory practices have particularly affected lawyers defending 'prominent opposition figures and anti-government activists,' contributing to a steady decline in the number of legal professionals in Belarus.⁵⁴⁰ As representing clients in politically sensitive cases has become increasingly dangerous, lawyers are difficult to find for such cases,⁵⁴¹ which has severely undermined the rights to a fair trial, due process, and legal remedy.⁵⁴² Human Constanta further noted that 'if a lawyer is too active, the Ministry of Justice would conduct checks about them.'⁵⁴³

As of January 2025, at least nine lawyers were criminally convicted for their professional or human rights activities.⁵⁴⁴ As of end of 2025, six lawyers were serving prison sentences ranging from six to ten years on politically motivated charges,⁵⁴⁵ including for 'providing legal aid to political opposition figures and activists' and giving interviews to independent media designated as extremist formations.⁵⁴⁶ In November 2025, a lawyer, who lost her licence for representing protesters in 2020, was sentenced to house arrest on the charges of 'inciting hatred.'⁵⁴⁷

In detention, lawyers face retaliatory ill-treatment comparable to that imposed on other political prisoners.⁵⁴⁸

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UN Human Rights Council, Report of Human Rights in Belarus, 22 April 2025, [url](#), para. 68

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Human Constanta, Online interview with EUAA, 25 February 2026

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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. 23

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HRW, “I Swear to Fulfill the Duties of Defense Lawyer Honestly and Faithfully.” Politically Motivated Crackdown on Human Rights Lawyers in Belarus, 27 May 2024, [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. 23

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HRW, “I Swear to Fulfill the Duties of Defense Lawyer Honestly and Faithfully.” Politically Motivated Crackdown on Human Rights Lawyers in Belarus, 27 May 2024, [url](#)

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HRW, “I Swear to Fulfill the Duties of Defense Lawyer Honestly and Faithfully.” Politically Motivated Crackdown on Human Rights Lawyers in Belarus, 27 May 2024, [url](#)

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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. 23

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Human Constanta, Online interview with EUAA, 25 February 2026

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HRW, “I Swear to Fulfill the Duties of Defense Lawyer Honestly and Faithfully.” Politically Motivated Crackdown on Human Rights Lawyers in Belarus, 27 May 2024, [url](#)

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Human Constanta, Online interview with EUAA, 25 February 2026

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UN Human Rights Council, Report of Human Rights in Belarus, 22 April 2025, [url](#), para. 39

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

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HRW, “I Swear to Fulfill the Duties of Defense Lawyer Honestly and Faithfully.” Politically Motivated Crackdown on Human Rights Lawyers in Belarus, 27 May 2024, [url](#)

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

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HRW, “I Swear to Fulfill the Duties of Defense Lawyer Honestly and Faithfully.” Politically Motivated Crackdown on Human Rights Lawyers in Belarus, 27 May 2024, [url](#)