

# Opposition Groups Call Not to Vote – Parliamentary Elections Digest

As early voting continues police targets both opposition groups which actively take part in elections and those who call to boycott the elections. A number of opposition parties withdraw their candidates and urge not to participate in elections.

[Opposition groups call not to vote.](#) Several major opposition political groups called on people not to vote in parliamentary elections. They include the United Civic Party, Belarusian Popular Front, Young Front, Belarusian Christian Democrats and Independent Trade Union of the Radioelectronic Industry. They stated as a [reason](#) for their decision the presence of political prisoners in Belarus, a lack of legislative framework for fair elections, an absence of control over vote counting and persistent repression against opposition groups.

[Two opposition parties withdraw their candidates.](#) The Belarusian Popular Front (BPF) and the United Civic Party (UCP) decided to withdraw their parliamentary candidates (31 and 38 representatives respectively), explaining that the election process was not transparent and democratic, and authorities were ignoring their demands to release political prisoners.

[Early voting begins in House of Representatives elections.](#) Polling stations opened in Belarus on September 18 for early voting in the elections for the House of Representatives. The main voting day in the elections is September 23.

[Police seize printed material from office of «Tell the Truth!»](#)

**movement.** Police seized a large amount of printed material from the office of the "Tell the Truth!" movement in Minsk on September 6. The officers raided the office, located in an apartment building, when many members of the opposition movement were staying there to watch a television address by a parliamentary candidate.

**Minsk court convicts Zmena activists.** Minsk Frunzenski District Court has considered the administrative charges brought against activists of the Zmena movement (youth wing of the Tell the Truth campaign), who were brutally detained during an election picket on September 18. Hanna Kurlovich was sentenced to a fine of 2 million rubles; Yahor Viniatski to 7 days of arrest; Aliaksandr Artsybashau to 10 days of arrest; Pavel Vinahradau to 12 days of arrest.

**Police break up demonstration for election boycott in Minsk.** Police in civilian clothes broke up a demonstration for an election boycott in Minsk on September 18, violently grabbing opposition activists and journalists who were covering the event.

**Election contest of #electby.** Resource of the people election monitoring #electby jointly with the project "Election Observation: Theory and Practice" announce a contest for the best photos and videos for the parliamentary elections in Belarus. Among the nominations there are best photo, dedicated to the campaign; best video of/about the candidate. The competition prizes – camera, smartphone, e-book – will go those who will collect the largest number of "likes" in social media and at the website [electby.org](http://electby.org).

Analytics

**Report of Early Voting Observation Results.** 200 short-term and 95 long-term observers of the "Human Rights Defenders for Free Elections" campaign carry out everyday monitoring of the early voting at 150 polling stations all over Belarus. They note the number of early voters, evidence of compulsion to vote early

and obstacles created for observers to count the number of early voters. The recent diagrams reflects information from over 120 polling stations, the reports from which were processed as of September 19, 10 p.m.

[Typical young candidate.](#) Alternative Youth Platform has examined all the young people registered as candidates to the parliamentary elections, and compiled a portrait of a typical candidate. There are 38 candidates at the age of 18 to 31 years. A typical candidate is a resident of Minsk. 89 percent of them are male. Most of them do not belong to any party, the second and the third largest group are representatives of the Liberal Democratic Party and Belarusian Popular Front.

[EU Poised to Extend Sanctions Against Belarus After Elections](#) (for subscribers only) – The European Voice reports that the EU will be watching parliamentary elections in Belarus on Sunday (23 September) with a sense of uncertainty about how to adjust its policy towards its eastern neighbour after another year of clashes with the regime of Aleksandr Lukashenka. The EV also gives reference to the think-tanks Carnegie Europe, IISEPS and BISS quoting their vision of the current situation, as well as, mentions the Brussels-based ODB burglary.

[The Belarusian Opposition on the Eve of the Election Day](#) – the Analytical Belarusian Centre presents an analytical overview which is described the Belarusian opposition on the eve of the election day. The issue is dedicated to the existing situation among opposition parties on the eve of the main polling day. The experts predict the results of the parliamentary elections and possible alliances among the opposition.

[Elections from Belarus: a view from Poland.](#) The monthly bulletin of the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) is dedicated to Belarus, specifically to pre-election situation and named "Election without choices". The experts

note that the campaign running up to the parliamentary elections highlighted the lack of dialogue between the authorities and society. It also underlined the problems of the Belarusian opposition, i.e., the internal divisions and the lack of resources required to conduct political agitation.

*Belarus Digest prepared this overview on the basis of materials provided by Pact. This digest attempts to give a richer picture of the recent political and civil society events in Belarus. It often goes beyond the hot stories already available in English-language media.*