

The War of Blacklists – Belarus Politics Digest

Yesterday a former Belarusian presidential candidate Ales Mikhalevich found himself on an INTERPOL blacklist. The Polish authorities had briefly detained him in the Warsaw airport before they found out that he was put on the list by Belarusian authorities who had targeted him for his political activities in Belarus. Mikhalevich was released after the intervention of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As this digest of recent developments show, Belarusian authorities and the European Union use their respective blacklists to restrict "undesired" individuals. Although Belarusian authorities usually make it easy to exit Belarus, they want to keep certain foreign journalists, NGO activists and politicians out of the country. Inside Belarus, they blacklist undesirable rock groups to prevent them from performing in public and restrict activities of Western NGOs and local opposition activists. The West, on the other hand, [imposes](#) travel bans and asset freezes against those whom they see as playing an active role in human rights violations in Belarus.

"Blacklisted" Belarusian Reporter could Enter Lithuania. The correspondent of the Belarusian state TV channel ONT [Aleksei Mikhalchenko](#), targeted by the EU visa sanctions, was able to freely [enter](#) the territory of Lithuania to take part in the coverage of the meeting of the OSCE foreign ministers in Vilnius. As reported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, the journalist received the Lithuanian national visa as an exception.

Members of the Norwegian and Danish PEN Centers were not allowed in Belarus. On the night of December 05, in Minsk-2

airport representatives of Norwegian Danish PEN Centers were [denied](#) visas. Guests were expected to meet with representatives of the Belarusian Association of Journalists, the Belarusian PEN Centre, the Union of Belarusian Writers, local authors and publishers.

“Black list” of musicians works. On November 22, musician [Zmitser Vaitsyushkevich](#)’s concert [was canceled](#) a few hours before beginning. The concert was to be held in the café *Mistral* in Minsk. The similar incident occurred with [Lyavon Volski](#) in Brest.

Belarusian authorities close Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus [confirmed](#) the closure of the Belarusian branch of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung . “We made □□this decision due to the fact that the Foundation does not fully meet the criteria of constructive engagement with Belarusian authorities”, – said Foreign Ministry spokesman Andrei Savinykh. The Belarusian representative office had worked in Minsk since 1997.

National Bolsheviks Detained in Minsk. On December 06, in Minsk, two activists of the National Bolshevik Party – Eugeni Kontush and Vladislav Lobov, were detained. Yauhen Kontush is [charged](#) with “disorderly conduct” for alleged spilling a bucket of noodles and scattering leaflets at the entrance of the Belarusian TV and Radio Company on 3 December.

Tatiana Gatsura fined for performance against the death penalty. On December 09, the day of her birth, a human rights activist Tatyana Gatsura was [punished](#) by a fine equivalent to approximately \$80 for participation in an unsanctioned action. On December 6, the mother of many children, Tatiana Gatsura, with her two sons came out into the street with a placard "Mr President, I have four children, who is guaranteeing their right to life?"

Tax officers are interested in the Liabedzkas' income. As the leader of the United Civil Party Anatol Liabedzka informed the public, his wife and son have [received](#) a notification that they should submit tax declarations.

Preventive steps before the coming anniversary of 19 December events. The prosecutor's office of Leninski district of Minsk has issued an official warning to the ex-presidential candidate [Uladzimir Niakliayeu](#). The politician could be sent into prison, in the event that he intends to continue to violate the rules of conduct set for him, the same rules set for a convicted person. On December 06, [Nasta Palazhanka](#), the "Young Front" deputy head, was asked by police if her place of residence changed.

Pickets banned. On December 10, International Human Rights Day, human rights activists applied for holding pickets in several cities in Belarus. The pickets were banned in [Brest](#), [Borisov](#), [Vitebsk](#), [Molodechno](#), [Gomel](#).

"11+3" List. Now in prison there are not less than ELEVEN political prisoners: ex-presidential candidates Andrey Sannikov, Nikolay Statkevich; leader of the campaign "European Belarus" Dmitry Bondarenko; Pavel Seviarynets; Head of the Human Rights Centre "Viasna" Ales Byalyatsky; youth leaders Zmitser Dashkevich and Eduard Lobov; entrepreneur Mikalai Autukhovich. Anarchists Igor Olinevich, [Mikalai Dziadok](#) and Alexander Frantskevich are [recognized](#) as political prisoners of the Belarusian regime by human rights defenders at *Viasna* and *BHC*. Three more anarchists from Bobrujsk – Yauhen Vaskovich, Pavel Syramalotau and Artiom Prakapenka – are currently under [discussion](#).

Foreign Ministry Receives Recommendations of UN Committee Against Torture. The Belarusian foreign ministry has [received](#) the recommendations of the UN Committee Against Torture, the ministry's spokesman, Andrey Savinykh, said at a briefing on December 8. In its concluding observations

released following the November 11 and 14 meetings of the Committee Against Torture, which saw representatives of the Belarusian government and of rights organizations [deliver](#) diametrically opposed reports on the situation in Belarus, the Committee called on the Belarusian government to promptly investigate all reports of torture and ill-treatment of detainees.

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.