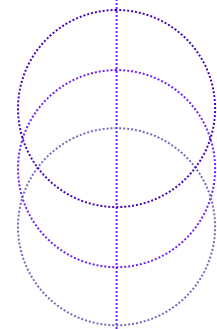


HUMAN RIGHTS IN BELARUS

Key Trends of Public Policy 2025





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Key Trends in 2025: Summary

- The state continues to deliberately reshape the legal system to sustain repression, including through revisions of core policy documents that define the foundations of state policy.
- A further turn toward totalitarianism, including an “Iron Curtain”: the legal basis for total control and arbitrary interference in private life has expanded
- Formal grounds for discrimination against those deemed disloyal are expanding, not only stripping them of civil rights but also preventing full participation in economic and social life.
- Access to public sources of information on criminal and administrative persecution has been eliminated, making it impossible to reliably track trends using quantitative data.
- Relatively large-scale releases of detainees as part of negotiations with the US **do NOT indicate any change**—or intention to change—**the repressive policy** or the authorities’ attitude toward the “other side.”

LEGALISATION OF REPRESSION

“IRON CURTAIN”

TOTALITARIANISM

ANTIWESTERNISM

Tightening Control

→ Tighter control over movement across the western border: the scope of individuals whose personal data is collected and shared with the state (Ministry of transport) has been expanded. This now includes **road transport**, in addition to air and rail.

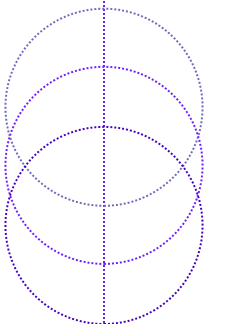
→ Increased control over foreigners: a wider range of foreign nationals is now subject to **mandatory fingerprinting** + border guards' powers have been expanded in this respect.

→ Tighter control over Belarusians with foreign ties: **mandatory fingerprinting** now applies to Belarusians holding foreign citizenship or temporary/permanent residence permits known to the state.

→ Expansion of direct interference in private life: the draft law introduces administrative liability for so-called “propaganda of homosexual relations, gender transition, childlessness, and pedophilia.”

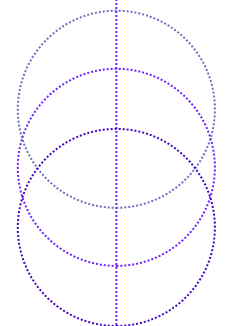
→ State monopoly in education, culture, and sports:

- *de facto monopoly over international representation in sports, arts, and education competitions*
- *ban on online education in foreign schools for children residing in Belarus*
- *restrictions on self-employed educators, enabling ideological control*



Powers of Security Forces ↗

- Expanded powers of security forces **to restrict communications extrajudicially**: they can now block internet resources of legal entities, cellular services, and internet services for both legal and natural persons, if it is found that there is 'information on a detected legal violation, including its causes and contributing circumstances'
- Round-the-clock legislative **access** for investigative authorities to the automated system for recording and storing data on the movement of registered **postal items**.
- **Widened scope of organizations subject to personal searches**, inspections of belongings and documents, and vehicle checks: now includes entities that regularly host discos, nightclubs with security units, shopping centers, and cultural infrastructure facilities.



Functions of the Armed Forces ↗

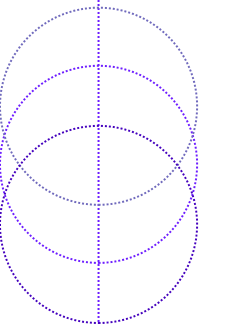
*Legislation on the armed forces has been **aligned with the new 2024 Military Doctrine**. The formal grounds for arbitrary interpretation have been expanded, including creation of broad leeway for deploying the military to suppress protests.*

→ Armed forces **in peacetime**: prevent internal armed conflict; if it occurs, participate in its resolution

→ Definition of internal armed conflict in 2024 Military Doctrine does not align with International humanitarian law

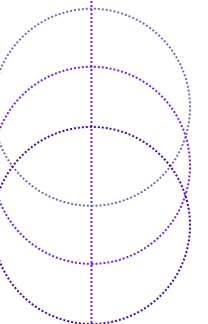
→ Expanded grounds for martial law:

- mass conscription evasion
- sharp decline in military staffing
- uncontrolled emigration reducing military capacity
- armed confrontations between societal groups based on ideology, politics, race, nationality, religion, language, or other social factors



Economic and Social Rights ↘

- Arbitrary increase in the required work experience to qualify for unemployment benefits: now set at 5 years.
 - Restrictions for prisoners who are pensioners: administration of pensions transferred from the Social Protection Fund to correctional institutions.
 - Additional restrictions on employers and violations of migrants' rights - shifting state responsibilities onto employers
 - Unjustified restrictions on self-employed workers in education: including tutors, hobby clubs, and studios.
 - Further tightening measures against the so-called “socially inactive” (“parasites”): full payment of utilities in their property - “collective liability” of relatives, and “punitive measures” for Belarusians in exile.
- +
- Law enforcement practice: involvement of security forces and administrative penalties.

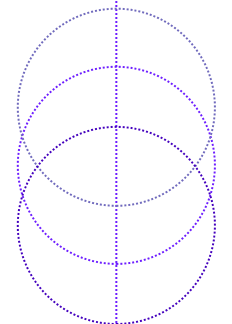


Access to the Profession

*Formal grounds for discrimination against those deemed disloyal are expanding. People are not only stripped of their civil rights but are also **prevented from fully participating in economic and social life**: hiring rules, professional certification, and codes of ethics are being changed to restrict access.*

- Realtors
- Auditors
- Crisis managers
- Tour guides and interpreter-guides (third time)
- Bank employees (“key officials and specialists”)

- 2023: Tour guides, interpreter-guides
- 2024: Tour guides, interpreter-guides, notaries, education professionals

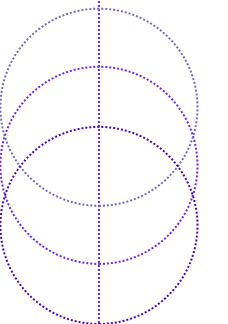


Pressure via Social Protection Measures – “Socially Vulnerable Situation”

New Decree enshrines “political grounds.”

→ The number of administrative offenses that can trigger (when parents are held accountable) placing a family in a socially vulnerable situation (SOP) has doubled, from 6 to 12.

→ Among the expanded set of offenses, four are being used for politically motivated persecution: Articles 19.4, 19.10, 19.11, and 19.8 of the Code of Administrative Offenses.



Releases through Negotiations with the U.S.

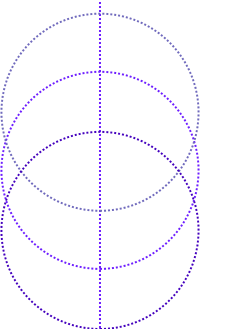
→ Several waves of relatively large-scale releases as part of a deal in exchange for “concessions” for the de facto authorities.

→ Forced Expulsion from the country under unclear status (including without passports) + December 2025: **expulsion to a war zone** (Ukraine) – an additional vulnerability, deliberately created threat to life and health of people in vulnerable condition.

→ Authorities continue to pressure relatives of those expelled. Exploiting their uncertain status, in some cases they claim the individuals “escaped.”

- *highlights the regime’s particular cynicism*
- *underscores the nature of the agreements and U.S. involvement.*

→ **Do NOT signal any change on the policy level**, or intent to change in repressive policies and the authorities’ stance toward the “other side.”



Changes in Repressive Policy?

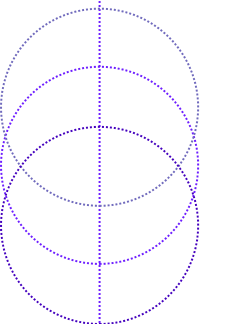
→ A stable and systemic foundation for repression on a massive scale:

- far beyond direct, better-known forms of persecution,
- latent repression formalized in legislation,
- affecting all areas of society, beyond opponents,
- with big cross-border impact (transnational repression).

→ Since 2025 no official sources of information remain on criminal or administrative persecution (public access to electronic court schedules has been terminated) → Official repression figures appear lower, giving a false impression of easing → Year-on-year comparisons no longer provide valid insights into repression trends

→ Releasing political prisoners ≠ easing repression and the overall repressive climate; Official political prisoner numbers alone do not reflect repression trends.

→ Quantitative v. qualitative indicators

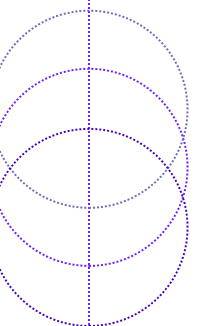


Repressions' Benchmarks

Key Measures and Indicators for Monitoring Changes in the Situation with Political Repressions in Belarus – a document developed by the Human Rights Coalition.

- Outlines the full range of repressive measures that the state must end for the situation to change
 - political prisoners
 - repressive law enforcement practices **across different spheres**, applied **to political prisoners** in places of detention and after release + targeting **a broad range of individuals** perceived by the authorities as dissenters (administrative and criminal persecution, extremists and terrorists lists, border, workplaces, foreign RP)
 - repressive legislation

- Ranks them by priority
 - urgent measures
 - first-tier measures
 - second-tier measures



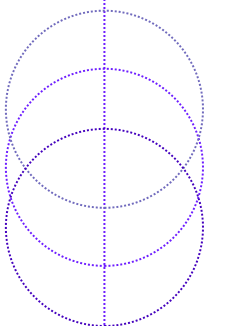
Repressions' Benchmarks

Key Measures and Indicators for Monitoring Changes in the Situation with Political Repressions in Belarus. What is the aim and the possibility of use?

- To show (to international partners and other relevant stakeholders) the full scope of repression, not just surface-level issues
- To advocate for the importance of addressing more than just political prisoners in Belarus discussion
- To use the document as a “menu” for step-by-step in (whatever) negotiations with the regime for setting concrete demands, priorities, and minimum/maximum expectations
- To track compliance with indicators; ensuring that the regime cannot “buy off” the process with empty promises.

↓

[ROADMAP OF RECIPROCAL STEPS FOR A LIMITED DE-ESCALATION BETWEEN BELARUS AND THE EU](#)
AN EXPERT VIEW



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