

Belarusian participation in the war in Ukraine: regime and people

“We went out for peace,
but ended up in prison”

Anti-war actions of citizens
and the reaction of the Belarusian
regime

Seventh Interim Report of the International
Committee for Investigation of Torture in Belarus
prepared in collaboration with the Monitoring group
“Belarusian Gayun”

THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMITTEE
FOR INVESTIGATION OF
TORTURE IN BELARUS

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MAIN CONCLUSIONS

"...evil and all this, how we were treated, it should not stay unpunished. Anyone who treats people like this should be punished."

From an interview with a participant in an anti-war rally

According to Article 3 of Resolution 3314 (XXIX) of the UN General Assembly of December 14, 1974, an act of aggression is (among other things) "The use of armed forces of one State which are within the territory of another State with the agreement of the receiving State, in contravention of the conditions provided for in the agreement or any extension of their presence in such territory beyond the termination of the agreement"¹.

The available data of the Monitoring Group "Belarusian Gayun"² allow us to state

1. https://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl_conv/conventions/aggression.shtml

2. https://t.me/Hajun_BY

that the Belarusian authorities (Lukashenko's regime) actively contributed to Russia's aggression against Ukraine by their actions (inaction). These actions fully comply with the criteria for an act of aggression described in Article 3 of Resolution 3314 (XXIX) of the UN General Assembly of December 14, 1974.

Despite the ongoing internal repressions in the country, the war launched by Russia against Ukraine caused more than just a wave of indignation among the Belarusians. Permanent Belarusian resistance has passed into a completely different phase - from peaceful protests against the war to active actions to prevent the movement of military equipment and weapons through the territory of Belarus, damage to equipment on railway lines.

The Belarusian authorities responded to this with unjustified use of force against peaceful demonstrators at anti-war rallies, torture of detainees of anti-war rallies in places of detention, severe repression of reactions to the war on social networks and the Internet, the use of military weapons against participants in the "rail war", armed guards on railway tracks and equipment.

On February 27, 2022, on the main voting day at the referendum on amendments to the Constitution, citizens began to be massively detained in different cities of Belarus. According to the Viasna Human Rights Center, 908 citizens³ across the country were detained that day. In just two days - February 27 and 28, 2022 - more than 1,100 people were detained in Belarus, while at least 630 people were subjected to administrative arrest.

According to the official telegram channel of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, about 800 people⁴ were detained at polling stations for various violations of public order throughout the country.

All those detained for protesting against the war in Ukraine were kept in inhuman conditions in special institutions (Isolation Centers for Offenders - TsIP, Temporary Detention Facilities - IVS). The conditions of detention in these institutions for "political" were much different from the conditions in which there were citizens detained on domestic offenses. "Political" were not given any mattresses with pillows, no bed linen with towels, no parcels were allowed. The administration of the institutions purposefully created overcrowding in the cells - 32 people in a four-bed cell. There were no separate sleeping places. People slept in pairs on bunk beds with metal rods, on tables, under beds, right on the concrete or wooden floor. Employees of

3. <https://spring96.org/ru/news/106932>

4. <https://t.me/pressmvd/4025>

special institutions took away warm clothes from the detainees, opening the windows in the cells so that people would freeze; most of the detainees were not fed before the trial from 1 to 5 days; did not provide personal hygiene products, including toilet paper and pads to women; they were tortured with sleep deprivation, holding roll calls at 2 and 4 in the morning, forcing people to get up and tell their names. In the IVS Zhodino, the detainees were beaten right in the cells. Despite the fact that in such conditions of detention many experienced health problems, medical assistance was not provided or was not provided in full measure.

Many detainees after serving administrative arrests had to restore their physical form and health for a long time. They noted that they lost weight during the arrests, they were sick for a long time, the psychological state was very difficult and depressed.

The social consequences of serving administrative arrests for citizens are very diverse. Many of them were fired or their contracts were not renewed. Two senior year students were expelled from universities. The family of one of the detainees was registered as a "dysfunctional family", their child is allegedly in a socially dangerous position. Some citizens had to leave the country because of the risk of repeated arrests and initiation of criminal cases.

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

"Yes, people were shouting slogans "NO TO WAR". There were Ukrainian flags. People tried to talk about the war with law enforcement officials. They explained to them that they would suffer from the war in the first place, they risked being involved there. And yes, it needs to be stopped."

From an interview with a participant in an anti-war rally

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began on February 24, 2022, at 3:40 a.m. Kyiv time. Russian troops entered the territory of Ukraine from Russia, Crimea and Belarus, and the troops of the so-called "Donetsk People's Republic (DPR)" and "Luhansk People's Republic (LPR)", recognized as independent by the Russian Federation on February 21, 2022, also joined the fighting.

Between 4:00 am on February 24, 2022 and midnight on May 30, 2022, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights recorded 9,029 civilian casualties in the country: 4,113 killed and 4,916 injured. Most of the reported deaths and injuries were caused by long-range explosive weapons, including

heavy artillery and multiple rocket launcher attacks, as well as rocket and air strikes. OHCHR believes that the actual figures are much higher, as information is received late from areas of intense fighting and many reports require confirmation⁵.

The invasion from the territory of Belarus was preceded by the Russian-Belarusian military exercises "Allied Resolve-2022", launched on February 10, 2022. According to the official version, the exercises were carried out «in order to work out the tasks of suppressing and repelling external aggression in the course of a defensive operation, as well as countering terrorism and protecting the interests of the Union State.» On January 27, 2022, Chief of the Belarusian General Staff Viktor Gulevich said that after the exercises, the Russian military would leave Belarus, there was no threat to neighbors and Europe as a whole⁶.

Despite this statement by the Belarusian official, the first rocket launch from the territory of Belarus was recorded as early as 06:20 on February 24.

The purpose of this report is to reflect the real situation in Belarus in connection with the Russian military invasion of Ukraine, the reaction of Belarusian citizens to the actions of the regime and the brutal persecution of them by security forces that followed the anti-war actions.

Based on international norms and standards, the experts of the International Committee for Investigation of Torture in Belarus (the Committee) qualify the actions of the Belarusian authorities as an act of aggression, analyze the official reaction of the regime and state media to the war in Ukraine and Belarus' participation in it. Based on information from open sources, social networks and data collected by the Committee, the document provides an overview of the facts of the persecution of Belarusian citizens for their anti-war position and analyzes the conditions of detention of those detained for anti-war actions.

The document analyzes data from surveys of 62 citizens who were serving administrative arrests for anti-war actions in connection with the aggression of Russia and Belarus against Ukraine.

Most of the detentions took place on February 27, 2022, on the day of the Republican Referendum on amendments to the Constitution of the Republic

5. <https://www.ohchr.org/ru/news/2022/05/ukraine-civilian-casualty-update-31-may-2022>

6. <https://www.interfax.ru/world/821202>

of Belarus, right at the polling stations and at the exit from them, in the evening - on Victory Square, and also on February 28 at the actions announced on the Internet - on the Station Square in Minsk, in the building of the railway station and the streets adjacent to it. On March 2, mass detentions of bloggers and administrators of microdistrict and profile telegram chats took place in Minsk. On March 3, in Minsk, in the area of the Cathedral, people were detained who were praying for peace in Ukraine. In February and March, people were detained who criticized the actions of the Russian and Belarusian regimes on social networks. Many were taken away from the workplace, some citizens were detained at the exit from the subway, and public transport stops. Detentions of citizens who previously took part in protest activity took place in many cities of Belarus⁷.

According to the citizens, after being detained, they were taken to the nearest militia departments of Minsk (Moskovsky, Leninsky, Tsentralny, Oktyabrsky, Zavodskoy districts), departments of internal affairs in Grodno and Dzerzhinsk. Neither at the time of detention, nor at the militia department, nor at the places where the arrest was served, they explained their rights to anyone.

Basically, citizens were charged under Art. 24.23 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Belarus (Violation of the procedure for organizing or holding mass events) and Art. 24.3 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Belarus (Disobedience to a lawful order or demand of an official in the exercise of his official powers).

The protocols contained the same type of records that a person participated in an unsanctioned rally, violated public order, expressed disagreement with the current government, and shouted anti-war slogans "No to war" and "Long live Ukraine". Many detainees did not agree with the contents of the protocols, as they were detained in the wrong place or at the wrong time. All the witnesses at the trials were security officials in a balaclava with the same type of fictitious surnames (Aleksandrovich Alexander Aleksandrovich, etc.), who gave false evidence, but this had no effect on the decisions of the courts. People received from 7 to 30 days of administrative arrest.

The main places of detention of administratively detained and administratively arrested citizens were the Temporary Detention Facility (IVS) on Akrestsina (Minsk), the Center for the Isolation of Offenders (TSiP) on Akrestsina (Minsk), the TDF in Zhodino, the TDF of the Internal Affairs Directorate of the Mogilev Regional Executive Committee.

7. <https://spring96.org/ru/news/106978>

THE BELARUSIAN REGIME AS AN ACCOMPLICE IN THE CRIME OF AGGRESSION

"How can you support war? War is scary! Libya, Syria, Afghanistan, Iran, Yugoslavia...People shouldn't fight. People should live peacefully."

From an interview with a participant in an anti-war rally

In accordance with Article 2 of the UN Charter, all Members of the United Nations shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations⁸.

According to Article 1 of the Definition of Aggression, approved by General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX) of December 14, 1974, aggression is the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another State, or in any other manner inconsistent

8. <https://www.un.org/ru/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

with the Charter of the United Nations⁹.

This document states that no considerations of any nature, whether political, economic, military or otherwise, can serve as a justification for aggression. Aggressive war is a crime against international peace. Aggression entails international responsibility.

In accordance with Article 3 of the above mentioned document, the action of a state allowing its territory, which it has placed at the disposal of another state, to be used by that other state to commit an act of aggression against a third state, regardless of the declaration of war, will be qualified as an act of aggression.

Since the beginning of the war against Ukraine by Russia, the monitoring group "Belarusian Gayun"¹⁰ has been monitoring the movements of the Russian Armed Forces (hereinafter referred to as the RF Armed Forces) on the territory of Belarus. The available data allow us to state that the ruling regime in Belarus (Lukashenko's regime) by its actions (inaction) actively contributed to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. These actions are fully consistent with the criteria for an act of aggression described in Article 3 of the above resolution of the UN General Assembly.

The following forms of use of the territory of Belarus by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation can be singled out.

1. MISSILE STRIKES

The first rocket launch from the territory of Belarus was recorded at 06:20 on February 24, 2022. According to available information, from February 24 to May 8, about 633 missiles were launched from the territory of Belarus¹¹.

The main locations for the firing positions of the RF Armed Forces are the administrative regions of the Gomel region bordering Ukraine (Mozyr¹²,

9. https://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl_conv/conventions/aggression.shtml

10. https://t.me/Hajun_BY

11. RUS. <https://motolko.help/ru-news/633-zapuska-s-nachala-voyny-analiz-raketnyh-zapuskov-s-territorii-belarusi-po-ukraine/>

ENG https://motolko.help/en-news/633-launches-since-the-beginning-of-the-war-analysis-of-missile-launches-from-the-territory-of-belarus-against-ukraine/?doing_wp_cron=1653925558.6525259017944335937500

12. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/2874

Kalinkovichi¹³ and Khoyniki¹⁴ regions). There are also recorded missile launches from the territory of the Svetlogorsk region¹⁵, the vicinity of the Zyabrovka airfield¹⁶ (Gomel region) and Luninets¹⁷ (Brest region). It is worth noting that the launchers of missile systems constantly changed their firing positions and were not in one place.

The following missile systems were used to carry out missile strikes by the RF Armed Forces:

- OTRK «Iskander»¹⁸;
- TRK «Tochka-U»¹⁹.

Despite the statements of the command of the RF Armed Forces about the non-use of the Tochka-U TRK, there is evidence of the import of these complexes into the territory of Belarus²⁰.

Also, the aviation of the RF Armed Forces used the airspace of Belarus for the use of aviation missile systems²¹.

2. DEPLOYMENT OF AVIATION

The military airfields of the Armed Forces of Belarus have been involved from the very beginning of the war in Ukraine. Airfields were used for:

- supply of the RF Armed Forces group stationed in Belarus and advancing in the direction of Kiev;
- strikes on military and civilian targets of Ukraine by front-line aviation;
- conducting aerial reconnaissance.

The RF Armed Forces used military airfields in Lida²², Baranovichi²³, Luninets²⁴,

13. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/3031

14. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/215

15. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/2813

16. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/4335

17. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/477

18. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/3551

19. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/2506

20. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/4173

21. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/2677

22. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/2156

23. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/439

24. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/1611

the village of Veliky Bokov (Mozyr district)²⁵, Zyabrovka (Gomel district)²⁶, Machulishchi, Bobruisk²⁷.

Separately, it is worth noting the use of the Gomel civil airport²⁸ both for delivering strikes on the territory of Ukraine and for sanitary purposes²⁹.

In addition to the actual use of airfields, one can also state the facts of the involvement of Belarusian personnel in air traffic control³⁰.

3. LOGISTICS

The RF Armed Forces actively used the railway infrastructure of Belarus. Initially, for the transfer of a military group (before the exercises "Allied Resolve-2022"), and subsequently for the transfer of reinforcements, supply for the group of troops that was advancing in the Kiev direction, and the evacuation of wounded, damaged military equipment and material assets captured in Ukraine³¹.

The following railway stations were most actively involved:

- Gomel region - Gomel (Northern³², Nechetny³³), Rechitsa³⁴, Yelsk³⁵, Mozyr³⁶, Khoiniki³⁷, Narovlya³⁸, Zyabrovka³⁹, Kozenki (Mozyr district)⁴⁰;
- Minsk region - Kolodishchi⁴¹;
- Brest region - Luninets⁴², Baranovichi⁴³.

25. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/3234

26. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/3203

27. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/246

28. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/2643

29. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/2745

30. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_SBPSoeeqWE

31. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/4372

32. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/3966

33. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/3177

34. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/4038

35. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/4231

36. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/766

37. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/3783

38. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/4175

39. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/4039

40. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/544

41. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/3859

42. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/383

43. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/1915

The RF Armed Forces also actively used the transport infrastructure of Belarus to move their units. The following main routes for the movement of equipment of the RF Armed Forces can be distinguished:

- Minsk-Bobruisk-Gomel,
- Kalinkovichi-Mozyr,
- Kalinkovichi-Rechitsa-Gomel,
- Gomel-Dobrush-RF,
- Khoyniki-Bragin-Komarin and others.

Armored vehicles⁴⁴, tactical missile systems⁴⁵, cargo⁴⁶ and fuel trucks⁴⁷ etc. moved along the roads.

It is worth noting that there is evidence of a direct entry of the RF Armed Forces from the territory of Belarus to Ukraine on February 24⁴⁸. Also, the equipment of the RF Armed Forces, which invaded Ukraine from the territory of Belarus, had the identification mark "V". Subsequently, burnt equipment with such an identification mark was seen in the Kyiv region⁴⁹.

4. PROVIDING MEDICAL CARE TO WOUNDED SERVICEMEN

Already from the first days of the war, information began to come in about the provision of medical care to servicemen of the RF Armed Forces wounded in Ukraine. Thus, medical care was provided in the following health care institutions:

1. Republican Scientific and Practical Center for Radiation Medicine and Human Ecology, Gomel⁵⁰;
2. Mozyr city hospital⁵¹.

Also in Mozyr and Gomel, ambulances of the RF Armed Forces carrying

44. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/3671

45. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/3551

46. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/1387

47. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/584

48. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/133

49. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/369

50. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/706

51. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/958

wounded servicemen were constantly observed⁵².

It should be noted that the Belarusian authorities motivated the provision of medical care by the existence of special interstate agreements between Belarus and Russia⁵³.

5. PROVISION OF FUEL AND LUBRICANTS

The Belarusian authorities provided the RF Armed Forces with fuel. So, there are facts of refueling of fuel trucks:

- at the Mozyr Oil Refinery⁵⁴;
- at the 2657th base of fuel and lubricants of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus (military unit 55435), Baranovichi⁵⁵;
- at the 2766th fuel supply base of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus (military unit 55461), Krasny Bereg (Zhlobinsky district)⁵⁶.

6. USE OF CIVILIAN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR MILITARY PURPOSES

- Separate facts of the use of civilian infrastructure facilities in the interests of the RF Armed Forces were also recorded. For example:
- on the territory of the Narovlyansky RAIPO, a site for the repair of armored weapons and equipment was deployed⁵⁷.
- the Ethanol enterprise in Mozyr was used as a temporary base for the deployment of the RF Armed Forces⁵⁸;
- vocational school dormitory No. 68 in Mozyr was used for quartering military personnel⁵⁹, etc.

52. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/643

53. <https://petitionsby.win/petitions/5245>

54. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/1682

55. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/1397

56. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/4155

57. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/2311

58. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/3883

59. https://t.me/Hajun_BY/2638

In its resolution of March 2, 2022, the UN General Assembly stated the aggression committed by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in violation of paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the UN Charter and expressed regret over the participation of Belarus in this illegal use of force against Ukraine, calling on it to comply with its international obligations⁶⁰.

On April 20, 2022, the UN Human Rights Committee registered a complaint against the Republic of Belarus by three citizens of Belarus and three citizens of Ukraine, represented by the human rights organization Respect-Protect-Fulfill. The complaint alleges that Belarus, by allowing the Russian Federation to use its territory and infrastructure for acts of aggression against Ukraine, violated its obligation not to expose the applicants to the risk of arbitrary deprivation of life and personal integrity, the risk of ill-treatment.

The Human Rights Committee granted the request for interim measures and asked Belarus, pending consideration of the complaint (or until further communication), "not to allow the use of its territory and infrastructure for military operations that have a direct impact and cause a real risk of ill-treatment and arbitrary deprivation of life" for the complainants.

60. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3965290?ln=ru>

OFFICIAL REACTION OF THE REGIME AND STATE MEDIA TO THE WAR IN UKRAINE AND THE PARTICIPATION OF BELARUS IN IT

"I believe that we live in an open fascist dictatorship, completely deprived of civil and human rights. In a sense, I felt a moral debt to those who had already served time. I am even rather proud of this imprisonment of mine."

From an interview with a participant in an anti-war rally

On February 21, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree recognizing the so-called Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics as independent states. On February 22, 2022, the Federation Council ratified this decision. At 5 am on February 24, 2022, the President of Russia announced the start of a military operation (special operation) against Ukraine in Donbas at the request of the DPR and LPR.

Two goals were declared: demilitarization (complete destruction of the entire military infrastructure and weapons park of military equipment that is currently on the territory of Ukraine) and denazification of Ukraine. The end of the military operation, in addition to these two goals, also pursued the removal of questions about the status of Crimea and Donbass, the punishment of those responsible for the civil war unleashed in Donbass, for crimes against civilians (as Putin pointed out, the protection of people who have been subjected to bullying for eight years, genocide by the Kyiv regime), for crimes in the Odessa House of Trade Unions and on the Maidan. It was also alleged that Ukraine provoked the conflict, intended to attack the Russian Federation, which was forced to deliver a preemptive strike.

Representatives of state bodies of the Republic of Belarus, official propaganda, Lukashenka himself justify Russia's war against Ukraine. It is also important to note that Belarusian officials give their assessments solely based on what Alexander Lukashenko said (often repeating his passages verbatim), who, in turn, does not deviate from the version of the Kremlin.

It should be noted that in February 2022, joint exercises of the troops of Belarus and Russia were held on the territory of Belarus. Part of the armed forces of the Russian Federation remained on the territory of Belarus even after they had ended. It became known that they attacked Ukraine from here, using Belarusian airfields, bases and roads.

Justifying the "forced" nature of the "special operation", on April 8, 2022 Andrey Vladimirovich Savinykh, a deputy of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, stated:

"Russia was forced to start a special operation in Ukraine, because it simply had no other choice. US financial and corporate groups decided to mitigate the collapse of the global world through the collapse of Russia and our entire region, by analogy with the events of 30 years ago - the destruction of the USSR. The corrupt oligarchic elite of Ukraine, with the support of the territorial defense units infected with Nazi ideology, was chosen as an instrument of destruction. The fraternal Ukrainian people, for the most part, turned out to be hostage to this situation. Just like the EU countries, because it is planned that they will pay for the destruction of our countries.⁶¹"

61. <http://www.house.gov.by/ru/interview-ru/view/andrej-savinyx-proschaj-amerika-proschaj-navsegda-8342/>

On the air of the "Point of View" program on Radio Minsk, the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the House of Representatives on National Security, Major General Oleg Belokonev, also called Russia's "special operation" in Ukraine a forced and necessary measure⁶².

The position of the leadership of Belarus was most concentrated in an interview with Alexander Lukashenko on May 5, 2022 to the international news agency Associated Press.

First of all, the thesis about "Ukraine's guilt" in the war was repeated: "I don't understand why the Ukrainians had to provoke Russia. They went to the point where it was possible to agree on all issues. I say this as a knowledgeable person. I was constantly in this process. I'm deeper into the subject than anyone else. And I saw that it was possible to come to an agreement... Starting from personal insults to the Russian leadership and to all sorts of economic provocations, pressure and mockery of the Russian people in Ukraine - I saw it all. I just don't understand why Ukraine needed it. Thus, Ukraine provoked the Russian Federation. They got what they wanted."⁶³

Lukashenka admitted for the first time that Russia used the territory of Belarus to attack Ukraine. "But it all started with a provocation from Ukraine." He also said that Tochka-U tactical missile systems were deployed near the Belarusian border. "We had to take decisive measures to avoid an attack against Belarus. We were lucky that there were still troops left after the exercises. The Russians tracked this down and helped us hit those four positions. And part of the troops really left Belarus for Ukraine."⁶⁴

It should be noted that earlier, on April 19, 2022, following the then policy of non-recognition of Belarus' involvement in hostilities, the Presidium of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, in connection with the suspension of the participation of the Republic of Belarus in the Central European Initiative, stated:

62. <http://www.house.gov.by/ru/interview-ru/view/vse-idet-po-planu-8326/>

63. <https://www.belta.by/president/view/o-prekraschenii-vojny-sanktsijah-svobode-slova-i-demokratii-vse-podrobnosti-intervjju-lukashenko-dlja-499978-2022/>

64. <https://www.belta.by/president/view/o-prekraschenii-vojny-sanktsijah-svobode-slova-i-demokratii-vse-podrobnosti-intervjju-lukashenko-dlja-499978-2022/>

“We bring to the attention of the CEI member states : The Republic of Belarus is not a participant in hostilities in Ukraine. On the contrary, President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko initiated peaceful Russian-Ukrainian negotiations, three rounds of which took place on the territory of our country.”⁶⁵

In an interview with the Associated Press, almost for the first time, the opinion was expressed that the “special operation” lasts too long.

In the interview mentioned above, and later, for example, in a speech on May 9, 2022, it was emphasized that about 50 countries are providing assistance to Ukraine. Belarus and Russia are actually left alone.

«Belarusians have neither legal nor moral right not to support Russia. We have always been together, we have always been united... I want everyone in the West to hear me once again: Belarusians are not aggressors. But, remaining an ally and strategic partner of fraternal Russia, we will support it in every possible way.»⁶⁶

However, despite the external validity of these theses, the main difference is hidden. In the first case, assistance is provided to the victim of aggression, in the second - to the aggressor.

Regarding the correspondent's question about Russia's atrocities in Ukraine - the events in Bucha and Mariupol, Lukashenko said in an interview on May 5, 2022 that this was an organized provocation, a lie. The same was said earlier, on April 12, 2022, by Putin at a joint press conference with the participation of Alexander Lukashenko⁶⁷. This is despite ample evidence to the contrary.

Both the interview and the speech on May 9, 2022, were broadcast on radio channels, on television, placed in all state-owned media, their analysis and interpretation, citation continues to this day.

In connection with the protracted war, the presence of sanctions, there were statements about the threat to the military security of Belarus from neighboring states and NATO. Alexander Lukashenka at a meeting in the

65. <http://www.sovrep.gov.by/ru/news-ru/view/prezidium-soveta-respubliki-natsionalnogo-sobranija-respubliki-belarus-prinjal-zajavlenie-v-svjazi-s-19203-2022/>

66. <https://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-belorusy-ne-agressory-no-my-budem-vsjachieski-podderzhivat-rossiju-500622-2022/>

67. <https://www.vesti.ru/article/2702798>

Ministry of Defense on issues of ensuring military security on May 26 said that they plan to create a Southern Operational Command in the Armed Forces of Belarus, and they also talked about creating a people's militia⁶⁸.

On May 27, 2022, Defense Minister Viktor Khrenin also said that during a meeting devoted to clarification of adjustment and development of the Armed Forces, the Commanders-in-Chief gave the task of creating a people's militia in Belarus:

"We see that this issue is also very important. The main thing is that we have people and weapons for this. Indeed, the number of defenders of our country can be increased significantly. This is of great importance in the current situation. The answer will be adequate if someone comes to our land."

All these actions of the leadership of Belarus are aimed at avoiding direct participation in the war of Russia against Ukraine. It is clear that otherwise there will be a response from Ukraine, sanctions, and most importantly, it will categorically not be accepted by the Belarusian people. On the other hand, in order not to lose Russia's economic assistance, the declared support for Russia's policy requires Alexander Lukashenko and government officials, not only in words, but also in deeds, to at least imitate actions to prepare for such a possible participation.

68. <https://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-belarusi-predstoit-stolknutsja-s-bespretsedentnym-ekonomicheskim-politicheskim-i-voennym-504183-2022/>

PERSECUTION OF BELARUSIAN CITIZENS FOR ANTI-WAR STANCE

"...there was such a strong shock when the war began that I just could not help but demonstrate my attitude."

From an interview with a participant in an anti-war rally

The Russian invasion in Ukraine as a fact of obvious aggression of one neighboring state against another with the complicity of Belarus caused a real shock in the Belarusian society.

The irresponsible actions of the leadership, which provided its territory as one of the springboards for the attack, on the one hand, put Belarus on a par with the aggressor, on the other hand, caused in a society subjected to severe repressions during 2020-2022 not only rejection of the policy pursued by the regime, but also direct resistance.

The pacifist sentiments of citizens began to appear already in the first days

after the start of the war, however, the most massive anti-war protests throughout the country took place on February 27 and 28, 2022 - on the day and after the republican referendum on changes to the Constitution⁶⁹.

The referendum participants made anti-war inscriptions on the ballots, photographed the ballots and posted them on social networks, gathered near polling stations and massively expressed their negative attitude towards the actions of the regime and complicity in the war.

The protest activity of citizens continued in the following days and does not stop to this day. Citizens of Belarus openly show their disagreement with the policy of the ruling regime towards Ukraine and their sympathy for the people of Ukraine, who fell victim to aggression, in a variety of ways throughout the country⁷⁰.

It is expressed in picketing of Russian diplomatic institutions and picketing in the streets and squares of cities and towns, prayers for peace, hanging anti-war banners, shouting anti-war slogans, launching yellow and blue balloons, wearing clothes and symbols in blue and yellow colors, sound signals of support for anti-war pickets and etc.

Separate groups of young people have undertaken acts of real counteraction to Russian military aggression. This counteraction was carried out in various forms: from sending video and photo information about the movement of Russian military equipment to the telegram channels "Belarusian Gayun", "Nexta", "Belarus Golovnogo Mozga" and others, to creating obstacles to its movement.

It is also known that some Belarusians expressed a desire to fight for Ukraine and took concrete measures for this: they looked for ways to join the Armed Forces of Ukraine, applied to the Ukrainian embassy for this⁷¹.

Belarusian volunteers have been fighting on the side of Ukraine since 2014 in different units. After the current Russian invasion, they merged into one formation, which was announced on March 9, 2022. Formed in March, the Kastus Kalinouski Battalion announced on March 25 that it would join the

69. One of the significant changes in the new Constitution - the Republic of Belarus excludes military aggression towards other states. This provision replaced the definition of Belarus as a nuclear-free and neutral country.

70. <https://spring96.org/ru/news/107338>

71. <https://nashaniva.com/ru/288243>

<https://nashaniva.com/ru/290401>

Armed Forces of Ukraine⁷². In May, the **Kastus Kalinovsky Battalion** merged with the Litvin Battalion and the Volat Battalion, thus forming a Belarusian regiment within the Armed Forces of Ukraine⁷³.

Anti-war demonstrations in Belarus began to be brutally suppressed already on the first day of the war.

So, only on February 27 and 28, 2022, more than 1,100 people were detained in Belarus, while at least 630 people were subjected to administrative arrest. This figure is comparable to the number of people detained at mass protests against the falsification of the presidential elections in Belarus in September-December 2020.

Among the detainees there are representatives of all ages, social groups and professions: engineers, workers, schoolchildren and students, teachers, clergy, medical workers, representatives of business and the IT sector, and many others.

The most common form of persecution of citizens for expressing an anti-war position is administrative liability under Art. 24.23 of the Code of the Republic of Belarus on Administrative Offenses "Violation of the procedure for organizing or holding mass events".

We give typical examples.

Thus, the leader of the independent trade union Naftan, Olga Britikova, who was detained on February 27, 2022 at a polling station in Novopolotsk, was brought to administrative responsibility 5 times during February-April 2022:

- February 28, 2022 for photographing a ballot at a polling station - 15 days of arrest;
- March 3, 2022 for wearing the inscriptions "No war", on the jacket - 15 days of arrest;
- March 10, 2022 for the same slogans displayed in the windows of her own apartment - 15 days of arrest;
- April 17, 2022 for the post «No War» on Instagram - 15 days of arrest⁷⁴;
- April 27, 2022 for illegal picketing - 15 days of arrest⁷⁵.

72. <https://news.zerkalo.io/world/11762.html?c>

73. <https://euroradio.fm/ru/batalon-kalinovskogo-rasshirilsya-do-polka>

74. <https://spring96.org/ru/news/107338>

75. <https://reform.by/312832-glava-nezavisimogo-profsojuza-naftan-britikova-vyshla-na-svobodu-posle-75-sutok-aresta>

Detained on the same day at a polling station in Polotsk, Sergei Khlebodar was arrested for 15 days for wearing a blue and yellow scarf⁷⁶.

The priest of the Belarusian Greek Catholic Church, Vasily Yegorov, after 3 days of detention, was subjected to an administrative penalty in the form of a fine in the city of Mogilev. The reason for this was a sticker on the car with the inscription «Ukraine, I'm sorry»⁷⁷.

On March 31, 2022, the court of the city of Bobruisk brought to administrative responsibility in the form of a fine the history teacher of secondary school No. 27 of Bobruisk Larisa Sekerzhitskaya. The reason for bringing to court was the wearing of blue and yellow ribbons in the hair. As noted in the administrative protocol, L. Sekerzhitskaya "expressed her attitude towards what is happening in Ukraine with her appearance"⁷⁸.

On February 27, 2022, on the day of the referendum and anti-war actions, in the city of Mozyr and in the city of Kalinkovichi, a group of citizens was brought to administrative responsibility in the form of heavy fines, who, according to the protocol, "stayed in one place for a long time without moving, this way they publicly demonstrated mass gathering."⁷⁹

On March 3, 2022, in Minsk, in the Cathedral on Nemiga, riot police detained several mothers of Belarusian soldiers who participated in a prayer service for peace⁸⁰.

And this list of absurd actions of the regime can be continued.

In order to inform the public about the movements of Russian troops stationed on the territory of Belarus and participating in the aggression against Ukraine, the practice of video and photo recording of these movements and sending the information to independent anti-war telegram channels, which the Belarusian regime has recognized as extremist, has found wide application in the country.

The law enforcement agencies of Belarus reacted to this practice in the most severe way and began to massively initiate criminal cases on these facts, and, as a rule, detain those who sent information.

76. <https://spring96.org/ru/news/107338>

77. <https://news.zerkalo.io/life/11761.html?c>

78. <https://news.zerkalo.io/life/11698.html?c>

79. <https://spring96.org/ru/news/107338>

80. <https://news.zerkalo.io/life/10839.html?c>

So, on April 13, 2022, the Investigative Committee of the Republic of Belarus stated that only in the Gomel region seven criminal cases were initiated on such facts, all those responsible were charged either under Art. 361-4 of the Criminal Code (assistance to extremist activities) or under Art. 361-1 of the Criminal Code (participation in an extremist formation).

It is known from open sources that the following persons were arrested for such actions in March-April 2022:

- Alexander Luchinovich, Andrey Utkin, Irina Abdukerina, and Viktor Kulinka (all from the Gomel region) - for sending photos of Russian military equipment to the Belarusian Gayun telegram channel;
- Anna Pyshnik (Mozyr) - for filming the movement of helicopters for the Nexta telegram channel, as well as Oleg Nekalo (Pinsk), Alexander Gurlai (Minsk region), Yury Gontzarevich (Baranovichi), Pavel Nozdrya (Mozyr), Oleg Borodin, Ivan Yasnikov and others⁸¹.

Criminal cases of some citizens under Art. 361-4 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus have already been sent to court⁸².

The attempts of Belarusian citizens to directly resist Russian aggression in Ukraine have also received a wide response in the society. Directly observing how Russian military equipment and ammunition used to shell Ukrainian cities are transported by the country's railways, citizens, in groups and alone, in different regions of the country took measures to destroy railway equipment.

So, on the night of March 30, 2022, a special unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the Savichy-Berezina stretch (Osipovichi-Gomel section) near the Babino stopping point on suspicion of destroying railway equipment - two relay cabinets and a signaling installation - detained Yevgeny Minkevich, Dmitry Klimov and Vladimir Avramtsev. During the detention, weapons were used, all of them were wounded.

In the first ten days of March 2022, other «rail partisans» were also detained:

- Sergey Glebko - in the town of Stolbtsy for placing wooden logs on the railway track;
- Dmitry Ravich, Denis Dikun and Oleg Molchanov - in the city of Svetlogorsk

81. <https://news.zerkalo.io/life/12767.html>

82. <https://www.prokuratura.gov.by/ru/media/novosti/nadzor-za-resheniyami-po-ugolovnym-i-grazhdanskim-delam/snyala-voennuyu-tekhniku-i-pereda%E2%80%A6>

- for setting fire to a relay cabinet on February 28, 2022, as a result of which traffic lights and turnouts on the track section were rendered inoperative;
- Sergei Konovalov, an employee of the Vitebsk branch of the Belarusian Railway, was detained, according to the authorities, for «planning to disable systems that ensure the safety of railway traffic»;
 - Sergei Pleshkun and Yuri Selvich were detained in the town of Mozyr for «preparing for an act of terrorism», which, according to the investigation, consisted of planning to set fire to Russian military equipment transported by rail.

All of the listed persons were detained, and all of them were charged with either terrorism or attempted terrorism (Article 289 of the Criminal Code)⁸³.

In a story shown on Belarusian Television (BT) in early April 2022, it was stated that more than 80 terrorist attacks had been committed at the facilities of the Belarusian Railway by that time⁸⁴.

In response to the undertaken "rail war", the authorities of the country started a real persecution of people. So, at the end of March 2022, at least 40 railway employees were detained throughout the country⁸⁵. Mass searches and detentions also took place in Mozyr and the Mozyr district, in Svetlogorsk and the Svetlogorsk district, in Baranovichi, Stolbtsy, Dzerzhinsk and other regions. The purpose of the detentions was to search for people who were preparing acts of petty sabotage on the railway or sending information to independent media and telegram channels about the movement of Russian troops or missile launches to Ukraine from Belarus.

It also became known that some of the security forces who were involved in the suppression of peaceful protests after August 2020, as well as fighters of the internal troops, were transferred by the authorities to guard the railways.

In order to whip up an atmosphere of fear in society and in an attempt to bring down protest moods, the authorities initiated and on April 27, 2022 hastily adopted amendments to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus, according to which, contrary to the prevailing world criminal law practice, the death penalty was introduced for an attempt to commit an act of terrorism.

The measures taken by the citizens of Belarus to counter Russian aggression were highly appreciated by the Ukrainian side. Thus, Aleksey Arestovich,

83. <https://nashaniva.com/ru/288746>

84. <https://nashaniva.com/?c=ar&i=287877&lang=ru>

85. <https://news.zerkalo.io/life/11969.html#c>

adviser to the head of the office of the President of Ukraine, stated in the Euroradio stream that the supply of Russian troops was violated very competently through the efforts of Belarusian partisans. Arestovich admitted that he was surprised that «*with such a dominance of the special services, the Belarusian society was able to give birth to this kind of resistance.*» He called the actions of the "rail partisans" extremely competent: they damaged switchboards, removing sections of the road for a long time, which disrupted the supply of Russian troops on the territory of Belarus.

"This is an outstanding military achievement of operational significance. I can say that these people are real heroes, because they risked their health, and even their lives⁸⁶."

Citizens of Belarus who publicly declared their opposition to the policy of the official authorities towards Ukraine were also subjected to other forms of persecution and discrimination.

So the lawyers who signed the public anti-war petition that appeared online on March 1, 2022, were massively summoned to the Bar Association and demanded the withdrawal of signatures⁸⁷.

With one of the signatories of the petition, lawyer and associate professor of the Faculty of International Relations of the Belarusian State University Alexander Danilevich, the rector of BSU did not renew the contract, and he was reprimanded by the bar⁸⁸. On May 20, 2022, it became known that Alexander Danilevich was arrested.

At school No. 62 in the city of Gomel, on the basis of a denunciation by a student because of an anti-war statement, a month before the end of the school year, the teacher of Russian language and literature, Oksana Chechetkina, was forced to resign⁸⁹.

After serving an administrative arrest for participating in an anti-war action, the daughters of the well-known Belarusian writer and teacher Anna Severinets Yevgenia and Lyubov Subat were expelled from the philological faculty of the Belarusian State University⁹⁰.

86. <https://youtu.be/YXQoYZngauw>

87. <https://nashaniva.com/?c=ar&i=286100&lang=ru>

88. <https://nashaniva.com/ru/288539>

89. <https://nashaniva.com/ru/288666>

90. <https://nashaniva.com/?c=ar&i=287264&lang=ru>

CONDITIONS OF DETENTION AND TORTURE OF DETAINEES FOR ANTI-WAR ACTIONS

CONDITIONS OF DETENTION IN TSIP ON AKRESTSINA

"It is alarming that human rights can easily be undermined and violated, they can be taken away very quickly. You don't have to count on logic and substantiated evidence."

From an interview with a participant in an anti-war rally

The detainees were taken to TsIP on Akrestsina on February 27 and 28, 2022. People were brought there from different militia departments in Minsk, and they spent 1-3 days there before the trial. Some remained in TsIP to serve their arrest.

All the detainees note that the staff of the detention center deliberately created overcrowding of the cells by 4-5 times, people had to serve their arrest without a separate bed, and mattresses, pillows, towels and bed linen were also not given. Many detainees had to sleep on the floor. Due to overcrowding, it was hot and stuffy in the cells, condensation accumulated on the walls, and people suffocated. The guards forbade lying and sitting on bunks during the day and carefully monitored this. From constant standing on their feet, tension and stuffiness in the cells, many became sick. Warm outerwear was taken away from the detainees. Very often homeless people were put together with the "political" ones, which introduced additional problems due to the presence of lice and infectious diseases from those people.

"... There were 16 people in the cell, which was 4 by 4 meters in size. In TsIP on Akrestsina, it is forbidden to lie down during the daytime, especially on the upper shelves. The guard told us to put all our outer clothes in one place so that he could see it, said that we were forbidden to sit down or lie down. We tried to be closer to the door, because there was at least some breath of fresh air through the cracks. The feeder was closed, although we asked to open it, at least in order to get some fresh air from outside. If someone sat down, the guard immediately swore at us through the door, threatening that he would pour a bucket of bleach on the floor and force us to clean up the whole thing."

"... we were transferred to cell no. 12. It is designed for 8 people, there were 4 double bunk beds, and there were 34 people there. There were no mattresses, no bedding."

"The conditions of detention there are as follows - the cell is small, designed for one. The largest number of people that were there with me was 10 people, and the colleagues who got there before me had the largest number - 13 people, of which 8 were political, and 5 were homeless people"

The detainees did not get enough sleep due to the overcrowding of the cells, the lack of separate sleeping places, mattresses and bed linen. At night, bright lights were constantly on in the cells. In addition to all of the above, the detainees were tortured with sleep deprivation, they were woken up twice during the night at 2 am and at 4 am. The person had to stand up and give his last name, first name, patronymic.

A separate type of torture was pouring chlorine liquid into overcrowded cells. This caused irritation of the respiratory tract - people began to choke, cough.

"We were woken up at night, at 2 am, at 4 and at 6. I had to stand up and say my name. Or they called the surname, and we had to continue the name, patronymic. The light in the cell was never turned off."

"One time after the search, at the moment when we were in the corridor, the officers entered the cell. It was examined. And when we entered this cell, it turned out that they poured a bucket of bleach into it for us. They just spilled it all over the cell."

As a rule, until the court decision was made (1-2 days, even up to 3 days), the detainees were not fed. Randomly they could be given bread and tea. The quality of food, according to the detainees, is unsatisfactory. Drinking water was not given, a very small amount of tea was given. People were forced to drink tap water of very poor quality.

"... three days later there was a trial. All these three days we were not fed, only on March 2 we were given two loaves of bread for everyone."

"They detained us at lunch on Sunday, fed us only in Zhodzina on Wednesday evening."

"We were not fed the first day. But there was bread left over from the previous ones. And there, later in the evening, I ate a piece of bread offered to me by one of the prisoners. ...there was an opportunity to drink water only from the tap. Neither the first nor the second day I ate anything."

There was no ventilation, the staff of the institution did not open the windows. Sometimes employees opened windows and deliberately did not close them. As a result, it was cold at night with open windows, people froze and fell ill. From the majority of the detainees outerwear and warm clothes were taken away. During the day, with the windows closed, it was very stuffy and hot in the cells. Clothing parcels from relatives were prohibited.

"... There was such an episode at Akrestsina: the woman who was sitting with me asked to open the feeder, because it was stuffy."

They did not open it for us, but she asked insistently, because she had a headache. Duty officer Yevgeny Vrublevsky - led her to the corridor, hit her forehead against the wall and brought her back."

"It was impossible to breathe there. On the second day, we just approached the door and lay near it, it stank of the toilet, but it was already impossible to breathe, there was no oxygen at all."

"It was very uncomfortable to sleep, it was quite cool. Because the window, which gave fresh air, did not close at night, there was no physical opportunity to close it. Therefore, some people were constantly under cold air. Later on I got a runny nose. "

Due to unsanitary and inhuman conditions of detention, many detainees fell ill with respiratory viral diseases, including COVID-19, and many of their chronic diseases worsened. Medical care was not provided to the detainees. Medications taken on a regular basis were not regularly given.

"After 2 hours, one of us felt sick. We began to provide some first aid, tried to bring him to his senses with cold water, he almost lost consciousness. The man weighed around 140 kg. He began to feel very bad, he was afraid that, according to the sensations, his pressure began to rise, so we began to knock and say that the person needed medical assistance, which was never provided."

"...people who were with me and who were chronically ill did not receive their pills every day, but received their pills once or every three days. It happened that in the morning we simply could not call the paramedic. Or if the employees asked the paramedic to come with pills, she came, but she didn't provide us with any pills. ... there were people who had chronic diseases, in particular high blood pressure. They needed such pills on a regular basis, but they were not given pills."

The detainees could not fully maintain hygiene, in most cases they were not given soap, they were given very little or no toilet paper. Women were not given pads. Toothpaste was not provided. Some detainees say that they brushed their teeth with a medical mask.

"We were not given any personal hygiene products either. We asked for soap and at least a few pads, but we were not given any."

"Girls who had critical days did not receive pads, they got only a small piece of cotton, which was not enough when they bled heavily."

"Apart from soap and bleach in the toilet, we didn't have any other hygiene products. We did not have the opportunity to brush our teeth for the entire period of our stay at Akrestsina."

Every morning there was a cell and body search at Akrestsina: the detainees were taken out into the corridors and there they were examined. According to the respondents, this check was carried out especially hard when the head of the TsIP was present (such a check took place 2 times a week). When he came, the TsIP employees (guards) behaved more aggressively, spoke rudely to people, did not allow them to smile, forced them to take off their shoes in the corridor and return barefoot back to the cell. During searches, people were often beaten - they could be kicked, punched or hit with a truncheon if they thought that a person was not moving fast enough or was not standing the right way.

"During the morning inspections, when they put everyone facing the wall with palms turned outwards, if you didn't react quickly enough to commands, if you slowly walked there, slowly walked back, then in the process one of the employees constantly hit you with a truncheon, leg or hand to speed up.»

"Guys were forced to run naked down the corridors back and forth. Long corridor, ten meters, I think. Maybe less. And imagine, they have to run naked or in shorts without clothes."

The detainees note that they were not taken out for walks during the entire time they were kept. Parcels were prohibited.

"...we were not taken for walks, we were not taken to wash. We were not allowed any parcels."

Some citizens who were detained by the GUBOPiK were severely beaten. During their detention, they used an electric shocker, beat them on their legs, and they had multiple bruises on their bodies.

"And there was a blue guy, he was detained at the Mayak, he has a strong build. He ran, the last fence was high, he could not

escape, and when they ran after him, after the arrest they beat him with truncheons, he was completely blue”.

“At Akrestsina, there were several people with me in the cell who were badly beaten. According to them, they were beaten by GUBOPiK officers during their arrest. People were already with such huge yellow bruises on their arms, on their backs, with black eyes.”

CONDITIONS OF DETENTION IN THE TDF ON AKRESTSINA

“There was a man in the cell who was the chat administrator, he stood all night because he was just blue, and it hurt to lie down.”

From an interview with a participant in an anti-war rally

The majority of the detainees were taken to Akrestsina TDF, where they stayed for 1-3 days before the trial, after which they were transferred to TsIP or TDF in the city of Zhodino. Upon arrival, outerwear and warm clothes were taken away from them. Many remained barefoot, without socks. Some interviewees testify that upon arrival they were kept for 4-5 hours at night in exercise yards (cells on the streets with a grid instead of a ceiling) and they were freezing. The employees of the TDF deliberately created overcrowding of the cells putting 3-5 times more people in them (22 people in the cell for 6 people 8x3 meters). Mattresses, pillows, towels and bed linen were not provided. People were forced to sleep on the cold floor, they froze. Bright lights were on 24/7.

“When they brought me to the cell, there were two beds in the cell and there were 13 people. Accordingly, no bedding, no linen, nothing. Someone was sleeping on the floor, and two people on each bed.”

“Then we were transferred to another cell on Akrestsin Street. There were already thirty-three of us in this cell for 6 people. For two days we, it seems, sat there until the trial.”

“It was very cold in the cell. We didn't really fit on the beds, so

we had to sleep on the floor. And since we didn't have jackets, almost no one did. Almost everyone's jackets were taken from us. We begged for jackets all evening, but we were told that they would not give us."

The detainees note that they were not provided with medical assistance, they had to beg for medicines from the paramedic for a long time. Only the simplest and outdated drugs (charcoal, paracetamol) were given. An ambulance was not called.

"I also remember we were constantly asking for pills, but they gave some pills there, but not all the pills. For example, a girl had bipolar disorder and could not be given the pills she needed."

The TDF officers were rude, insulted and humiliated the detainees, while threatening to use physical force and rape.

"Some employees said that if an order was given, they were ready to rape the detainees: "So you came out, my son is the same, but were you raped with a truncheon or not? Do you want to be raped with it. If not then why did you go out to the rally? If I had my way, I would do it to you.»

According to the stories of the victim, one evening two girls and one woman were taken from their cell, allegedly to be taken to Zhodino. However, after 3 hours they were returned, terribly frozen. They said that they were simply kicked out to some kind of exercise yard, left there, they closed the door and told to wait.

"They stood in the cold all this time, the frost was very strong that day, they just stood in a pile and warmed each other with their breath for 3 hours. In the end, they were told that they would not be picked up today, so they were returned back."

The cells are unsanitary: dirt, cockroaches, bed bugs, woodlice. Hygiene items were practically not given. The toilet was located in close proximity to the detainees, very rarely it was fenced with half-walls. They didn't give out rags for cleaning, detainees had to use paper, the remnants of rags that were in the cells.

"In the cells, cockroaches run, and woodlice, fleas or bedbugs.

There were living creatures both in the TDF and in TsIP."

"We slept on the floor with these bedbugs. It was very cold in the morning. I hid under the battery, and under the battery there was probably some kind of their nest, it was very scary."

"The beds were wooden, which was also a plus that they are not made of iron. But there were no mattresses on the beds, bedding. We were sometimes given soap and toilet paper. The soap was the worst, it was like melted wax, of a strange consistency, like half-dried gouache, but it didn't look like soap."

CONDITIONS OF DETENTION IN TDF ZHODINO

"... the staff, especially in the Zhodino institution, probably the majority, in fact, are inborn sadists. They enjoy the sight of bullying. From torture, from pain, humiliating others."

From an interview with a participant in an anti-war rally

In the temporary detention facility in Zhodzina, the detainees were greeted with loud shouts, threats and obscenities by law enforcement officers in balaclavas with truncheons and dogs. Rights and obligations were not explained to anyone.

After the inspection of the arrested, they began to register and place them in cells. For "political" they purposefully created overpopulation in the cells by 3-4 times. Mattresses, pillows and bed linen were not given. The water was only cold.

"They put our group of 16 people in a cell with 4 beds. A very small one. We calculated the area of this cell - 12 square meters. There were no accessories for several days, except for a small piece of laundry soap, and that's it."

"We went into this cell, the beds there turned out to be iron, there were such bars, there were holes ... The hand could easily fall through this hole. We thought that there would be at least mattresses, but, as usual - no. The floor is covered with tiles, the toilet is a cubicle, completely open. It was difficult for most of us

to go to the toilet, because there were a lot of people we didn't know, and an open toilet, especially for girls, is such a delicate topic. There was no hot water.»

There were no conditions for full-fledged sleep in the Zhodzina TDF for political prisoners. Due to the overcrowding of the cells, the detainees did not have separate sleeping places. The lack of mattresses and bed linen created additional torment, the metal bars of the beds dug into the body.

"It turns out that when you sleep, this iron digs into the thigh, and especially the seams, they could put pressure on the skin there, so it hurts. As a result, we put a jacket, our outerwear on this iron grate. The girls slept under the table, one girl slept on the table. And there were 2, 3 people on the beds. Who is smaller, could fit three of us, but these were some absolutely not human poses in which the girls were lying, it was as if folded like cats ... "

"We had general rules hanging on the wall, the rights and obligations of prisoners, and we read out that one should not humiliate self-esteem, and about all these mattresses, and everything else, and that parcels are allowed. When we asked why we don't have all this, the guard replied that normal criminals are entitled to everything, but political ones are not allowed to get anything."

According to the detainees, despite the restrictive measures in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, due to which parcels were prohibited, they were given aluminum dishes that went around in circles in all cells. At the same time, the detainees had to wash the dishes themselves in ice water and give them to the guards. All this took 5-7 minutes. Tea was given out at the rate of 1 mug for 2 people.

"And, accordingly, it was necessary to wash the dishes on their own and give them clean back. We washed dishes without dishwashing detergent, under ice water, it was terrible, our hands really burned, because washing aluminum dishes under ice water is not a very simple story."

"In the end, everyone started to get sick. We started begging for pills. The nurse was furious why we asked them. She was surprised that we were all sick. Indeed, when we have the same dishes, we

are all 22 people together in such a small space, and why are we sick. One girl had conjunctivitis, another had problems with her ears, most of them choked with cough, one girl had a nosebleed."

Despite numerous complaints, medical assistance was not provided to the detainees or was provided in extreme cases, when the person was already in a critical condition. Medications were given reluctantly, even necessary for daily intake. In cases with high temperature, only paracetamol and aspirin were available; in case of poisoning, activated charcoal was given. Many detainees fell ill with COVID-19 while in the TDF, and after their release, some received positive COVID-19 test results.

"... we had a girl O., and she needed pills for her kidneys, and she had to take them all the time, she had some kind of illness. And at some point she felt sick, she had not taken pills for 5 days, or a week. And she turned green, said that she was in a lot of pain, and the staff could not find her pills in any way. As a result, O. was taken away in an ambulance, examined, and given painkillers ... But she was returned to the cell."

"And we all got covid. Somewhere on the fourth day, many symptoms began. And since it was not possible to drink or ventilate the room, it was in a very severe form for the majority. Many had a very high temperature - over 39. Medical assistance was not provided, as we asked. They said that a doctor is only for criminals."

Requests for an ambulance were ignored. The detainees note only three cases of calling an ambulance - for a girl with bipolar disorder (she was subsequently placed in a neuropsychiatric dispensary in Novinki), for a girl with acute toothache after her cheek was swollen and urgent dental surgery was required. An ambulance also took away a man with urolithiasis.

"Most of the people slept on the floor and one cellmate felt sick during the night. As it turned out later, kidney stones began to move in him. I mean, it hurts a lot. He knocked on the door, the guards came, they said - lie down, be patient. He almost lost consciousness, knocked - a doctor, a doctor! He himself crawled out of the cell. Half an hour later they returned him back, also with the help of truncheons, pushed him into the cell, said that they had given him an injection and everything was fine with

him, that nothing hurt him. He lay down for 5-10 minutes, again he had an attack, again he became ill, he could not find any normal position. We started knocking on the door, asking for an ambulance. The whole procedure lasted more than 2 hours, and he was not provided with real help. He was taken to the paramedic, he measured the pressure, temperature, said that everything was fine and sent him back to the cell. Still, in the middle of the night, after 2 hours, the ambulance arrived and took him away."

"They promised to put a truncheon in my ass. ... when they took us to the paramedic, because we really had a big problem, that everyone needed a laxative, and everyone was just not feeling well. And in general, we specially went with a large delegation to take for everyone. And so one of the employees suggested solving our problems in this way."

The detainees were not given hygiene items; instead of toilet paper they were given newspapers. At some point, newspapers also stopped being distributed. Soap was given out a few small pieces for the entire cell. This amount for washing and washing clothes was extremely not enough. Women, as a rule, were given 1-2 pads a day or cotton wool instead of them, sometimes they were given nothing at all. Women were forced to tear their T-shirts into pads. Some of the detainees were taken to the shower once during the period of detention, however, due to the lack of hot water, body washes (there was no shampoo, normal soap), limited time and number of showers (2 working showers for 20-30 people, for washing 10 minutes were allocated) many subsequently refused to take a shower at all.

"Toilet paper was not available, there were no hygiene products, pads were given in such a limited amount that we constantly had to beg. All the girls had to constantly wash everything, tear their T-shirts into pads, it's just terrible! Of course, no one had any toothpaste or a toothbrush, no parcels were allowed. One time we were taken to the shower. It was such a mockery that it would be better not to go there. 33 people were taken to the shower room, where there are 4 showers, 2 of them only worked, and in such a small room, we all stood close there. They said - 20 minutes for you, for everything. And a small, small piece of laundry soap."

"And here was [the detention center in Zhodino] the most bestial attitude, absolutely nothing was given, everything had to be begged for. Toilet paper, pads were not given to us, instead we were given cotton wool. We were not taken to the shower."

"There was no toilet paper in Zhodzina, instead of toilet paper we were given books and Soviet Belarus newspaper, or as it is called, the "Belarus Today".

BEATINGS OF DETAINEES AND OTHER TORTURE

Many respondents testify to the beatings of men by TDF guards. The officers broke into the cells at night and beat the detainees with their feet, hands and truncheons, this happened several times. At least once it was filmed by them on video. There was a case of men being gassed in a cell. As punishment for "offenses" (loud talking, sitting or lying on beds during the day, etc.), the guards forced the men to do push-ups or squat to the point of exhaustion. If a person did not agree, they threatened to beat him. In relation to women, the guards also undertook physical influences and actions that can be interpreted as sexual harassment.

"The camera opens, a cry: "Faces to the floor!", "Well, what, Tikhanovsky's bastards?". One jumped in, everyone fell (some from the upper beds, some from the lower ones) to the floor. Several people were at the entrance - they got the most. They immediately began to beat all those lying down, distributing blows from right to left. Someone just rolled under the bed from the blows, and after a while he apparently realized that he didn't go through everyone very much. He shouted: "Everyone rise and stand, hands behind your back!" and continued to beat us. He himself jumped onto the table and continued to beat from the table".

"The doors opened, one riot policeman (they were all wearing masks) filmed everything, two beat me. They beat me with truncheons, kicked me. Then they ordered us to lie down and beat us from above, asked us to get up and continued beating. Plus, periodically, some kind of beatings of individual people."

"We handed over the dishes, he returned a few minutes later -

everyone should stand. Everyone got up. Why are you all looking at me? Turn away. - Turned away. And he put his hand through the feeder, where food is transferred, and sprinkled with pepper gas. For such a cell, for such a large number of people, it was impossible to breathe. Everyone was coughing, some had gag reflexes, some ran because they vomited, some just felt nauseous."

"And we start coughing more and more. I say: «It's either from the window or from the ventilation.» And then we hear that some kind of fuss is happening in the corridor, and that people in other cells are also coughing. We already understood that it was pepper spray. Ventilation there is just super-duper. All this reached us, but we were in the outermost cell and the least of all reached us. Because the girls who were closer to the center, I heard that there, almost to some kind of gag reflex, they had this cough, much stronger."

"We heard that the guys were generally tortured, and taken out at night. "Lie down - get up! Lie down - get up! And we heard blows."

"One of these perverts came up to me, and he took his hand, stuck it in my head, and moved his fingers there. Honestly, it felt like you were raped, I don't understand what he wanted with this, and now he moved his nasty, smelly fingers in my head and then hit me against the wall. The girl who was standing to my right, he also turned her around and hit her head twice on the wall."

"The worst thing for me was the night of March 7-8, I heard that they took men out and beat them, mocked them. And it was 4 nights, but not in a row. These 4 nights I stood at these doors and prayed and sobbed."

CONDITIONS OF DETENTION IN THE TDF IN MOGILEV

"In Mogilev, the attitude towards the "political" was strict, I could understand by the sounds. For example, commands: "Move faster, legs wider!" Night: "Rise! Everyone rise! Full Name!» In that tone.»

From an interview with a participant in an anti-war rally

When they were transferred to the temporary detention center in Mogilev, the heating in the paddy wagons was not turned on, it was drafty from the cracks and people froze.

During the registration all warm clothes were taken away from the men, leaving only pants and a T-shirt. Jackets and warm clothes were also taken from women. All this was done to make people more cold.

During the inspection, the men were forced to tighten the handcuffs so that their hands turned purple and their fingers went numb.

People were deliberately placed in overcrowded cells by 3-5 times. As soon as some of the people from the cell were released, the rest were moved to another, smaller cell, so that the "political" constantly felt overpopulation. Mattresses, pillows, bed linen and towels were not provided. At night, they woke me up 2 times, torturing me with sleep deprivation. It was very cold in the cells. The hot water in the cells was turned off. Walks and showers were not provided.

"For some time we were in a cell where there were 6 of us and our company was constantly getting smaller. And so, we were transferred to smaller cells. Where there were 4 beds, there were 10-12 of us. Crowding is maintained artificially and deliberately. More than once there were threats to put even more people if we behave in a wrong way."

"The light was always on too. We were woken up 2 times during the night. At 2 and 4 o'clock. We had to get down, go to the feeder, say our first and last name."

"At night, twice" wake-ups "- get up, introduce yourself, all this

with a cry. In the morning, as it turned out, we were forbidden to lie on the floor, it was forbidden to sleep under the bunks. It was sometimes forbidden to lean on the bunks."

"Initially, there were 7 of us there, we were very cold. Although there was heating there, but the battery warms from above, from below it is slightly warm. We were freezing terribly, especially in the middle of the night. We huddled together to the battery, who, as best they could, sat down by the battery in order to somehow warm up".

A special method of bullying was the daily three or four searches of the cells and those arrested. People were forced to undress (both men and women), taken naked out of their cells and searched. At the same time, the TDF officers behaved aggressively, rudely, used physical force against the detainees.

"Three times a day we were taken to, in my opinion, this is called a check or inspection. A slit opens in the door, a peephole, and we are told to undress to our shorts. Everyone undresses to their underpants, then the feeder opens, you put your hands in there, they put handcuffs on, in shorts, with handcuffs on your hands, you take your things, the doors open, you go out into the corridor, you put things on the bench, your hands are handcuffed to the wall, your legs stand wide. Your turn comes, they say - cowards. You take off your underpants, give them to the TDF officer, squat 3 times, return the underpants, put them on, wait for everyone to do this, they say: "Take your things, come in." You pick up things, you go. All this is also accompanied by cries like "faster! faster! «. If it seems to the TDF officer that you did not spread your legs wide enough during this examination, he can come up and use his shoed foot to knock your legs wider so that you stand even wider against the wall. This is a cold corridor, I think I caught a cold there even more, with these three searches a day."

"They searched at least 3 times a day, and not like on Akrestsina. During the checks, we were taken out into the corridor and put against the wall. Before that, we stuck our hands into the feeder and they handcuffed them. When we were taken from floor to floor, then the hands should be behind the back, when just to check, the hands are in front of you. There they groped us, then they took us to a small room where a girl stood, in front of which

we completely undressed, she looked at every our thing. We raised our hands, masks, squatted 3 times. Although we had women 50 and 70 years old with us. Then we got dressed, they handcuffed us again, we went into the corridor, body search again and a metal detector, and only then they led us into the cell and removed the handcuffs through the feeder. And so 3 times a day.

The detainees note that the quality of food in Mogilev was unsatisfactory. Not enough drinking water.

"Drinking. Drink something, tea, compote, jelly, only twice a day. Nothing was given for dinner. Only tap water. And in the early days, the norm was very low - 100 grams. Moreover, they brought it in some half-liter aluminum mugs, very old. Army mugs decommissioned from the army. And all the utensils match, very old. For unknown reasons, they began to bring 200 grams in a couple of days."

In fact, there was no medical care for the detainees; in case of a cold with a high temperature (possibly it was COVID-19), after numerous requests, paracetamol was given to the detainees a few days later.

"At some time I could not even speak, my voice sat down, my throat hurt very badly. On Thursday we were transferred and since Thursday we have been asking for at least some paracetamol, aspirin, something like that. And we got the first paracetamol only on Saturday."