

MASS TORTURE IN BELARUS 2020-2021

Fourth interim report:
Conditions of Detention in Places of Detention
from August 2020 to May 2021

МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ
КОМИТЕТ
ПО РАССЛЕДОВАНИЮ
ПЫТОК В БЕЛАРУСИ

The International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus was created as a reaction of Belarusian and foreign human rights organizations to torture and brutality towards civilians after the presidential elections on August 9, 2020.

THE COMMITTEE'S OBJECTIVES

1. Documenting torture, brutality, use of weapons and special equipment against civilians.
2. Searching for witnesses and evidence of torture.
3. Identification of suspects in torture and inhumane treatment.
4. Processing of the information received.
5. Preparation of lawsuits and legal support of torture victims.
6. Communications with and appeals to international organizations.
7. Preparation of reports on the collected information for the general public of Belarus, as well as for international organizations and institutions.
8. Interaction with governmental, non-governmental actors, for example, national and international courts, the Investigative Committee, the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Belarus.

PRINCIPLES OF THE COMMITTEE

The activities of the Committee are based on the Principles of Activity of Human Rights Defenders of Belarus. In addition, for this purpose, we adhere to and emphasize the following in our work:

- confidentiality of information and security for its members;
- interaction of all stakeholders;
- work according to unified methodology and concentration of information in a single database.

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Content

<u>General conclusions</u>	4
<u>Methodology</u>	6
<u>International standards and national legislation of detention of administratively detained and arrested persons</u>	9
<u>Conditions of detention in places of detention in Belarus</u>	14
<u>Statistical data from analysis of interviews</u>	49
<u>Conclusions</u>	51
<u>Persons responsible for torture</u>	54
<u>Recommendations for the government</u>	56

General conclusions

The purpose of this report is to systematize the testimonies of victims of torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment in the period of August 2020 - May 2021 in places of detention in the Republic of Belarus.

It is important to understand that before being put in places of detention the vast majority of detainees had already been subjected to torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment. Many of them, even before being put in places of detention, needed medical and psychological assistance, which in the overwhelming majority of cases was not provided.

Based on statistical and analytical data obtained from in-depth interviews with victims who were detained during the period of August 9-13, 2020 and had an unknown legal status, as well from those who were subjected to administrative detention and arrest in 2020-2021, the authors of the report conclude that there were **numerous human rights violations in places of detention**: militia departments (ROVD, RUVD) and places of detention for detained and administratively arrested persons (OIC, TDF, Pre-trial prison). International standards and requirements of the legislation on the conditions of detention of people in places of detention were deliberately violated on a massive scale by the administrations of detention institutions and by militia officers, and these violations were criminally ignored by those responsible for overseeing compliance with the law.

The torture had a large-scale, systemic and mass nature and had the goal of suppressing and eliminating protest activities and possible public manifestations of disagreement with the regime (dissent). From the moment of detention and during all of its stages, the security forces tortured, intimidated and humiliated people and violated their human dignity.

Minsk was the center of demonstrative reprisals and intimidation of dissenters, which involved all militia departments and places of detention (OIC, TDF on Akrestina Street). The institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for holding of administratively detained and arrested persons in the regions also participated in repressive treatment of detainees and created inhumane conditions at places of detention.

Thus, since August 9, 2020, places of detention in Belarus have been deliberately turned into **places of mass torture and demonstrative unpunished reprisals using cruel physical, sexual, psychological violence** on political opponents and people who disagree with the rule of the Lukashenka regime. Places of detention, along with law enforcement agencies, courts and state media, became parts of a large machine of repression.

The authors of the report also remind of the **previous interim reports** of the International Committee of the Investigation of Torture in Belarus:

1. [First Interim Report](#): On the State's Reaction and Measures Taken to Investigate the Mass Torture of August 9-13 2020 ¹
2. [Second Interim Report](#): Detention, Conditions of Detention and Treatment of Detainees in September-November 2020 ²
3. [Third Interim Report](#): Torture, Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment of Women ³

Mass torture during detaining and delivery to places of detention in August and later on constitutes a separate object of research and will be elaborated on in subsequent reports.

1 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cX6SN-Of3aop2RB6t2ZKU8ed79zSwg3E/view>
2 https://drive.google.com/file/d/1neM05as_IzF8ZlcXTwZtWEx6_MzpOdy/view
3 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Eu2RpPmylSPfwhiS17tsD1308pOUjgbr/view>

Methodology

This report contains information on the conditions of detention in the territorial bodies of internal affairs, in temporary detention facilities (TDF), in the Center for Isolation of Offenders (OIC) and in other specialized institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus for persons of two categories:

- a) those to whom administrative detention was applied (**administratively detained**);
- b) those subjected to an administrative penalty in the form of administrative arrest (**administratively arrested**).

Administratively detained persons are persons to whom administrative detention has been applied and whose cases must be considered by the courts no later than 72 hours from the moment of detention.

Administratively arrested persons are persons whose cases have been considered by courts that have sentenced said persons to penalty in the form of administrative arrest.

The listed categories of people have different legal status: the former have not yet been found guilty of committing an administrative offense; the latter have been found guilty. It is important to note that from the analyzed questionnaires, it was not possible to establish the facts according to which persons placed in places of detention could be considered real offenders.

623 in-depth interviews of people who applied to the Committee were subjected to analysis. To analyze the conditions of places of detention, reports of **394 people (274 men and 120 women)** who served administrative arrest in places of detention in the Republic of Belarus from August 2020 to May 2021 were selected.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

OIC - Offenders Isolation Center

TDF - Temporary Detention Facility

LTP - Labour Treatment Profilactoria

RUVD/ROVD – District police departments

GUVD - the Main Department of Internal Affairs of the Minsk City Executive Committee

The authors of the report analyzed the conditions of detention of detainees in the following places of detention **(550 cases)**:

1. OIC (Center for Isolation of Offenders), Minsk, 1st str. Akrestina, 36a;
2. TDF (temporary detention facility), Minsk, 1st str. Akrestina, 36;
3. TDF of Minsk region, Minsk, st. Skoriny 20;
4. Pre-trial prison in Brest, Brest, st. K. Marksa, 86;
5. TDF of Baranovichi, Baranovichi, st. 50 let VLKSM, 1;
6. Pre-trial prison in Baranovichi, Baranovichi st. Brestskaja, 258V;
7. TDF of Bobruisk, Bobruisk, st. Sovetskaja, 7a;
8. TDF of Borisov, Borisov, st. Stroitelej, 14;
9. Prison of Grodno, Grodno, st. Kirova, 1;
10. TDF of Gomel, Gomel, st. Mezhdugorodnjaja, 26;
11. TDF of Zhodino, Zhodino, ul. Sovetskaja, 21;
12. Pre-trial prison in Zhodino, Zhodino, ul. Sovetskaja, 21;
13. TDF of Lida, Lida st. Sovetskaja 19;
14. OIC of Lida, Lida st. Sovetskaja 19;
15. TDF of Mogilev, Mogilev, st. Krupskoj 99b;
16. Prison of Mogilev, Mogilev, st. Krupskoj 99a;
17. TDF of Molodechno, Molodechno, st. Galickogo, 23;
18. TDF of Slutsk, Slutsk, ul.Ulasovca, 12;
19. LTP (Labour Treatment Profilactoria) of Slutsk, Slutsk district, d. Pavlovka;
20. TDF of Starye Dorogi, Starye Dorogi, ul. Pervomajskaja, 21;
21. TDF of Stolin, Stolin, ul.Sovetskaja, 69.

The report also contains information on conditions of detention in the District Police Departments (RUVD) of Zavodsky, Leninsky, Moskovsky, Oktyabrsky, Partizansky, Pervomaisky, Sovetsky, Centralny districts, and in ROVDs of other cities of Belarus. This information was gathered from the questionnaires of the victims, who were held in detention in several places. For the sake of objectivity of information, the authors considered it necessary to include them in the study.

The bulk of the injured people were concentrated in Minsk, since it was the capital

that was the epicenter of mass actions both in August 2020 and thereafter. And it was in Minsk where the repressive machine of unprecedented, for Belarus, scale was created to suppress any protest activity.

The report also contains information from open sources (media, social networks) obtained from partners and witnesses.

For the safety of the interviewed people, the data provided by the Committee in the report is anonymous. The data of all respondents is available at the Committee, and, with the consent of the respondents and after the change of regime, all evidence will be provided to independent investigating authorities.

International standards and national legislation of detention of administratively detained and arrested persons

INTERNATIONAL TREATIES AND STANDARDS

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is an international covenant for the Republic of Belarus since 1976. As a result, norms of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights are part of the legal system of the republic of Belarus.

Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states: “no one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment”.

In accordance with article 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, all persons deprived of their liberty have the right to humane treatment and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person. The penitentiary system provides for a regime for prisoners, the essential purpose of which is their correction and social re-education. Juvenile offenders are separated from adults and given treatment appropriate to their age and legal status.

Administratively detained and administratively arrested persons are subject to the **United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners** (the Nelson Mandela Rules)⁴, which the Republic of Belarus, a UN member, is obliged to comply with.

4 https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Nelson_Mandela_Rules-R-ebook.pdf

NATIONAL LEGISLATION

Article 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus establishes the prohibition of torture, cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment, and also obliges the state to ensure freedom, inviolability and dignity of the individual. At the same time, restriction or deprivation of freedom is allowed in cases and in the manner prescribed by law.

During the period described, the conditions of detention of the detainees in special institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were regulated by the **Rules for the Detention of an Individual to Whom Administrative Detention Was Applied** (approved by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 996⁵ dated November 21, 2013).

The conditions of detention of persons subjected to administrative arrest were regulated by Articles 18-5. and 18-7 of the Procedural and Executive Code of the Republic of Belarus on Administrative Offenses (hereinafter PIKoAP), in force until March 1, 2021, as well as the **Rules of Internal Regulations for Places of Serving Administrative Arrest**⁶ (approved by the Resolution of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus dated 20.10.2015 No. 313⁷).

However, despite the different legal statuses of administratively detained and administratively arrested, the conditions of their material and living provisions in places of detention, food standards, provisions of bedding, bed linen and personal hygiene products, the procedure for providing medical assistance to these persons, as well as sanitary and epidemiological requirements for their detainment, with a few exceptions, were identical.

5 <https://bit.ly/3xsoKF5>

6 <https://bit.ly/3cKDnfo>

7 <https://bit.ly/35qrMxP>

FOOD AND WATER PROVISION

The Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus dated November 21, 2006 No. 1564 «On the establishment of nutritional standards for persons held in places of temporary detention of internal affairs bodies, centers for the isolation of offenders of internal affairs bodies, ...» establishes the following nutritional norms for adult men and women, regardless of their procedural status, held in places of temporary detention and in isolation centers for offenders, in grams per day:

- bread from a mixture of peeled rye flour and wheat flour of the first grade 300;
- wheat bread from second grade flour 200;
- wheat flour of the second grade 5;
- various groats 90; pasta 30;
- meat (pork, beef, lamb - I category) 100;
- fish (headless) 100;
- margarine products 25;
- vegetable oil 20;
- cow's milk (milliliters) 100;
- sugar 30;
- table salt 15;
- natural tea 1;
- bay leaf 0.1;
- mustard powder 0.2;
- tomato paste 3;
- potatoes 500;
- vegetables 250;
- fortified kisel powder 25;
- dried fruits 10.

SANITARY CONDITIONS AND OCCUPANCY OF DETAINMENT CELLS

According to Art. 18.7. of the PIKoAP, which was in force during the period of this study, there should be **no less than four square meters** per person in a cell.

In accordance with **paragraph 38** of Rules 2 and **paragraph 48** of Rules 1, administratively arrested and detained persons are provided with **a sleeping place for individual use.**

The same paragraphs of both Rules stipulate that detained and arrested persons are provided with **bedding and bed linen** in accordance with the established norms.

36. In accordance with the established norms and based on the number of persons held, the cells are issued the following items for common use:

- laundry and toilet soap, toilet paper;
- board games (checkers, chess, dominoes);
- items for cleaning the camera (for the time of cleaning);
- sewing needles, scissors, knives for cutting food (can be issued for short-term use under the supervision of employees of places of serving administrative arrest).

37. Cells of places of serving administrative arrest are to be equipped with:

- table and benches with seating according to the number of places in the cell;
- beds;
- sanitation unit;
- a washbasin (if possible), as well as a tap with tap water (a tank with drinking water);
- a bedside table for storing toiletries;
- radio receiver;
- rubbish bin;
- ventilation equipment;
- TV (if possible).

38. Administratively arrested persons are **provided with personal hygiene products.**

39. Cooled boiled water for drinking is supplied to the cells (isolation cells) every day, as well as on demand.

43. Administratively arrested persons are **given writing implements and paper** at their request for writing petitions, proposals, statements and complaints.

44. At least once a week, administratively arrested persons are given the **opportunity to take a shower for at least fifteen minutes.**

90. In case of complaints of administratively arrested persons about deteriorating health and (or) obvious signs of illness and the absence of the possibility of providing emergency medical care, the head of the place of serving the administrative arrest or the person on duty is to **immediately call an ambulance.**

94. In case of **detecting that an administratively arrested person has an infectious disease**, scabies, head lice, the arrested person **is placed in a separate cell** during his detention in places of serving administrative arrest.

Administratively arrested persons **can use the right of a daily walk** of at least one hour (Clause 7, Art. 18-7. PIKoAP).

Conditions of detention in places of detention in Belarus (August 2020 - May 2021)

AUGUST 2020

August 2020 became one of the most brutal periods in terms of conditions in places of detention and is characterized by the most numerous and unprecedented violations of human rights.

The following human rights were violated en masse:

- the right not to be subjected to torture, cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment,
- the right to liberty and security of person,
- the right of persons deprived of their liberty to be treated humanely and to have the inherent dignity of the human person respected,
- the right to privacy.

Particularly cruel beatings of detained people took place from 9 to 13 August 2020. **People with tattoos, non-standard appearance (long or dyed hair, dreadlocks, piercings, etc.), national symbols on their clothes, those that spoke Belarusian language were given increased attention and more severe beatings.** The beatings were savage enough that some of the detainees lost consciousness or involuntarily defecated/urinated due to pain.

All detainees, even those who were not subjected to beatings, or were subjected to minor physical interaction, were in a stressed state due to the constant screams of the beaten, which in turn is also characterized as torture, since the very situation of being in these places of detention in the complete absence of any guarantees, legal or otherwise, along with experienced or seen torture, was assessed by people as a real threat of torture.

Deliberate deprivation from sleep at night (beatings, threats, or repeated demands to line up and roll call), overcrowding (lack of sleeping places or even places to lie down in general), unacceptable temperature conditions (night cold if outside or lack of fresh air if inside in the cells) - these are the conditions of detention that were described by the administratively detained and arrested on August 9-14, 2020.

Lack of water and food, ignored requests for necessary medical assistance, and bright lighting around the clock affected people as additionally harsh conditions of detention.

No sanitary and epidemiological measures were taken to prevent COVID-19, which during a pandemic is a great threat to health and life of detainees.

OIC AND TDF AKRESTINA

When the detainees were brought to places of detention, many of them were beaten and forced to kneel along the fence, some with their heads on the ground, and had to stay in that position for 6-12 hours. Kneeling on the pavement caused excruciating pain, and detainees were beaten for changing their posture. At the same time, food and water were not provided, and detainees were not allowed to go or be taken to the toilet.

Later, the detainees were placed in **outdoor exercise yards** (exercise yards are designed for detainees to walk for up to 1 hour and are open-air rooms with concrete walls and a concrete floor with a metal mesh instead of a ceiling; there is no furniture or toilet there) with an area of 20-25 square meters 70-110 detainees were placed there, and were kept there for 1-2 days. Given the size of the yard and the number of detainees, they could not even lie down on the concrete floor, and sometimes there was not enough space for everyone to sit down at the same time. Drinking water was not provided, at best only tap water was given. Tap water was provided extremely rarely and in very small quantities, in total, 1-2 sips per detainee from a shared bottle. Occasionally, 5-10 loaves of bread were given for the stated number of detainees. In such conditions people did not have the opportunity to sleep at night, got cold and were forced to warm themselves pressing against each other.

Standard cells of these institutions had similar conditions. From 30 to 60 detainees were placed in cells designed for 4-6 people (approximately 12-18 sq.m). In addition, the windows could not be opened. Employees sometimes opened the feeders (a small window in the door of the cell for serving food), but it was all at their discretion. Detainees were tortured (beaten, had air flow to the cell restricted, had a bucket of water poured into the cell) for any demand for

medical assistance or improvement of conditions of detention. As the humidity in the cells reached very high levels and condensation appeared on the walls, it became even more difficult to breathe, and some detainees would faint. If any request came from a single detainee, the employees could beat all detained in the cell (principle of collective responsibility).

The detainees were deprived of sleep. At night, employees walked along the corridors and shouted loudly, hitting the doors with truncheons. Detainees were not fed for 1-3 days. No drinking water was provided, only poor quality tap water. Some of the detainees were stripped of their outer clothing and left in their underpants. The detainees were not provided with mattresses and other bedding, or with hygiene products (soap, toilet paper, pads for women). There were cockroaches in the cells.

Before their release, many people were severely beaten, laid on the ground and beaten, as the guards put it, «for purposes of prevention». Medical care was not provided in all places of detainment.

«I was especially sorry for the blonde-haired guy, when during the 'interrogation', one of the punishers asked if he was a woman or a man, and the other one answered 'hit him in the groin, to find out', so, he hit him».

«The cell had inhumane conditions. There was not enough air, we all drank water from the same bottle, because due to overcrowding it was difficult to move around the cell: we literally lay, sat, stood on top of each other. And the more you move, the more oxygen you consume, and the more you interfere with others. All of this during the coronavirus epidemic. We could only dream of soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, toilet paper. Only cold water, no hot water, no one takes you to wash. Regarding food, too, nobody remembered that we should be fed. When we insistently demanded something from the guards, they, as we believed, out of anger at us, poured buckets of water into the cell, and it was terrible, as due to the water we could neither lie nor sit on the floor. We even had to sit on the sanitation hole. In addition, the water increased the humidity, and the chamber turned into a sauna, we were suffocating, we did not have enough oxygen».

«They did not feed us from the moment of our arrival (evening of August 9th, Sunday) until Wednesday. 33 people were placed in a six-bed cell. It was impossible to breathe. People were lying everywhere. I began to choke, because I did not have enough air and could not move away from the window. The worst thing was that the toilet reeked horribly. It made the whole cell stink, and it smelled like urine. Not only did the toilet stink, all the mattresses and pillows stank. There was no possibility of any bed linen. All we had was the stinking cell, the yellow light, it did not turn off at all, it was on around the clock. There were also cockroaches ... They ran on the floor where we slept ... They ran along the floor, along the walls».

«Two nights from 10th to 11th and from 11th to 12th, i.e. on Tuesday and Wednesday, those were nights when they beat people ... I've never heard people scream like that. Not in any of the scariest horror films ever. Not in one of them ... It was real psychological abuse. «

«They refused to provide us with pads, even to bring them from the personal belongings of the detainees; medical assistance was not provided, the water was only from the tap, but it had a bad smell. There was one glass from the previous «inmates», everyone had to use it to get water for drinking».

«They brought us to Akrestsina, unloaded us, forced us to lay on the ground on the street and there we lay for two hours. In the yard. A medical worker appeared and walked around the yard. But she didn't help anyone. She was the medical worker of Akrestsina itself, one of the staff. Normal doctors would not be allowed here. Once again it was confirmed that I was tagged, one of the staff said that I was «special» and that I did not need help, and that they must not even approach me».

«They threw the boy, he had a tattoo on his wrists: «fuck», in Latin letters, on one wrist, on another, «you», but the wrists were just smashed. They, well, barely held together... There were no open fractures, but they could bend like this. Literally 2-3 hours later he began to faint. Because as I understand, that pain was incredible. His hands dangled, well, held together, because some of the tendons inside, muscles, perhaps haven't been fully severed».

«They brought us immediately to Akrestsina, kept us in the exercise yard for a day and a half. There were about 90 of us. The yard was about 4x4 or 4x4.5 meters. We spent the night standing or in a squat position. We were taken to the toilet, twice a day, sometime in the morning and in the evening. They did not feed us for a day, then they gave me a loaf of bread. We got half a liter of water per person per day. Then 40 people were placed in a cell for five people».

«They let us out on the night of 13-14 August, at 3 am. Behind the TDF, there was a dark corner. There we were forced to lie down on the ground, facing the fence. And 10-12 riot policemen - large men, in masks, in black T-shirts, in ankle boots, started beating us. At the same time, they forced us to sing the national anthem. When they beat us they targeted our legs more. I got special treatment, because I had a white T-shirt. They began to beat me while I was still standing, I immediately laid down, they began to kick me, then hit me with truncheons. They told everyone: «If you end up here again, you won't leave this place alive!» And so they beat us up. We were released one at a time with an interval of two minutes».

«There were 33 of us in a four-bed cell. On the third day after the arrest, they threw three loaves of bread for 33 people and the same amount the next day. Several times in the middle of the night they would wake us up without any purpose, just to torture us, so that we were constantly tense and stressed».

«They took us out into the yard, handed us over to people in black uniforms, I don't know, they didn't look like riot police, I don't know. Raising our heads was very dangerous. Everyone was lined up along the fence and told that there would be natural selection. They made us sit on each others shoulders and squat for count in this manner. Those who refused or simply could not physically squat because people did not have the strength were immediately removed and beaten on the grass with truncheons».

«There were 37 people in a 6-bed cell measuring 4 by 5 meters. We were packed in the cell like sardines in a can. Over time, we somehow accommodated ourselves by 4 people, sitting on beds and lying under the beds, on chairs, in the corners, on the nightstands. And we changed places with each other if something was getting numb. There was no ventilation as such. Through the open window we saw people being beaten. The medics who were on Akrestsina Street did not provide help. One man started having heart issues. We barely managed to wait for a medic, when he came he said "it's fine if you die». From the evening of 9.08 to the morning of 12, we weren't fed once. A badly beaten man was in the cell with us, he demanded that his traces of beatings be officially registered. In response the guard poured 2 buckets of water with bleach into our cell».

TDF OF ZHODINO

Upon arrival, some detainees were kept on their knees for several hours along the wall in the basement. Some of the detainees were beaten. Many were placed in outdoor exercise yards with an area of 15-20 square meters, where 30-40 people were placed.

The detainees were also placed in standard cells of this institution. The cells designed for 8-10 people contained 30-40 people. On the first day after their arrival, the detainees were not fed, and no drinking water was provided. Sometimes they were not fed in the following days too. If fed, then food was given only according to the number of beds in the cell. There were not enough mugs for tea, 2-3 people were forced to drink from one mug. No drinking water was provided, only tap water was available, which was of very poor quality. No medical assistance was provided.

«If you had too short a step, they beat you with a truncheon, if you raised your head, they beat you with a truncheon, if you walked too slowly, they beat you with a truncheon. That is, for any action that the guard does not like, you got a truncheon».

«There were 37 of us in the cell for 8 people. On each bed we had a mattress, a pillow and a prickly woolen blanket. And we gave the guys on the floor these blankets from the beds, so the blankets were laid out on the floor and on the table. And someone slept on the table, someone under the table, someone next to the table».

«We were taken to the room where the employee was sitting, he asked if there were any complaints. Some said that they have diabetes, high blood pressure, heart problems, to which he replied that he doesn't care».

BREST CITY MILITARY BASE (“SEVERNYJ GORODOK” DISTRICT)

Many of the detainees were severely beaten. People were forced to kneel with their hands behind their heads for 15-18 hours. If a person changed posture or raised his head, he was beaten. Detainees were beaten for requests to go to the toilet or to drink water. Only several sips of water were given, detainees were not fed. According to the victims, the riot policemen said: *“We were not allowed to beat you for 26 years, we are now given free rein, and we are having fun».*

«They beat people severely, if you ask for water, to go to the toilet, or raise your head - they always beat you. They kept us there for 18 hours and gave us five two-liter bottles of water for 250 people, everyone drank from bottles. They didn't feed us. Some people in there were crying because of the beatings, some had bowel movements there. And they were also beaten for that».

PRE-TRIAL PRISON IN BREST

Cells had 4-7 times more detainees in them than they were designed for. For example, there were 35 people in a five-bed cell. People were not allowed to sleep at night, they were woken up 2-3 times. Mattresses and pillows were provided only according to the number of beds in the cell, bed linen was not provided.

LTP SLUTSK

The detainees placed in this institution noted that the conditions of detention were normal - beds, food and showers were provided. However, they noted that the institution itself was surrounded by a fence with barbed wire and towers with submachine gunners.

«Immediately there was a contrast, because the employees who were in Slutsk treated us humanly, even if we were prisoners, but they treated us humanly. We were taken to the showers. ... I began to look around and did not understand what was happening, because this place was fenced off with a new wooden fence, there were towers with submachine gunners, and the barbed wire was so new it shined, that is, it was a place that had been prepared recently and they even continued working still to finish it. I did not know that it was an LTP, but it felt like a concentration camp - towers, submachine gunners, barbed wire».

«Long-long barracks and there were probably 180 of us there. Bunk beds, there is bed linen, there are mattresses, there are pillows. In the morning they brought us for breakfast, you could take seconds there, like in the army».

DISTRICT POLICE DEPARTMENTS OF MINSK AND OTHER CITIES

Zavodsky District Police Department of Minsk

The detainees were beaten in the courtyard all night. They were not taken to the toilet, were not provided with drinking water and food. For refusing to sign the protocol, they were beaten with truncheons. Detainees were insulted and humiliated.

«When they were unloading us, they also beat everyone, passed us through the line beating us with truncheons, laid everyone face down on the grass, took our personal belongings and noted them, and from time to time they hit us. I needed medical help, I was denied it many times».

Frunzensky District Police Department of Minsk

The detainees were thrown to the floor and purposefully beaten in the legs and buttocks. Some of the men were kicked. Many were beaten to get their phone passwords. Everyone who did not agree with their protocols was beaten. Detainees were not taken to the toilet or provided with drinking water for at least one night. Detainees were insulted and humiliated.

«A girl was sitting with me, her boyfriend had dreadlocks, he was forced to pull them out at night. In the morning they put me back in the place with the floor covered with dreadlocks».

«I remembered the moment when I was in the gym, this Karina, Valuiskaya, passed by, and the guys who were in these 'comfortable' positions were hit with a rubber truncheon in the groin. That is, I got hit twice. And some guys ... later already, I found out very late, the man's name was Igor, he is 54 years old, he was taken from his house on the 11th at lunchtime, and his legs were simply pulled apart by two employees, and Karina was beating him in the groin».

Centralny District Police Department of Minsk

The detainees were beaten. They were not provided with drinking water and food. For refusing to sign the protocol, people were threatened to be beaten or were beaten, insulted and humiliated in every possible way.

«There was also a man of about 40 years old, there is an obvious thing that when you step out of line in any way, you will be physically punished. He was indignantly complaining, saying, why was he detained, are you all insane. 2-3 people grabbed him and dragged him to the side behind our backs, and they beat him very hard for about 10 minutes, because he shouted some words, then he just shouted. My blood froze with horror that a person could be beaten so badly».

«In a rude manner, people were taken out of the cell by three, beaten, then put in a stretch in the courtyard of the Tsentralnyj RUVD with their foreheads against the wall. If someone stood in a "wrong manner", they were also beaten».

Moskovsky District Police Department of Minsk

The detainees were beaten. They were also beaten for requests to take them to the toilet. 30 people were placed in solitary cells with an area of 4-5 square meters. No drinking water or food provided. They were beaten for refusing to sign the protocol. Insults and humiliation.

«They poked with a truncheon in the anus. Let's just say, through the pants. They stepped on hands with their feet. Hands just turned blue».

«They forbade people to sleep, that is, no one could close their eyes all night, they walked around, thundered on chairs with truncheons so that people, God forbid, would not sleep. They beat those they thought fell asleep. with a helmet or a truncheon in the back, in the back of the head».

Partizanski District Police Department of Minsk

Beating up detainees. Forcing them to kneel with their head to the floor. Keeping people in the basement all night, concrete basement without sleeping places. No drinking water or food provided. Detainees were beaten for refusing to sign the protocol. Insults and humiliation.

«They pushed us out into the street, it was Partizanskoje RUVD and they beat us very badly. They beat us in the back, beat us in the buttocks, beat us in the thighs».

«In the morning, riot police arrived. They started beating us in the spine. They hit the spine with a truncheon, the truncheon parallel to the spine and hit such that the truncheon's end was where the back of the head was. And you had to give your name, surname and patronymic, that is they beat you, and you quickly name yourself. The blows were very strong. One guy lost consciousness twice. He did not have time to say his first name, surname and patronymic. They beat him, he falls to his knees, they raise him again, he comes to his senses a little, they ask him again».

Leninsky District Police Department of Minsk

Detainees were beaten up. They were not taken to the toilet and beaten for requests to take them to the toilet. Anyone who tried to turn his head or change his position was beaten. No drinking water or food provided. They were beaten for refusing to sign the protocol. Insults and humiliation.

«They told us to crawl on our knees to the left along the perimeter. This went on for a long time, we crawled on glass, on stones, this whole process was accompanied by blows with truncheons. Knees and legs in general were numb and it was extremely difficult to move. At the same time, everyone's legs were torn raw and bloody. If one crawled badly, he received blows on his back with truncheons».

Sovetsky District Police Department of Minsk

The detainees were lined up along the wall, and all night long they stood with their hands tied behind their backs. Detainees were beaten. No drinking water or food provided. Detainees were beaten for refusing to sign the protocol. Insults and humiliation.

«It was impossible to change the position. If, for example, I put my legs closer, if they notice it, they beat me with a truncheon on the inside of my legs so that I have to spread my legs. It was also not allowed to turn my head, to talk».

Pervomaisky District Police Department of Minsk

Detainees were beaten. No drinking water or food provided. Detainees were beaten for refusing to sign the protocol. Insults and humiliation. Detainees were held in the gym, concrete cells without sleeping places.

Oktyabrsky District Police Department of Minsk

Detainees were beaten. For 24 hours they were not taken to the toilet, or provided with drinking water and food. For refusing to sign the protocol, they were beaten with truncheons on the hands. Insults and humiliation.

«They bring me the protocol, they say, sign it. I refuse, they beat me on the hands several times for refusing. In the end they put my hand on the bench, start hitting the bones and say that if I do not sign, then the truncheon will be replaced by a leg and they will simply grind up all 4 of the bones, I won't be able to move my fingers. In the end, I signed a protocol even though I had no idea about its contents».

District Police Department of Lida

Detainees were beaten. Detainees were doused with water at night while they were lying on the asphalt and it was cold.

«They hit someone, the person groans in pain, and they begin to imitate that with some sexual connotations, moan, giggle. ... They poured water on us. I don't know why this happened (this 'washing' at the ROVD). Perhaps because many people urinated under themselves. Perhaps it was some kind of torture, because it was already night, it was cool, we were lying on this asphalt surface, it was cold».

TDF of Bereza

No medical assistance was provided.

«I said that I was severely beaten and I felt bad, I have a closed head injury, I asked to call a doctor, the commander laughed and said that I would live to see the trial».

SEPTEMBER, 2020

Compared to August, the level of violence has decreased, but inhumane treatment in places of detention continued. People were insulted and humiliated. In some places, employees of institutions deliberately created overcrowding in cells, while no sanitary and epidemiological measures were taken to prevent COVID-19, which during a pandemic is a threat to the health and lives of detainees.

OIC AKRESTINA

When the detainees arrived, the officers shouted loudly, insulted people, and swore obscenely. No drinking water was provided. The number of detainees in the cells was mostly within the normal range.

«The window in the cell was closed, and there was no ventilation, we were dying of suffocation. When asked to open the window, they not only did not open it, but, on the contrary, even closed the 'feeder'».

«We were moved into a large cell. The windows were wide open. There was a dire cold wind blowing from there, and it was as if we were sleeping on the street. There was no hot water. We were all so cold that night that everyone immediately fell ill and we were sent from Akrestsina for Zhodino, sick».

«There was a stench in the cell and mold on the ceiling. It was impossible to breathe. The mattress was smelly, by morning it sank between the bars and it was uncomfortable to sleep on it. The blanket also gave off a terrible stench».

TDF AKRESTINA

Cell occupancy standards were within normal limits. The employees were polite, they assured detainees that they would not be beaten. However, there are cases when some detainees, for revenge or other reasons, were placed in an isolation cell, where the conditions of detention were inhumane. No medical assistance was provided. Unsanitary cells (dirt, stench, lack of hot water and hygiene products).

«There were four of us in a single cell 3x1.7 meters. I spent 10 days in it. There was very little space in the punishment cell. Most of the cell was occupied, as it were, by a toilet, or rather, a hole in the floor with a pedestal. The bed was always fastened to the wall, and therefore we had to sleep in turns either on a stool or on a concrete floor. Sleeping on the floor was painful and cold, our hips and shoulders were freezing. There was no water - neither in the toilet nor in the tap. For drinking water, we were

given several bottles with some kind of muddy liquid with an unpleasant smell and taste. Due to lack of water, the toilet was not flushed, there was a constant stench in the cell, and we had to ask the guards to let us take water from the next cell. When I was detained, my ear was torn off and my eardrum was damaged. I sought medical help several times from a paramedic and a doctor, but no help was provided to me».

«There was no hot water in the cell, there was only cold water. There was a very dirty unsanitary toilet. They provided torn bed linen. There were very smelly dirty blankets. They all smelled of urine, of all possible secretions. It was cold in the cell, it was impossible to sleep. We were warming ourselves, hugging each other and that helped us».

«The cell was insanely smelly. The walls were covered from top to bottom with stains, spots, drops. There was a persistent smell of urine. The stench was such that it almost knocked us out there right away. It was cold in the cell».

TDF OF ZHODINO

When the detainees were brought in, the employees of the institution shouted, cussed, and treated them with disrespect. In some cases, 12 detainees were situated in cells designed for 6. In this case, 6 mugs were given. Sometimes they did not bring food at the time detainees were supposed to eat. Mattresses and bed linen were not provided. Only cold water was available in the cells. Women were not provided with soap or pads. The toilet did not provide privacy, there was no door, there was only one partition wall. Cockroaches were spotted in some cells. No drinking water was provided. The detainees were taken to the showers once a week, women were brought to the showers by a male guard. Walks were provided only 1-2 times in 15 days.

«On the sixth day of our detention, we asked to be taken to the shower, to which the guard just laughed at us and left. And every refusal to our requests was accompanied by a comment like "Well, you know who you are!".

«They did not physically assault us, but insulted us, called us 'beasts', humiliated us, demanded to be silent. There were many cockroaches in the cell».

«The cell was very cold, because the window did not close well. They took me out for a walk only once and for 5 minutes».

TDF OF BORISOV

It was very cold in the cells at night. Unsanitary conditions - dirty mattresses and bed linen, soap and toilet paper were not provided.

«I was also surprised by the appearance and smell of the mattresses: they had brown, yellow and reddish spots, the origin of which can only be guessed at. The bed frame was covered in some kind of sticky substance, to which dust and lint from the blanket stuck».

TDF OF MOGILEV

It was cold in the cells, insects were present. No medical assistance was provided.

«By order of Pakhomenko, I was put in solitary confinement. It was very cold there, people in the TDF got sick with COVID-19, I know one person with certainty. There were bedbugs in all the cells of the TDF where I was placed».

DISTRICT POLICE DEPARTMENTS OF MINSK

Leninsky District Police Department of Minsk

All detainees were taken to a garage where they stood over 7 hours.

Zavodsky District Police Department of Minsk

Employees did not let detainees study the protocol and leave their comments. Disrespectfully addressed the detainees. Did not provide drinking water.

Centralny District Police Department of Minsk

Detainees were held in a hangar kneeling on concrete floor, detainees were beaten, insulted and humiliated.

«We were kept on a concrete floor, kneeling. Knees crossed, arms behind our backs, with our heads on the ground».

Sovetsky District Police Department of Minsk

The detainees were forced to stand against the wall for 6-9 hours and were beaten. Medical assistance was not provided.

«I stood at the wall for 7 hours, they constantly demanded that I stand on both legs, despite the fact that I told them about a possible fracture of my leg. Medical assistance was not provided».

OCTOBER, 2020

Those detained at the protest actions started being intensely beaten en masse during arrests and in police wagons yet again. In some police departments of Minsk, despite the cold weather, people were forced to stand without moving for a long time on the street along the wall. On the instructions of the leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, after October 8, the conditions of detention for the «politicals» were purposefully worsened. Also, the detainees were treated more rudely. Drinking water was not provided. No sanitary and epidemiological measures were taken to prevent COVID-19, which during a pandemic is a threat to the health and lives of detainees.

OIC AKRESTINA

While transporting the detainees to Akrestsina, riot policemen beat some people in the police wagon. There is evidence of detainees in cells being beaten by police officials in balaclavas. The practice of pouring a bucket of water into the cell onto the floor had begun. Many cells were overcrowded twice over their limit. Bed linen was not provided, sometimes mattresses were taken away. It was forbidden to lie on bunks during the day, the mattresses had to be rolled up and put on the upper bunk. Showers weren't allowed, walks were either not provided or there was one for 15 days. Unsanitary conditions in the cells - many detainees had lice, toilet paper and personal hygiene products were not provided. Bright lighting around the clock. Some of the detainees fell ill with COVID-19.

«Once we were gathered to watch a propaganda film, the head of the OIC Shapetko was also present there alongside us. I took advantage of the situation and asked if he knew in what conditions my cellmates and I were being held. I told him that our mattresses, bed linen and blankets were taken away from us, the sewage system did not work in the cell, there was no hot water, we had nothing to wash ourselves with. We have not been taken out for walks and for 7 days now, we have not been taken to the shower. To which the answer followed: «The conditions of your detention here are determined by me. All this is done so that you do not want to return here».

«I was sentenced to 15 days and transferred to a punishment cell, where I was for 5 days and, moreover, alone. I was not given a mattress or linen. I slept either on a bare board or on the floor. A tap with cold water was sticking out of the wall, and instead of sinks there was a trash can. The bunk was lowered only for the night. At 6 in the morning you get up and the bed is raised and only after lights out they lower it back. It was cold in the punishment cell and I was freezing. Before that I hadn't washed for two weeks, but I was not taken to the shower. We didn't take any walks for 10 days either. While in the punishment cell, I got sick, my temperature rose, my body began to itch, and lice appeared. Then I was transferred to another cell, where it was stuffy, there was no air».

TDF AKRESTINA

Some of the detainees were placed in a punishment cell (a concrete room 1.5 by 3 meters wide and 4 meters high with a concrete floor), where the bunks were not lowered back at night. There was 1 chair in the punishment cell, and people had to sleep on the cold concrete floor or on a chair. Sometimes the guards poured a bucket of water onto the floor before bringing the detainees in again. There was no ventilation in the cell, so the moisture evaporated for a very long time. Medical aid was not provided.

«After about 10 minutes, a paramedic came and asked what happened, I explained to her, and asked to call an ambulance. She said “we will call an ambulance for you when you die».

«At the Akrestsina TDF they gave me a pillowcase and a sheet. And it was a dilemma: to put the sheet between myself and the mattress or to separate myself from the blanket with it. As a result, I brought lice home».

TDF OF ZHODINO

Several detainees were beaten by riot police in police wagons en route to TDF Zhodino. Some were also beaten when they were let out of detention. Many detainees were forced to duck walk single file. Detainees were placed in cells with twice the number of people the cell was designed for. For example, nine detainees would be held in a four person cell.

Before the trial, a detainee was not given mattresses and bed linen, they were not fed for more than 24 hours. No walks were provided. No soap or cleaning products were provided. A bright light was on in the cell all day and night. In the morning detainees were ordered to roll up the mattresses and put them on the upper bunks; it was forbidden to sit on the beds during the day. Many cells were unheated. Temperature-wise, conditions were very cold. The toilet did not allow for privacy. Almost all detainees were given one mug per two. Detainees were deliberately placed in overcrowded cells to infect with COVID-19. Some of them fell ill with COVID-19, medical assistance was not provided to them, and they were not placed in separate cells.

«There were 12 of us in the six-bed unheated cell. There were no mattresses, we slept as best as we could: some were sitting on a bench with their foreheads in their hands, some were sitting on iron bunks. Without a mattress, it was impossible to sleep on the bunks, besides, the cold also prevented you from falling asleep. There was no toilet paper and therefore we had to tear handkerchiefs. In the morning three loaves of bread and 6 cups of tea were given for 12 people».

«The water was ice cold, the windows were open, the heating radiators did not work ... The cold is incredible. We immediately started knocking to close the windows». They do not close», - we were told an amazing argument. We tried to close the windows ourselves but couldn't. We slept fully clothed for two days. One woman immediately became ill with cystitis. We asked for a paramedic - "later, later, later». He came only on the third day. That is, we call for a paramedic in the morning - he's busy. We call him in the evening, he had already gone home».

«We, about 15 people, were led in single file through these Zhodino catacombs, until we arrived at one of the blocks. Again we were put against the wall, the kicks, jabs in the back, smashing heads against walls of those who were fidgeting or walking, continued. In the cell a bright light was on 24 hours a day, it never turned off. At 6 am we rolled the mattresses. And from 6 am to 10 pm you can't use the beds, otherwise they take away the mattresses. You can't sit on the bed, you can't sit on the floor. Either you are standing, or you sit on benches that are very narrow, small, hard».

«Misha Balaklavshchik, the most erratically behaving person from Zhodino. He constantly wore a balaclava, beat everyone, pressured us verbally and physically. Four people were given two cups of tea. Eight people - 3 cups of tea. I don't know what their standard is. It shocked everyone. Rest of the drinking is done from the tap. Constant verbal humiliation. Literally: «You are scum. You are rubbish. We should wipe our feet on you. You are Tikhanovskaya's henchmen. Tikhanovskaya is a bitch, etc».

TDF OF BARANOVICHI

The attitude of the staff is normal. The cells are damp, dark, very cold, and there is mold on the walls. The bright light did not turn off around the clock.

«In Baranovich, the light did not turn off either. You are in the same lighting mode. It's hard. We were given bed linen. Pros: we were fed very well. The OIC had just water with some presence of cereals, but here there was soup, potatoes with meat. Every evening everyone was given fried herring. Despite the fact that the shower was scheduled on Thursdays, we nevertheless were taken to shower on Friday, they took us for a walk every day. Once it was raining hard, but we were still taken for a walk. The walk lasts at least an hour, and all this time we were in the pouring rain in a stone bag with our feet in the water and shouted, like at the protests: "Let us out!" But no - you have to go for a walk - and you will be walking. Everything according to schedule. And we were sick all these days».

«The cell was very cold, the wall was so damp that it was impossible to touch it. To somehow get warm, we poured hot water into bottles and slept with them or put the bottles under our clothes. The washed clothes in the cell did not dry at all. We asked for second blankets. We stayed in this cold cell for a week. Everyone who was in this cell got sick».

TDF OF STOLIN

Cold cells. No drinking water was provided. The security officials did not react to the demand to record the beatings.

«The cell was gloomy, dark and cold. Only the next week they called me an ambulance, I asked for a doctor because my chest hurt. I turned to him and said: "here, look: I have bruises. I need to record them". He said that he could not help with that, he could only provide medical assistance».

DISTRICT POLICE DEPARTMENTS OF MINSK

Centralny District Police Department of Minsk

Detainees were forced to kneel by the wall and forced to stand for over 3 hours. Medical help was not provided to those who were sick or beaten.

Frunzensky District Police Department of Minsk

Some of the detainees were placed in punishment cells with concrete walls and benches. People were forced to sleep on cold concrete with health consequences.

Leninsky District Police Department of Minsk

Detainees were put in an unheated garage for more than 15 hours, and the detainees were freezing.

Sovetsky District Police Department of Minsk

People were beaten when delivered to RUVD.

Moskovsky District Police Department of Minsk

Rude behavior, threats, requests to call a lawyer were refused.

NOVEMBER, 2020

Those detained at the protests continue to be beaten. Many were beaten for refusing to provide their phone password or for being subscribed to protest telegram channels. All detainees began to be placed in cells that were at least twice overcrowded, sometimes the number of people exceeded the standard by factor of four. This was done purposefully to worsen the conditions of detention and cause the possible infection by COVID-19. The detainees were not provided with bedding, heating and hot water were turned off in the cells. No drinking water was provided. The attitude of employees of institutions towards detainees became more rude, they were insulted, sometimes beaten. In certain institutions, white-red-white flags were laid on the floor, on which detainees were forced to step on, and if they refused, they were beaten. Since the white-red-white symbolism is the historical national symbolism and a symbol of the revolution, such actions of the police forces are clearly political in nature.

OIC AKRESTINA

At the entrance to the institution, a white-red-white flag was laid (the historical flag of Belarus, the symbol of the protests of 2020-2021) and all detainees were forced to walk on it.

Almost all detainees were placed in overcrowded cells. For example, 10 detainees were placed in a four-bed cell, 18-20 detainees were placed in a 12-bed cell with an area of 25 square meters, and detainees were forced to sleep on the floor. The mattresses were only for the number of beds. Bed linen was not provided. From 6:00 to 22:00 detainees were forced to remove mattresses and put them onto the second level of beds, and were forbidden to sit on the beds. No walks were provided. There was a case of food poisoning with spoiled fish, but an ambulance was not called. No medical assistance was provided. No drinking water was provided.

«Then they took us to Akrestsina, put us in a 6-bed cell, there were 24 of us».

«The next day and night I spent on the floor (all Wednesday and from Wednesday to Thursday). I had no bedding, nothing - I just slept on my clothes».

TDF AKRESTINA

All detainees were placed in overcrowded cells. For example, 13 detainees were placed in an 8-bed cell, and 12 in a 6-bed cell. There were only mattresses on the beds, which were very dirty and smelly. Bed linen was not provided. No soap or toilet paper provided. There were cases when the detainees were not

given meals. The food was served by an old lady who portioned sausages and cutlets with her bare hands.

«In all the cells there were twice as many people as the places where you could sleep. We slept for a couple of hours and then had to get up. On that day, we did not drink or eat anything for 24 hours, except for tap water. We slept in pairs, there were 6 of us, but the cell was for three, and in another 6-bed cell there were 12 people, that is, twice as many. We were not given mattresses».

TDF OF ZHODINO

Some of the detainees were left to stand in the street for up to 1-1.5 hours, people were freezing. The detainees noted a very rude and disrespectful attitude, constant threats from Mikhail Nikolayevich Tarasik (Misha Balaklavshchik). He beat the detainees for refusing to squat and sprayed pepper spray on their underpants and face. Some employees called detainees names: *«Animal, scum, freak».*

At the reception in the courtyard and in the medical examination room, white-red-white flags were spread on the floor. Those who did not step on these flags were beaten with truncheons. A case is described when a guy was severely beaten for a white-red-white tattoo.

Detainees were forced to crawl in single file along the basement corridor, do push-ups, squat, those who could not or fell, were beaten with truncheons. All those detained before the trial (1-2 days) were placed in overcrowded cells. For example, 23 detainees could be placed in a 4-bed cell (12-15 square meters), and 21 detainees could be placed in a 6-bed cell (15-18 square meters). There was not enough oxygen, detainees were suffocating. Detainees were forced to sleep on the floor under the beds, under the tables. Mattresses and bed linen were not provided. Many were not fed for more than a day. Meals were provided irregularly. At the same time, food was handed out without gloves, with bare hands.

The toilet did not provide privacy. There was no hot water. It was very cold in the cells. It is reported that the officers stole some of the items from the care packages of the arrested. Torture by being kept awake was practiced. At night, officers knocked on the cell door loudly. A bright light burned around the clock.

«We were given one loaf of bread for 18 people. One loaf of bread a day. No complaints were accepted and they did not enter into any conversations».

«We were forced to sign for receiving the full care package, but only part of it was given, the rest was stolen by the guards. Many of us fell ill with COVID-19, but they

did not provide medical assistance for a long time. Regarding medical assistance, they only gave paracetamol, and you had to ask for it for a long time from the guards. Even when detainees had high fever of 39C, some shifts of guards did not allow them to lie on the beds».

«There were no mattresses. You sleep on iron, and moreover, the iron is not solid, but a lattice. An iron bar, another iron bar, and another iron bar. There was an option to lay a coat under yourself or to cover yourself with it, because it was cold. I put it under myself, because my back hurt a lot. We slept in this way. I really hoped that they would bring us at least a piece of bread. Breakfast at six in the morning, but no food was brought at all. I waited, but nothing was brought to us».

«In Zhodino there were not enough dishes, they gave one mug for two detainees. We tried to share in the following way: the first half of a mug was drunk by relatively healthy people, and the rest was finished by those with signs of illness».

«I got infected with COVID-19 there. When I got out, it turned out that I had a quarter of my lungs damaged and now I have an active stage of COVID-19. Most likely everyone was ill».

TDF OF BARANOVICHI

During the transportation, the security officials laughed at the fact that detainees did not have time to eat, they were hungry, they shared and ate the remaining prison bread. Some of the detainees were placed in overcrowded cells. For example, 12 detainees were placed in an 8-bed cell. The cells are very humid, the walls were covered with mold. Mattresses and pillows were provided, but bed linen was not provided. From 6:00 to 22:00 it was forbidden to sit on the beds and unfold the mattress. In the cells, many fell ill with COVID-19. No medical assistance was provided. Detainees were taken out for a walk only once. No drinking water was provided.

«The conditions of detention were just terrible: the cell there was in such a state that it is difficult to even describe. There was mold everywhere, the floor was damp - we came in and there was a puddle, it never dried up. Everything was very old, everything was in such a state that people simply should not be placed there».

«We were immediately placed in a distribution cell, from which we then were assigned to our cells in pairs. There were more than a hundred of us in a 10-bed cell. It was there that we most likely contracted COVID-19».

«There were more of us than the 19 place cell was designed for. Many slept in pairs. One laid a mattress on the table and slept on the table. The light was on all the time, it was never turned off. I adapted the face mask into an eye mask. When we all got out, we all got sick with COVID-19».

TRANSFER TO BARANOVICHI

«We missed both breakfast and lunch and, accordingly, were without food for 24 hours. We had prison bread with us in the police wagon, and we began to distribute it to each other. We were accompanied by 4 special forces soldiers and they laughed at this, that we were eating this prison bread as if we were from a starving land. The situation was reminiscent of war pictures from history textbooks».

TDF OF MOGILEV

It was very cold in the cells, damp, and there was mold on the walls. The hot water was deliberately turned off to worsen the conditions of detention of political prisoners. From 6:00 to 22:00, employees of the institution demanded to roll up mattresses and forbade detainees to lie on bunks.

Many had contracted COVID-19. All those who were released had to make it to their homes on their own, while all their personal belongings along with money remained in the police department in Minsk.

DISTRICT POLICE DEPARTMENTS OF MINSK

Before being brought to the police station in minibuses, some of the detainees were severely beaten for refusing to unlock their phones.

Centralny District Police Department of Minsk

The detainees were kept in the cold along the wall for more than 5-6 hours. One of the detainees was beaten by an officer of the police department Smolskiy Nikolay Petrovich.

Frunzensky District Police Department of Minsk

When leaving the police wagon, the white-red-white flags were laid out; those who did not step on them were beaten by riot police officers. Many beat up detainees were brought in, but no one called an ambulance for a long time. 11 people were placed in a concrete chamber 1.2 by 2 meters for one night. People did not have enough air, they were not allowed to use the toilet all night.

Sovetsky District Police Department

People were placed along the fence and kept outside for more than 8 hours. At the same time, they were forced to keep their hands up, placed on the fence.

Leninsky District Police Department of Minsk

Riot policemen beat people. The detainees were kept in an unheated garage at the wall for 8-9 hours. No medical assistance was provided.

Pervomaisky District Police Department of Minsk

The detainees were kept in an unheated garage for 8-10 hours, body searches were carried out there and detainees were forced to undress. They were not taken to the toilet, and were not provided with a lawyer. Some were kept outside for 4-6 hours, and detainees were very cold.

Zavodsky District Police Department of Minsk

Beatings of the detainees on delivery and in the premises of the police department. A white-red-white flag was laid on the floor and detainees were forced to step on it; those who did not step on it were beaten. Detainees were forced to stand along the wall.

DECEMBER, 2020

Violent arrests of protesters continued, some were beaten on the way to the police station. Many of the detainees were held outside the police precinct for one to three hours in the cold. Humiliation of detainees and rudeness towards them took place at all stages of detention and arrest.

The purposeful practice of creating special inhumane conditions for the «political» detainees continued. Overcrowding in cells forced people to sleep on the floor. The heating was deliberately turned off, or windows were open in the cells and could not be closed. No drinking water was provided. No sanitary and epidemiological measures were taken to prevent COVID-19, which during a pandemic is a direct threat to the health and life of detainees.

OIC AKRESTINA

Before being received, some of the detainees were kept outside in the cold in the exercise yard for 1-3 hours, people were freezing.

The detainees were placed in overcrowded cells. For example, 11-12 people were placed in 6-bed cells. At the same time, there were mattresses only for the number of beds in the cell. Bed linen was not provided. Cockroaches were seen in some cells. People were forced to sleep on the floor. The heating was turned off in the cells, and it was very cold even when wearing outer layers of clothing. Walks were not provided, detainees were not taken to the shower. The bright light in the cells around the clock did not allow detainees to sleep normally.

«For the entirety of detention they did not provide us with either a shower or a walk. It was cold in the cells, because of the lack of sleeping places, people slept on the floor».

«There were linen lice, some jumping insects, I'm not a biologist. I suppose it might have been a flea, maybe a louse. When we asked the employee, he said to just crush them».

TDF AKRESTINA

There is evidence that police officers kept shocking a detainee with a stun prod when they were transporting him to a place of detention. As a result, when he was brought to the TDF, he could not move and was carried. Very rude attitude from the staff. All detainees were placed in overcrowded cells. For example, 8 people were placed in a 4-bed cell. People were forced to sleep on the floor.

At the same time, the administration of the institution periodically turned off the heating.

«One detainee had a broken leg upon admission. The staff did not call an ambulance and did not provide medical assistance themselves».

«It was very cold in the cell, we were not given sheets and blankets, while there were 8 of us in a 4-bed cell».

«Employees addressed us rudely, called us broads and bandits».

TDF OF ZHODINO

People were deliberately placed in overcrowded cells. It was cold in the cells. Rude and disrespectful attitude from the staff of the institution. A bright light burned around the clock.

«Our entire cell was ill with COVID-19, no treatment was provided, and even detainees with fever were not allowed to lie in bunks during the day».

«They played propaganda songs (on the radio), mostly songs about “Bat’ka” (Lukashenko). It was very depressing and unsettling».

TDF OF BARANOVICHI

Some detainees were placed in overcrowded cells. The cells were dirty, damp, and there was mold on the walls. There was no hot water. From 6:00 to 22:00, the staff of the institution demanded to roll up the mattresses, put them on the second level and forbade detainees to lie on the beds. The toilet did not provide privacy.

Detainees were infected with COVID-19, but no medical assistance was provided. Detainees with COVID-19 were not isolated, only paracetamol was provided, no X-rays were taken, everyone used common dishes. There were rats in some cells.

DISTRICT POLICE DEPARTMENTS OF MINSK

Partizanski District Police Department of Minsk

Detainees were kept along the wall outside for hours, it was cold.

Leninsky District Police Department of Minsk

Detainees were kept in an unheated garage for over 6 hours. Detainees were

taken outside to the toilet (biotoilet), it was cold.

Oktyabrsky District Police Department of Minsk

Detainee was brought in with a broken leg, no ambulance was called, he was sent to TDF.

Pervomaisky District Police Department of Minsk, Minsk

RUVD employee yelled at the detainees, claimed they should be shot.

Sovetsky District Police Department of Minsk

Detainees were held for over 6 hours by a wall in a basement. Water was not provided.

JANUARY, 2021

Beatings of people during detaining continued. At the same time, the security forces directly stated that the protesters should be shot and they will do so if they receive an order. Some of the detainees were marked with paint. Medical assistance was not provided in RUVDs. In places of detainment, detainees were left in exercise yards outside for 0.5-1 hours, and detainees got very cold. All detainees were placed in cells that were overcrowded by a factor of two or three. For example, 12 detainees were placed in a 4-bed cell, detainees were forced to sleep on the floor. It was very cold in the cells, detainees froze even in outer clothing. Torture began with water mixed with bleach.

OIC AKRESTINA

All detainees were placed in cells that were overcrowded by a factor of two or three. It was very cold in all cells, detainees froze even in their outer clothing. In such cold weather, detainees were still taken for a walk and kept there for an hour. During this time, the ventilation was turned on, freezing the cell. Many fell ill. Mattresses, pillows and bed linen were not provided. Water mixed with bleach was poured into the cells. Detainees weren't taken to shower. A bright light burned around the clock.

«When they brought us to the cell, the door opened and we saw a 6-bed cell, in which there were already 14 girls, so in total there were 24 of us. The heating was turned off, there were no mattresses, there were no bed linen, forget about it. It was cold, because of the cold it was impossible to sleep».

«We did not sleep on the beds, we slept on the floor. Because it was terribly cold to sleep on the beds, they are metal, they do not heat up, they cool you even more. When they poured bleach into the cell for the first time, we were thrown into the cell last and this girl had Quincke's edema. This is a rather fatal edema. She became allergic, and at that moment, as it seemed to me, we began to break down the cell doors, because it was terribly scary. When I was sitting in a 4-bed cell in these conditions, there were thoughts of suicide».

«One girl tried to listen to what was happening in the corridor. The feeder opened, and a pepper spray can was shoved in her face: "if you try it again, the whole camera will get it».

«In a cell (No. 23), about 2.5x5.5 metres, there were 12 people in a 2 bunk bed cell. There were no mattresses or blankets, most had to sleep on the bare floor (I fell ill with bronchitis)».

TDF AKRESTINA

Cells were overcrowded by a factor of two or three. People were forced to sleep on the floor. Mattresses, pillows, blankets and bed linen were not provided. A bright light burned around the clock, it made it hard to sleep. The guards constantly insulted and humiliated detainees. No drinking water was provided. Once they sprayed pepper spray into the chamber.

«The cell was designed for 6 people, there were 16 of us (first night), 14 (second night), 10 (third night)».

«On the second day of staying in the cell, pepper gas was sprayed (presumably through the ventilation). Everyone in the cell coughed, there was pain in the nose. After trying to rinse the nose and the throat, it became worse, the pain intensified. Most likely, it happened in other cells as well, as we heard coughing in the neighboring cells as well».

TDF OF BOBRUISK

Detainees weren't provided with mattresses and bed linen. Detainees weren't fed for over a day.

FEBRUARY 2021

The practice of arresting dissenters continued. In places of detention, targeted worsening of conditions for political prisoners continued, with the aim of destroying human dignity and suppressing protest activity. The officers insulted and humiliated the detainees. It was cold in the cells. Almost all detainees were placed in cells that were overcrowded by a factor of two or three. Mattresses and bed linen were not provided. A bright light was on around the clock, which did not allow normal sleep. No drinking water was provided. No sanitary and epidemiological measures were taken to prevent COVID-19 spread, which during a pandemic is a threat to the health and lives of detainees.

OIC AKRESTINA

Some of the detainees were searched at outdoor temperatures. A window was opened in the inspection room and the temperature there, like outside, was -20C. People were placed in cells that were overcrowded by a factor of three. For example, 12 people were placed in a 4-bed cell with an area of approximately 12 square meters. Mattresses and bed linen weren't provided. The windows were opened and could not be closed, so there was a constant draft, people were freezing. Walks in the exercise yard and showers were not provided. Medical aid was not provided. Books were taken away.

«We knew for sure that three cells on this floor were empty. And where the non-political detainees were held, everything was as it should be. The number of people held in the cell corresponded to the number of beds. I found that out later. Our cell was designed for 4 people, but there were 12 of us».

«The head of OIC called us "bandits", and all our requests were ignored. The cell had bad conditions, it was very cold, and a strong wind blew in our direction, the window had a large hole. The head of OIC told us that we are not allowed neither books nor mattresses».

TDF AKRESTINA

Detainees were placed in cells that were overcrowded by a factor of two. Mattresses and bedding were not provided. People were forced to sleep on the floor. Ambulance was refused to detainees who needed it.

«There was a guy with us, he went on a dry hunger strike, but py could not write the official note, they didn't let him. He asked for paper, they ignored him, and did not let the hunger strike be officially announced. We only had mattresses in the cell once, no one had mattresses the other nights».

TDF OF ZHODINO

People were placed in cells that were twice overcrowded. For example, 16 detainees were placed in an 8-bed cell. The cells were very stuffy. Detainees slept on the floor. Mattresses and bed linen were not provided. Food was given according to the number of beds, if the cell was for 8 detainees, they were given 8 plates of porridge and 4 mugs for all. On some shifts, guards turned on the sound of the radio so loud that detainees had to raise their voice when talking. Every hour the guards knocked on the door and it was necessary to get up and line up. From 6:00 to 22:00 it was required to roll up the mattress, put them on the upper tier of the bunks, and it was forbidden to lie on the beds. A bright light burned around the clock. Very poor quality of food, sour bigus was given every day. The employees threatened detainees for attempting to give a statement to a lawyer.

«Before the trial, 16 people were held in an 8-bed cell. And now they add six of us there. There were no mattresses, no bed linen. Few could sleep, it was extremely difficult to sleep in such conditions. Food was given for 8 people, plus 4 cups of tea».

SMOLEVICH DISTRICT POLICE DEPARTMENT

The registration of the protocols took more than 18 hours. At the same time, the detainees were not allowed to sleep, were not fed or given drinking water.

MARCH, 2021

In anticipation of March 25, the practice of preventive arrests, and of arrests at protest actions on March 25-27, was continued. Beatings during arrest and delivery to the police department continued. Rude, disrespectful attitude and insults took place in all places of detention without exception. The practice of purposefully creating inhumane conditions for political detainees with the aim of destroying human dignity and suppressing protest activity continued in places of detention. Pouring a bucket of water and bleach on the floor of the cell every day has become a common practice. The employees of the special institutions took away books, notebooks and writing utensils. In the TDF in Zhodino, thefts by TDF officers from the care packages sent to detainees continued. No sanitary and epidemiological measures were taken to prevent COVID-19, which during a pandemic is a threat to the health and lives of detainees.

TDF AKRESTINA

Upon bringing in detainees, white-red-white flags were laid on the floor and detainees were forced to walk on them. Detainees were placed in cells that were twice overcrowded. Mattresses and bed linen were not provided. It was very cold. Detainees were not fed for over a day before the trial.

«The cell was designed for five, meaning there were three beds - two two-tier bunks, one single-tier, but there were 17 of us».

«When I asked the guard why we were not fed for almost a day, he said that food had not been ordered for us and it was not in his competence».

OIC AKRESTINA

At the entrance, white-red-white flags were laid on the floor, and people were forced to step on them. One man jumped over flags, as a result one of the OIC officers hit him several times in the torso.

Many respondents noted an extremely disrespectful attitude and insults from the employees of the institution, they called the detainees *«bums, broads, zmagars»*. People were placed in cells that were overcrowded by a factor of 2-2.5. People were forced to sleep on the floor. Mattresses and bed linen were not provided. Books, envelopes, notebooks and writing materials were taken from the care packages.

Every day, half a bucket of water with bleach was poured into the cell with detainees still there. Detainees were forced to breathe toxic fumes. Torture by lack of sleep was practiced.

«At one point, a male employee entered our cell, told everyone to get out. He said that today is Maundy Thursday. He also told us that all of us here are in favor of revolution, and what is a revolution without a kick, and now he will give us this kick. Four tablets of bleach dissolved in half a bucket of water. They poured it into the cell, brought us in and closed this small window. It was already hot and there was nothing to breathe, plus the feeder was closed. There were five of us, we had a couple of minutes to clean it all up, then we sat there until night with wet towels on their faces, because tears and snot were flowing. Everyone burned their mucous membranes with this».

«There were 4 beds, and there were 7 of us in this cell. The beds ... had no bed linen, no blankets, no mattresses. It was very cold at night».

«We had a four-bed cell. There were 16 of us there. Every day they poured a bucket of bleach into the cell. ... they opened the door, poured out a bucket of bleach and water. They also started waking us up at night. Twice a night they woke us up. You had to get up, say your name, surname. After this it was difficult to fall asleep. As soon as you fall asleep, they wake you up again and so it was very difficult to sleep at night».

TDF OF ZHODINO

Overcrowding by a factor of 1.5 (15 people per 17 square meters). There was no hot water in the cells or in the shower. Some cells had cockroaches. Bright lights were on in the cells around the clock. It was forbidden to lie on the beds from 6:00 to 22:00. Books, notebooks and writing implements were taken away. Guards woke people up several times during the night. It was reported that things were missing from the care packages. No medical assistance was provided.

«They took our mattresses from us. And not only from our cell, but from everyone on the floor, at least. Then I learned that they also took mattresses from everyone on the second floor. Not for some kind of offense, but simply from all detainees. And we couldn't figure out why».

«They turned off the heating for 2 days. But then they returned it, because, apparently, again a cold snap came. And during these 2 days the number of people who caught a cold increased by 5, that is, we had people coughing there who caught a cold there. Requests to call a doctor were denied».

APRIL, 2021

In places of detention, conditions for political detainees have become even more inhumane. The cells were sometimes overcrowded by a factor of three. Mattresses and bed linen were not provided. The practice of pouring a bucket of bleach onto the floor of the cell continued. Detainees were constantly tortured with lack of sleep. No sanitary and epidemiological measures were taken to prevent COVID-19, which during a pandemic is a threat to the health and lives of detainees.

OIC AKRESTINA

Cells were overcrowded by a factor of two to four. Mattresses and bed linen were not provided, people were forced to sleep on the floor. Water with bleach was poured into cells every day. A bright light burned around the clock. Several times during the night, the officers woke up the detainees, not allowing them to sleep. The detainees were not taken for walks.

«We were placed in a 2-bed cell, and at that time there were already seven people in the cell. There were no mattresses, there was no linen either. At 10.00 we were taken out into the corridor for cell inspection, the so-called "shmon". They went into the cell, threw our things around and poured a bucket of bleach on the floor. By 14 o'clock because of bleach, we all would have had headaches, because there is no fresh air, the so-called feeder is also closed. We knocked and asked to open it, to which they said that it is not allowed. Then 3 more people were thrown into our cell, that is, there were already 10 people in the cell. There was not even a place to sit on the bunk. People just stood or changed places. The room was very small».

«There we had no mattresses, no bed linen. There were 4 bunks. There were 16 people in our cell, then on the last night there was another 17th detainee. People slept right on the floor. An employee came twice a night and woke everyone up. You had to respond to your name».

TDF AKRESTINA

People were placed in cells that were overcrowded by a factor of 2-2.5. People were forced to sleep on the floor. Mattresses and bed linen were not provided.

«They took me to the cell, I was the twelfth. ... there were seven people sitting there on domestic charges, someone was there because of drinking, someone because of hitting someone else, someone just drank and got caught, and five were political. The cell was designed for 5».

TDF OF ZHODINO

The occupancy of the chambers exceeded the norm by two to three times. Mattresses and linens were taken away. The detainees noted the rude treatment by the employees of the institution, people were humiliated and insulted, some were beaten. Several times during the night, the officers woke up the arrested, not allowing them to sleep. People were not taken for walks. It is reported that the care packages were not given in full; the officers actually stole from the detainees. Books and writing materials were taken away.

«On the 1st, mattresses and pillows were taken away from us. Five more people were thrown into the cell. There were 15 people in the cell already. We counted this time, seven days, during which we were completely sealed in, we were not taken out for walks».

«They have already begun to make nightly roll calls. I saw it twice. When they entered at three in the morning and began to shout. They say a last name, and you must answer with your first name and patronymic. When people did not know the time, many jumped up, thought it was morning, they ran to brush their teeth on instinct. And then they realized that it was like three in the morning. As soon as you go to bed, the guards come running again. The attitude was, of course, inhumane. They constantly swore and shouted obscenities».

«Everyone is taken out of the cell and put in a stretch. Quite often they would beat someone using some senseless excuse, for example someone had not spread their legs wide enough in the stretch».

«On Saturday, I washed my clothes and hung them on the radiator, an employee saw this, took me to the shower room, there were two more employees. They put me against the wall in a stretch, started punching my back, kicking me on the legs».

MAY, 2021

The practice of repressing the human person and individuality in places of detention in order to suppress dissent and protest moods continued. Mattresses and linen were not provided to the political detainees at all, at the same time, all of these were given to ordinary detainees. Political detainees not taken to shower or for walks. The pouring of water with chlorine on the floor of the cell and torture by lack of sleep continued in almost all places of detention. No sanitary and epidemiological measures were taken to prevent COVID-19.

OIC AKRESTINA

Cells were overcrowded by a factor of eight. Mattresses and bed linen were not provided. Detainees were deprived of sleep at night: they were woken up twice a night, were demanded to state their last name, first name, patronymic. A bright light was kept on in the cells around the clock. Water and bleach were poured into the cells on the floor every day. Drinking water was not provided, and detainees were not taken out for walks.

«It was a cell for two persons. When I entered, people were everywhere, I was the ninth. And from Monday to Tuesday there were 16 of us in this cell, and I can't imagine how we were able to fit there».

«During a search, the guards came in and took toilet paper, wet wipes, pads from us - in general, everything they saw, they took from us and were very happy about it».

«The lights were on all the time, the lamps were on all the time at night, another lamp was added at night».

«The cell was designed for two, there were seven of us political plus one homeless person, quite smelly, with lice. There were no mattresses or linen. Now the politicals in Akrestsina have no mattresses, no linen, no walks, no work, no books. If suddenly guards do not like something during the morning inspection, they just pour bleach».

TDF AKRESTINA

Cells were overcrowded by factors of 2-3. Twice a night, the guard woke detainees up, demanding to give the last name, first name, patronymic. A bright light burned around the clock, interfering with sleep. Mattresses, pillows and linen were not provided.

«The camera was for two people, four of us were taken there in addition to three who were already there, for a total of seven of us. We somehow settled there to sleep. At about 2 am we were woken up by a guard. Like, get up for a roll call. And somewhere at 2.20 he took the mattresses and pillows and stuff like that».

TDF OF ZHODINO

Mattresses, blankets and bed linen were not provided. It was forbidden to sit and lie on the bed during the day. The floors were tiled, and it was impossible to lie on them. A bright light burned around the clock and interfered with sleep. No drinking water was provided, only tap water. Books and writing materials were not allowed. Medical aid was provided with a delay. Men were beaten and forced to run down the corridor.

«One woman got very sick - fever and cough. For two days she was not given any help at all and was not given bed rest. She lay on this cold tiled floor without any medical assistance».

«We heard how they beat the men and made them run down the corridor. They yelled at them very hard and we heard the sounds of truncheons. The guys later said that they were put into stretches and hit on the ankles».

Statistical data from analysis of interviews

We present some **statistical data on the living conditions** of those administratively detained and arrested in places of detention of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus based on the results of the analysis of the questionnaires.

PROVISION OF WATER AND FOOD

According to the interviews data, in a number of cases, the norms for the provision of water and food by places of detention were ignored. **Drinking** (or boiled) **water was not provided** to detainees. At best, the cells contained tap water, which the detainees used for various purposes. Almost half of the respondents were not provided with food for more than a day (206 people out of 550 cases), 55 people were not provided with water at all. **A fifth of the respondents** (104 people) were fully provided with water and food. Water was provided to them by volunteers.

OCCUPANCY OF CELLS

In a number of cases, people have reported excessive overcrowding in cells:

- 4-place cell - 30 people;
- 4-place cell - 34 people;
- 6-place cell - 12 people;
- 10-place cell - 21 people;
- 12-place cell - 28 people;
- and even a 3-place cell - for 19 people.

According to one of the detainees, there were 119 people in the cell!

292 out of 393 detainees reported overcrowded cells in OIC, Pre-trial prison and TDF, many were placed in the assembly hall or gym, in the police wagon, in the yard on the ground (in Minsk RUVD and regional ROVD) for the night.

SANITARY STATE OF PLACES OF DETENTION

According to the detainees, the places of detention were terribly **unsanitary** (dirt, lack of individual sleeping places, bed linen, hygiene products, presence of cockroaches and bedbugs). Under the guise of cleaning and disinfecting the cells, **a bucket of water with bleach was poured** onto the floor, which in such conditions became an additional factor of repression of the detainees and made the conditions of being in the cells cruel and inhumane.

Hygiene products were not provided in accordance with the established norms and with the number of persons held in cells (household and toilet soap, toilet paper). Cases were described when the hygiene products for women were unreasonably **confiscated** by employees of places of detention.

The cells were not equipped according to the standards with the necessary furniture (beds, tables and chairs, bedside tables). **Ventilation** in the cells was **inadequate**, as a result of which the detainees suffered from a lack of air. **Temperature regime does not meet the standards**, both due to the unsatisfactory condition of the windows (they did not open / close), and because of the deliberate shutdown of heating during the cold season.

According to the reports of people who have gone through the experience of detention and / or arrest, **access to the toilet** in a number of cases **was difficult**, there are cases of not being allowed to use the toilet for more than 4 hours (20% of the respondents).

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE AND COVID-19 CASES

A number of people interviewed stated about **medical care not being provided and ambulance not being called** even in serious cases (fractures of the extremities, infectious diseases, cystitis, gynecological diseases due to hypothermia in women, diabetes mellitus, TBI and others). 38% of the respondents told about **refusals to provide medical care** in places of detention.

As a result of overcrowding in cells, **people often became infected with lice, infectious diseases, including COVID-19**. The sick were not placed in separate cells, as required by the legislation; moreover, they continued to use common utensils and hygiene products. 4% of respondents (23 people) said that they were **infected with COVID-19** in the institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Conclusions

Since August 9, 2020, any person suspected of protest activity would be detained in Belarus. Massive violations of human rights and the rule of law occurred at all stages of contact between people and representatives of law enforcement agencies. The victims of illegal actions were often completely random people who found themselves in the zone of attention of security officials: random passers-by and people lounging at a cafe, those simply leaving the house for a smoke or to take out the trash, those returning home from work or from training. People were detained regardless of gender and age, and many of the detentions were accompanied by beatings and the use of special equipment. Beatings and torture continued while detainees were placed and transported in police wagons, while they were being escorted to the district police stations and to isolation centers. Some of the detainees were marked with paint by discretion (forehead, clothes, hands) of representatives of law enforcement agencies. Those marked were tortured with even greater cruelty.

At the police stations, most detainees were also subjected to beatings and other torture. The relatives of the detainees were not notified of the arrest. Mobile phones were seized or deliberately destroyed in front of the detainees. People were beaten for any requests made to employees (to invite a lawyer, to provide water, to show the detainment protocol, to allow fresh air into the cell). Some of the detainees were tortured to sign blank sheets of paper. Ambulance was called extremely rarely, sometimes only in emergency cases due to fear of a person's death

In places of detention, people continued to be severely beaten and tortured. Detainees were placed in cruel and inhumane conditions, were not provided with drinking water, were not fed, were not provided the opportunity to go to the toilet, were placed in overcrowded cells where there was not enough air

and people suffocated, or in overcrowded walking yards without a toilet where people could not even sit down and froze at night. For any request to improve conditions of detention or for medical care, detainees were most often beaten or threatened to be beaten, which at that moment was perceived by detainees as a real threat, since they had already been beaten earlier.

Detainees who were not tortured, but who saw torture of others or traces of torture, were forced to listen to beatings and terrible screams at night, were subjected to psychological torture and felt the hopelessness and powerlessness of their situation. People were in a state of shock and many were sure that they could simply be killed, beaten, or shot. Threats of rape, murder and executions from the security forces sounded constantly and at all stages of detainees stay in places of detention. We know of cases of detainees being raped by security officials.

The overwhelming majority of the detainees talked about the clear ideological indoctrination of the security forces against the participants of peaceful actions even before they were carried out. Security forces were subjected to massive disinformation about the planned and paid for preparation of mass riots, about protestors being paid to protest, and about mythical «puppeteers» from Western countries and Belarus' closest neighbors (Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania) preparing a violent overthrow of the government. This evidence confirms that the decision to harshly suppress any peaceful assembly was planned in advance.

On August 9-13, 2020, the courts were held directly in places of detention without the admission of lawyers and the observance of the minimum rights of citizens to legal defense. The possibility of a person's innocence was not even considered by the courts. Cases were falsified, and people were condemned en masse. The judges saw people mutilated by torture and did not react to it, withdrawing themselves from reporting torture to the investigating authorities. These actions show that the courts, along with the actions of the security forces, are part of a larger repressive mechanism.

After August 14, 2020, victims of state terror filed en masse applications to the investigating bodies in the hope of punishing the guilty and receiving compensation. However, in response, they received bills for catering in places of detention where they were tortured and starved to death. Over the next period and until today, not a single criminal case of torture has been initiated, and criminal cases for riots and actions that grossly violate public order were initiated against the applicants.

Thus, it can be stated that all the actions of the Belarusian authorities since August 9, 2020 were aimed not only at the brutal violent suppression of peaceful assemblies, pickets and marches, but, above all, at establishing an atmosphere

of fear in society and at building the machine of repressions. At the same time, the security forces were guaranteed not only complete impunity, but also all kinds of support and encouragement for any derogation from the law: abuse of office, illegal use of force and special means, inhumane treatment and torture. According to the stories of the victims, these instructions were and continue to be carried out by many security officials with special zeal and passion. Telling is the situation with the killings of civilians: Alexander Taraikovsky, Gennady Shutov, Alexander Vikhor, Roman Bondarenko. Those responsible for their deaths have not yet been punished. Those who have distinguished themselves in repressions against the people receive gratitude from senior officials and the person holding the post of president, in the form of promotions, titles and awards.

Since the establishment of state terror, many detainees, including those severely beaten, were filmed by the security forces and forced to apologize, confess their allegedly illegal actions and persuade people to avoid protest actions. These videos were later published in state media and telegram channels. State-owned media consistently display propaganda materials that insult and humiliate protesters and justify the brutal actions of the security forces. This confirms that state-owned media are also part of a larger repressive mechanism.

In all places of detention (TDF, OIC, Pre-trial prison, etc.), the administrations of these institutions, on the direct instructions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, created “special conditions” for those detained and arrested for political reasons. These “special conditions” are in their essence torture, and conditions that are cruel, inhumane and degrading to human dignity.

The current regime has achieved establishing complete disregard for the law and terror at the state level in relation to dissenters. People are afraid to participate in any peaceful meetings or to publicly express their opinion about what is happening in the country, fearing for their lives and health. The victims cannot appeal against torture and other unlawful actions of the security forces, since no measures are taken by the investigating authorities, and the arrests and torture of dissidents continue constantly.

Persons responsible for torture

The person holding the post of the president, Alexander Grigoryevich Lukashenko

Head of Akrestina Temporary Detention Centre Keniukh Igor Grigorevich

Head of Akrestina isolation centre for offenders Shapetko Evgeniy Andreevich

Head of Zhodino Temporary Detention Facility Kirchuk Sergey Sergeevich

Head of Pre-trial prison №6 in Baranovichi Hitrik Evgeniy Sergeevich

Head of TDF of the Main Department of Internal Affairs of the Mogilev City Executive Committee Korolev Sergey Nikolaevich

Former Minister of the Interior Affairs of the Republic of Belarus Karaev Juri Hadzhimuratovich

Former Deputee of the Minister of the Interior Affairs of the Republic of Belarus Barsukov Aleksandr Petrovich

Minister of the Interior Affairs of the Republic of Belarus Kubrakov Ivan Vladimirovich

Head of the Main Department of Internal Affairs of the Minsk City Executive Committee (GUVD) Grib Mihail Viacheslavovich

Commander of OMON of the Main Department of Internal Affairs of the Minsk City Executive Committee (GUVD) Balaba Dmitry Vladimirovich

Former Head of Moskovsky District Police Department of Minsk Gamola Maksim Aleksandrovich

Former Head of Oktyabrsky District Police Department of Minsk Ridetskiy Aleksandr Michailovich

Former Head of Partizanski District Police Department of Minsk Burdiuk Dmitry Evgenevich

Head of the Pervomaysky District Police Department of Minsk Shakhlay Artur Vladimirovich

Head of Zavodsky District Police Department of Minsk Kislov Kirill Stanislavovich

Head of Leninsky District Police Department of Minsk Kapilevich Vitaliy Vitalevich

Head of Sovetsky District Police Department of Minsk Kalinnik Sergey Leonidovich

Head of Pervomajsky District Police Department of Minsk Bakach Andrei Sergeevich

Head of the Frunzensky District Police Department of Minsk Polulekh Aleksandr Vladimirovich

Employee of Frunzensky District Police Department of Minsk Valuiskaja Karina Evgenevna

Head of the Main Department of Internal Affairs of the Zhodino City Executive Committee Trotsiuk Vladimir Vasilevich

Head of the Main Department of Internal Affairs of the Baranovichi City Executive Committee Maksimchik Vladimir Fedorovich

Head of of the Main Department of Internal Affairs of the Mogilev City Executive Committee Shcherbachenia Igor Vladimirovich

Employee of Zhodino TDF Tarasik Mihail Nikolaevich (“Mishka balaklavshchik”)

General Prosecutor of the Republic of Belarus Shved Andrei Ivanovich

Prosecutor of Minsk city Lavrukhin Oleg Vladimirovich

Prosecutor of Zhodino city Dackevich Maksim Viacheslavovich

Prosecutor of Mogilev city Borovskiy Aleksandr Gennadevich

Baranovichi Interdistrict Prosecutor Karliuk Aleksandr Pavlovich

Recommendations ⁸

Key recommendations for the democratic government after the regime change:

1. To bring to justice all perpetrators of torture, cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment of people in Belarus and to prevent all cases of psychological, physical and sexual violence against detainees in places of detention.
2. To unambiguously, at the highest state level, condemn torture and warn law enforcement officers about criminal responsibility for all acts of torture.
3. To bring conditions of detention in places of detention in line with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (The Nelson Mandela Rules).
4. To bring the conditions of detention in places of detention in line with sanitary and epidemiological standards, as well as to provide detainees with adequate medical care, hygiene items and protective equipment in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic or others.

⁸ Since the highest officials of the state are those that hold the most responsibility for torture, we do not consider it practical to address them with recommendations.