


Maskouskaye RUVD of Minsk. Torture of Detainees on August 9-13, 2020

Public inquiry



*«That's the kind of screaming
I've never heard, not even in
horror movies. The louder he
screamed, the harder he was
beaten.»*

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Abbreviations

Avtozak — vehicle for transporting detainees/prisoners

TDF — Temporary Detention Facility

CAO — Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Belarus

OMON — special police squad

RUVD — District Department of Internal Affairs

CC — Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus

OIC — Offenders' Isolation Center

SUMMARY AND METHODOLOGY

The *International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus* continues its cycle of documenting crimes against humanity committed by the regime in the aftermath of the August 2020 presidential election.

In pursuance of its mission to identify all cases of torture and ill-treatment, we present the results of a public inquiry into the events that took place in Maskouskaye District Police Department (RUVД) of Minsk between August 9 and 13, 2020.

Earlier, the experts of the International Committee issued reports on the forms of violence and its perpetrators against detainees in the Frunzenskoye¹, Sovetskoye² and Tsentralnoye³ District Departments of Internal Affairs, which together with other RUVДs and the Offenders' Isolation Center (OIC)⁴ held protesters against the declared results of the presidential election.

Detainees were brought to the Maskouskaye RUVД from all over the city between August 9 and August 12.

On August 9, people were arrested in the center of Minsk near the Stela monument on Peramozhtsau Avenue, in front of the «Yubileinaya» hotel, in

1 Public investigation: torture of detainees in August 2020 in the Frunzensky police department of Minsk. <https://torturesbelarus2020.org/en/belarus-zlachynstva-supracz-lyudskasczi/> (Eng)

2 Public Inquiry into Torture at the Sovetskoye RUVД on August 9-13, 2020 GO, GO, KILLEM ALL! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHAT COUNTRY YOU LIVE IN? <https://torturesbelarus2020.org/en/go-go-kill-em-all-have-you-forgotten-what-country-you-live-in/> (Eng)

3 Центральное РУВД г. Минска. Питки задержанных 9–13 августа 2020 года. Общественное расследование https://torturesbelarus2020.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/report_centru_ruvd_ru-2.pdf (RU)

4 «YOU WILL DIE HERE». Testimonies of the Prisoners of Akrestina. Public investigation of cases of mass torture in the Center for isolation of offenders in the city of Minsk on August 9–14, 2020 <https://torturesbelarus2020.org/en/vy-sdohnete-zdes/> (Eng)

the area of Melnikayte Street, Novavilenskaya Street, Dauman Street, Karol Street, in Victory Park, near the Palace of Youth and the «Riga» department store. On August 10, the detainees were also taken from Dzerzhynski Avenue, the area of Hrusheuskaya Street and the Malinauka metro station. On August 11, demonstrators were also detained on Pushkina Avenue (Pushkinskaya metro station), Pershamaiskaya Street, and at the belt line on Babruyskaya Street.

The interviewed survivors testify that they were arrested in a very harsh manner. Various law enforcement agencies took part in the arrests. Along with OMON, the special anti-terrorist unit «Almaz»⁵, officers of the KGB unit «Alfa», as well as internal troops were on the streets of Minsk at that time.

They arrested anyone they could get their hands on: random passersby, people from nearby apartment buildings returning from work, a clinic, or a grocery store, and even pulled some out of a taxi. Several people were arrested near a kebab stand. There were people who just went for a walk because the Internet was blocked, and it was impossible to get any news.

People were beaten with batons both during arrest and during transportation to the police department. Tasers and pepper spray were frequently used against those arrested.

The beatings and ill-treatment of the detainees continued after their arrival at the Maskouskaye RUVD. The harshest treatment was reserved for those marked with paint by OMON during their detention, individuals with tattoos of national Belarusian symbols, those who spoke Belarusian, and those with non-standard appearances such as long or dyed hair, dreadlocks, and piercings. The police displayed increased hostility toward IT professionals, motorcyclists, and former law enforcement officers.

In the RUVD, detainees were placed in the assembly hall on the third floor⁶, in the corridors, and in cells located in the basement. This is where the people were tortured. The entire floor of the assembly hall was stained with the blood and excrement of the beaten and wounded. Several detainees noted that the most brutal beatings occurred in the corridors. People were forced to kneel or bend over with their arms pulled back for 12 hours at a time.

On various days between August 9 and 13, about 150 people were in the assembly hall simultaneously⁷. All cells were overcrowded, and the conditions

5 According to The Insider <https://theins.ru/>, members of the unit may be involved in the murder of Alexander Tarakouski during the crackdown on protests in Minsk on August 10, 2020, along with members of the KGB's Alpha unit.

6 The detainees provided varying descriptions of the assembly hall in the RUVD. Some indicated it was on the 4th or 5th floor. There might be multiple rooms of this kind in a given RUVD. However, due to non-significance, we refer to this information as it was provided to the experts.

7 Some victims indicated a figure of up to 250 detainees.

were inhumane — filthy, damp, stuffy, with no ventilation, and no opportunity to lie down to sleep. Each cell housed up to 20 people, and a 1.5x3 square meter punishment cell held 10 people at a time.

Many detainees spent long hours lying face down on the floor, literally on top of each other, or sitting in chairs with their heads down and their arms stretched out in front of them. Any attempt to move or change position was punished with a baton.

According to survivors, they spent up to 12-16 hours in the Maskouskaye RUVD, with some staying as long as a day and a half. During this time, they were only taken to the toilet a couple of times, were not fed, and were given water to drink from a plastic bottle, which they passed to each other. Due to the spread of COVID-19, the lack of hygiene measures posed a serious threat to the lives and health of the detainees. At night, people were kept awake. Those who fell asleep were beaten with a baton.

During these days, minors (15-17 years old) and elderly persons (60+) were also brought to the RUVD. They were beaten, regardless of their age and state of health. Those detained included journalists, one of whom was a citizen of Russia.⁸

The detained women were taken to the Maskouskaye police station along with the men. However, according to those interviewed, they were not beaten. However, the obscene language, insults, and threats aimed at the women, along with witnessing the beatings of men, made them fearful and anxious about potential violence, including sexual violence.

Unrestrained and uncontrolled acts of humiliation and abuse of detainees, encouraged by the RUVD leadership, during interrogations turned into torture and sexual violence. At least three survivors experienced sexual violence at this police department, according to interviews analyzed by the International Committee's experts. One of the detainees testified that they were raped in the Maskouskaye RUVD on August 12, 2020, another received threats of sexual violence, and similar violence was reported against a third detainee.

In total, for this inquiry, the International Committee's experts thoroughly studied 48 individual interviews (569 pages altogether) with people who were detained by law enforcement agencies in Minsk and taken to the Maskouskaye RUVD. Drawing from the analyzed interviews, detailed, day-by-day accounts of the detainees' experiences in the RUVD were compiled. The experts also analyzed the photographs of injuries and medical documents (58 pages) provided by the survivors.

⁸ "Afisha Daily" published his story <https://daily.afisha.ru/news/40325-korrespondent-znakcom-nikita-telizhenko-rasskazal-o-zaderzhanii-i-izbieniayah-v-belorusskih-tyurmah/>

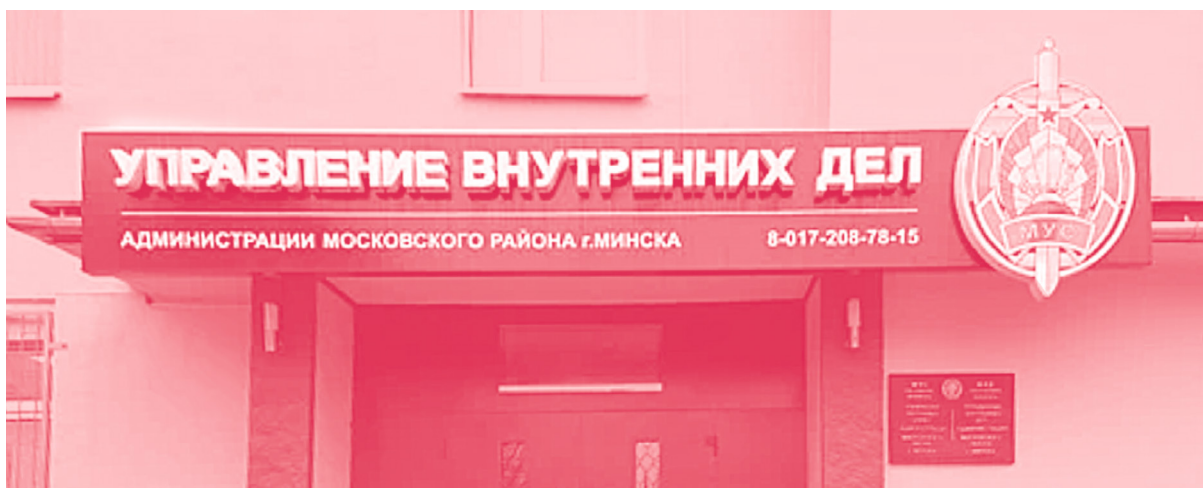
This report includes the following sections:

Consequences: Injuries and Damages, which analyzes the physical and psychological consequences of detention in the Maskouskaye RUVD;

Perpetrators of Torture of Detainees in the Maskouskaye RUVD, which presents the officers of the Maskouskaye RUVD identified by survivors, matched with information from the databases of partner organizations (Human Rights Center Viasna, Cyberpartisans) and open sources, social networks and Telegram channels;

Legal Assessment of the Actions of Law Enforcement Bodies of Belarus, which analyzes the actions of the Maskouskaye RUVD officers in accordance with the norms of national legislation and international law.

The *International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus* holds the personal data and other relevant documents, but in order to ensure the safety of sources and survivors, such personal data is not disclosed in the report.



Maskouskaye RUVD in Minsk on Hrusheuskaya, 9

TIMELINE OF TORTURE: DETAINEE ABUSE, AUGUST 9–13, 2020

«I realized while still in the paddy wagon that I might not make it out alive. And by the time I was at the RUVD, I was certain of it.»

From a survivor's statement

Maskouskaye RUVD became one of the places where demonstrators against the fraudulent results of the presidential elections were detained between August 9 and 13, 2020.

During the arrests, police searched for protest coordinators and marked with paint those they deemed of «interest» for further interrogation and punishment.

«... They were all marked, and the threats against them were particularly brutal. Literally they said, 'When we bring you to Akrestsina, you will get fucked in the ass with a truncheon there.' That's what these guys were told. 'For being the way you are.' They had a special attitude towards the guys with yellow marks.»

During those days at the Maskouskaye RUVD, OMON forces operated alongside regular staff, subjecting detainees to the most severe beatings and violence. However, the RUVD staff, in addition to processing, interrogating

detainees, and similar procedures, also indulged in beating defenseless people lying on the floor. The most ruthless beatings were inflicted on those marked with paint during the arrests, as well as on those believed to be protest organizers or active participants. These included individuals with tattoos of national Belarusian symbols, long hair, dreadlocks, piercings, as well as those wearing white shirts or white bracelets on their wrists. The individuals most likely to irritate the officers were IT specialists, doctors, motorcyclists, journalists (including a Russian citizen), and former law enforcement officers.

«One person was lifted in the morning and told: 'So, you wanted to become a policeman, studied to be a policeman. And yet you have a Pahonia («Chase», Belarusian national symbol) on your shirt, look at him.'» In the assembly hall they didn't really hit us with rifle butts and fists, but they had a full blast when they were searching us.»

It was evident that during those days, the security officers were ordered to take the most brutal actions against the protesters.

«...it was clear that some kind of order had been given, because when there were beatings, it felt like they had been ordered from above to build concentration camps.»

There was nothing holding them back these days — neither superiors nor human ethics. Interviewees described facts of sexual violence and constant threats of such violence against both women and men throughout their time in the RUVD.

«...continues to beat and in doing so often very much focused on money. "Who paid you?"» He starts to take off my pants, and says, «I'm going to fuck you now, guys bring some condoms.» starts hitting specifically on the butt and then moving the baton around the area».

«I said that no one pays me, I don't communicate with anyone. He said... there was a moment that yes, they wanted to shove a baton up my ass.».

The psychological atmosphere in the police department was very tense; people who were beaten and injured during their arrest felt depressed, humiliated, and overwhelmed by fear and helplessness. As many of them noted, it felt like they were being held captive by terrorists.

The detainees were held in every available space: the assembly hall, corridors, cells, and the punishment cell. On various days between August 9 and 13, about 250 people were in the assembly hall simultaneously.

According to interviewees, they spent up to 12-16 hours in the Maskouskaye RUVD, with some staying as long as a day and a half. The detainees also included women, minors and the elderly. 15–17-year-olds were handed over to their parents after being questioned and processed.

August 9, 2020

The *International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus* and partner organizations lack information about the detainees who were taken to the Maskouskaye RUVD in the evening of August 9, 2020.

Please contact us if you have any relevant information or if you were in this police department on August 9, 2020, and tell us about the actions of the officers.

August 10, 2020

«One guy was told, 'Are you a boxer or something? They found a mouth guard on him, and they beat him for a long time. Then that man was in the cell, and his face was all blue, he got beaten even on the face. He was really swollen. They beat another guy, asking him who his coordinator was. One person was yelled at, «Anarchist!» and beaten.»

From a survivor's statement

People brought at night were driven through «corridors of death» consisting of angry officers with batons, who beat them mercilessly as they were unloaded from police vehicles.

After that, the detainees were placed in the assembly hall of the police department, where OMON officers continued to beat them throughout the night and the morning of August 10. People were held motionless in unnatural postures for hours: they were forced to sit with their heads bent and arms stretched forward over the front seats.

The evening of August 10 was an ordeal for many. People were thrown face down on the floor, lying in pools of blood on top of each other. All internal premises of the police department, including the assembly hall, corridors,

cells, offices and the basement, were packed with people. Any interaction with law enforcement officers, whether it was interrogation or going to the toilet, was accompanied by foul language, threats and beatings. During interrogations, the officers threatened them with rape.

00:00 • 04:00

The detainees were taken to the RUVD and seated in chairs in the assembly hall on the fourth floor of the building. The RUVD staff did not introduce themselves, they were not wearing identification signs or badges with personal data. However, the detainees note that they had not been subjected to violence before the OMON arrived.

Everything changed with the arrival of OMON. They burst into the assembly hall and began shouting insults and forcing people into stress poses where they had to remain motionless. In particular, they were ordered to bend their head down and put their hands on the back of the chair in front of them. The officers insulted or beat people for trying to stretch their shoulders or raise their heads. Those who, for various reasons, displeased the security officers were taken to the corridor and forced to stand for an extended period with their backs bent and their hands against the wall.

*«Some were screamed at, others were beaten... It was total mayhem.»
The OMON officers behaved in a very brazen manner, swearing, humiliating and insulting detainees. The guys were called faggots, bastards, I mean they were constantly swearing.»*

«And there, people stood for twelve hours with their backs bent for the whole twelve hours.»

04:00 • 08:00

Some of the detainees were taken to separate rooms for interrogation, during which, threatened with torture, they were forced to unlock their phones for the officers to study their contents. People who refused to provide their phone passwords were beaten extremely harshly until they were completely exhausted and agreed to unlock their devices. Witnesses claim that the security officers used beatings to intimidate the other detainees, who could clearly hear the screams of those being beaten.

«[A] man was screaming for probably 30 to 40 minutes, and he just wouldn't stop. The screams were quite loud. The police officers said that the dude wouldn't let them unlock the phone. It's been 40 minutes

now, and they've been trying to get that password out of him. It was a horrifying atmosphere...»

«I tried to find out if it was legal. They hinted they could do anything to me.»

The officers not only prevented the detainees from receiving medical care, but also seized people's own medications that they needed to take.

«At the interrogation, I told them that I needed these pills, they say: 'No problem, take them from your bag'.» I had them, but when I tried to take this pill, this man, in green military uniform, snatched them away from me.»

According to eyewitnesses, there were about 240-250 detainees in the police department at 2-3 am. Most of them spent the whole night there before being transferred to other places of detention.

16:00 • 20:00

New groups of detainees arrived at the RUVD. People were brutally beaten as they were unloaded from police vehicles. Most of those who arrived were led into the RUVD building in the «swallow» position (arms twisted high up behind the back, head low down).

«They began the unloading. The unloading was even more terrible than the loading, with incredible humiliation, beatings, face to the floor, hands behind the back, use of special techniques. Two men picked me up and started carrying me up the stairs. I immediately said that I was a Russian national. There were drops of blood on the steps. Then they led me down the corridor, with the others being beaten very badly, there were inhuman screams throughout the corridor. When you walk down the corridor, it gets all shaky.»

«We got off the bus and there we had to walk to the RUVD building. And so, they beat me. They beat me, and then he hit me once near my lung somewhere in my chest, I started coughing, involuntarily of course. He told me to hold the cough.»

«The guy who was walking in front of me... He'd been beaten before or was having a hard time for some reason, when he was going up the last staircase, he tripped and fell. They started beating him very hard, with a fist on his kidneys, from the back with shouts of 'get up' and he was gasping for breath.»

Some detainees were intentionally injured while being escorted.

«While they were escorting me to the assembly hall, they hit me a couple of times. At one point, they deliberately shoved me into the wall as we passed a door, causing injuries to my nose and chipping two of my teeth.»

«The law enforcement officers began to walk them out with their hands twisted behind their backs. The guy in front of me had his head slammed against the doorjamb of the RUVD entrance, and they did it on purpose. He screamed in pain. In response, they started hitting him in the head and yelling, «Shut up, bitch!». They hit me for the first time when they were taking me out of the police vehicle. I just didn't bend low enough and got hit with a hand to the head and then kicked in the face with a knee.»

People were also placed in the assembly hall, males and females were treated differently. Women were predominantly seated on the seats placed around the perimeter of the hall and forced to sit in unnatural positions mentioned above (bent forward as much as possible and with their arms stretched out on the front seats). At the same time, the men were harshly thrown face down on the floor in the space between the chairs and forced to lie down with their hands behind their heads. Eyewitnesses reported that women were not beaten as intensely as men during this period.

«'First, he threw me on the floor, and second, when he threw me, he stepped on my head with his foot. I had a cut on my chin from it. We were lying on our bellies with our hands behind our backs on a tiled floor. He stepped on me, causing my face to hit the tile, and I bled for two or three hours.»

Those placed in chairs were required to remain in the same position for extended periods, with their backs bent, heads down, and arms extended in front of them. Those who attempted to stretch their necks or raise their heads were struck with batons on the head, back, and arms.

«Everyone sat in the assembly hall with their heads down. We remained in that position for approximately three hours. Everything was already going numb. There was always some kind of commotion, shouting, and beating, among other things. They were constantly punching detainees — someone raises their head accidentally, and immediately gets hit on the head. And the new guys just brought in were beaten too, one could hear it perfectly well.»

«They told us to put our hands on the front seat. The distance between the seats was about the same as on a plane. And there they beat detainees with batons too. I remember thinking, if they hit me, they'd break my fingers. Others weren't allowed to change their positions, but I was able to move my arms. Others were getting pounded, and I heard these punches and the foul language all the time. Those who demanded any rights were beaten even more severely.»

Many people were brought to the RUVD with signs of injuries or fits of chronic diseases due to beatings in the police vehicles. The officers didn't take any steps to provide medical assistance and continued to torture the injured people, which made their condition worse.

«There was a man who was gasping for breath because he had been hit very hard somewhere in the chest or stomach. He shouted his diagnosis asking for a doctor. All the OMON officers did was take a five-liter bottle of water, hit him and pour [the water] on his head.»

«He said he had cancer, which means he was entitled to special conditions as a cancer patient. His requests were ignored. Also, when he was taken to the RUVD, he couldn't walk up the stairs and started to lose consciousness. His legs were struggling. They started beating him, and he got even dizzy. They beat him even harder.»

One guy had his back injured when he was detained, or he might have already had some kind of hernia when he was detained and hit hard. He complained and asked to be allowed to sit down because it was difficult for him to be in that position for a long time, but no one let him.

«Despite the fact that the Minsk people were lying down, they were constantly beaten. It looked like some of the detainees had broken arms, legs, or spines, as they screamed in pain from even the slightest movement.»¹

Some detainees were brought in extremely tight handcuffs, which the officers refused to remove. People's hands were turning blue and numb from the lack of blood supply.

« I said several times: «Loosen the handcuffs, please. I can't feel my hands.» They didn't pay attention. One officer says to another, «Oh, he's got bracelets, go get the keys. His hands are turning blue.» This guy comes back, tries to unlock the cuffs, and the key doesn't work. He says, «That's the old model, bad luck, you'll have to sit like that.»

1 <https://www.gazeta.ru/social/2020/08/14/13194151.shtml>

So, I asked him again in 5-10 minutes, and he was like, «Shit, go look for the key, they are really blue now». Then the guy returned with the right keys and managed to undo the handcuffs, but my hands were still in a lot of pain.»

20:00 • 24:00

As more and more people were brought to the RUVD, the officers' level of violence escalated. After being unloaded from the police vehicles, people were still forced through the «corridor of death» — while officers chaotically struck detainees with batons, feet and hands.

«They brought them to the RUVD courtyard, opened the doors, and said: 'Quickly, everybody run out, hands behind your back, face to the floor, in a bent posture'» «Everyone ran out of the paddy wagon, and several OMON officers stood there, beating them with batons to speed up the process.»

«These corridors are such that when you are taken out of the paddy wagon, people are already standing there, and as you walk, you are constantly accompanied by blows.» «As you go up the stairs, your OMON officer escorts you, and another OMON officer walks down. He doesn't just pass by; he hits you with his elbow or a baton as he goes.»

The beatings continued while moving inside the RUVD building. They beat people especially brutally on the stairs and in the corridors between the building entrance and the assembly hall.

«When we had to go up to the fifth floor, a few more officers joined in. «And they pummeled me all five floors, mostly hitting my legs, but also my back and buttocks.»

«If in the assembly hall people were beaten relatively less severely, the corridors were much harsher.» We could hear them being beaten. Those of us lying in the assembly hall were outraged and tried to shout, «What are you doing? Stop!» It seemed like there was nothing alive there anymore.»

The police forced people to follow their orders as quickly as possible, beating them at any delay.

«When they took us out and up to the fourth floor, they kept changing pace, sort of, so it was hard to keep up with them. And I tripped a few times. They would hit me from behind with batons during these moments, basically urging me on.»

«When we arrived, I was the first one to be pulled out of the vehicle and pounded. Four men came at me from all sides, punching me with their fists and boots. They dragged me somewhere. I tried my best to move my feet as fast as I could, but they kept rushing me like, «Hurry up, hurry up». And since my arms were twisted behind my back, it was difficult to run. Eventually, I just stopped moving my legs, and they simply dragged me. They twisted me over my head, punched me again, and laid me face down on the tile.»

At midnight, there were at least 150 detainees in the RUV assembly hall, about 15-20 of them women. Due to a lack of space, the officers began piling people on top of each other as a second layer. New arrivals were forced to walk on people lying on the floor and then crawl towards the free space.

«We walk into this assembly hall — and there are people lying on the floor. People were lying in piles with their hands behind their heads, and the officer told me, «Go». He wanted me to just walk over these people. I tried to step over them, but sometimes I accidentally stepped on someone. I tried not to step on anyone, but it was difficult because there were so many of them, all lying there.»

«... kicking [people] in the face who apparently didn't react fast enough to do what needed to be done. Well, or just for no reason. People were beaten and punched. A huge number of blows rained down on people there... They made people crawl, people lay on top of each other. They deliberately created this chaos, never letting you relax, constantly building tension.»

«Those lying on the floor, they were told, "Put your head on the floor." If someone didn't obey, or had a stiff neck, or couldn't do something, they would be forced to do it. Officers kicked people with their feet.»

Only after some time, when the number of detainees became too high, the police allowed all those who were lying down to sit on chairs. Also, about 15-20 people were put in the basement, where they were forced to kneel, with their head down and their hands behind their backs, with their legs crossed. People who tried to react to the actions of the officers or demanded adherence to the law were subjected to especially brutal beatings.

«Men who continued to stand their ground were thrown to the floor and kicked repeatedly.»

«Some guy there refused to identify himself, to give his name and surname. An OMON officer shouted at him, «Name yourself, speak up, or it will end badly for you». So, he hits him, and from the sounds, it's very clear that it's with a baton. He keeps silent anyway, and finally

the OMON officer loses his temper and says: «Do you have any extra organs?» and takes him away».

Due to continuous beatings, the floor in the assembly hall and corridors was covered with blood, and the officers forced the detainees to wipe it up with their clothes.

«And as we walked down the hallways, I saw that the entire floor was covered in blood, literally. It was smeared everywhere; everything was covered in blood.»

«When they were taking him out, either his nose started bleeding after a punch, or he dripped blood onto the floor. The OMON officers forced him to wipe up the blood with his own clothes.»

«There was also a man who had been beaten, he was bleeding. And the police started yelling, «What is this? What kind of pigsty have you made here? Take off your shirt and clean it up quickly!»

The officers began taking people one by one to separate offices, taking inventory of their belongings and conducting personal searches. They continued to abuse and beat the detainees all this time.

«At the search they put my hands against the wall, kicked my leg to make me put my feet wider, and made a full personal search. My knee was bandaged. He hit me in the leg right above the ankle for that. He pulled out the entire bandage, threw it away, and shouted, «Look, he has bandages, he's planning to strangle us!» And he hit me in the leg for it.»

The officers were particularly aggressive towards people with non-standard looks, such as men with tattoos or long hair.

«When the OMON officer threatened me that he would cut off my braid, he pulled my hair, then I told him: «Okay, cut it off, cut it off, okay.» Then the yelling, the swearing started again. The officers started beating me. They tried to twist my arms further so that I would face the floor. They tried to twist them, while striking the blows and cursing. They beat me on my back, shoulders, hit me in the stomach, even tried to hit me in the face».

Some were beaten so severely that they involuntarily defecated from the pain.

«As I lay there, some people were yelling, 'Look, he crapped his pants!' That is, people were treated so harshly that some had bowel movements from being beaten or from fear.»

«Another guy, a little bit farther away, he was brought in later, and he was beaten up so badly that he took a crap in his pants.»

The officers conducted interrogations, during which they forced people to give their personal data and answer the same questions several times, as well as to unlock their phones. They forged detention protocols and forced people to sign them.

Some of the detainees were interrogated right in the assembly hall or the corridor. Some were taken to separate rooms where, behind closed doors, they were threatened with rape with a baton and sexually assaulted.

«...continues to beat and in doing so often very much focused on who paid me. He starts to take off my pants, and says, «I'm going to fuck you now, guys bring some condoms.» ...starts hitting specifically on the butt and then moving the baton around the area. He looks right in my face, and says: «Do you realize we're going to fuck you hard right now?» He describes in detail how and what he will do to me if I don't tell him who paid me.»

After the inventory and interrogation procedures, the detainees were taken to the basement floor, where they were videotaped: they were required to give their full name, date of birth, place of detention, place of work, place of study and any special features (scars or tattoos on the body). Some detainees were moved to cramped cells (about 3 meters wide and 10 meters long), which were not designed for such a large number of people. It was very stuffy in the cells; the ventilation was not on. Moving between the cells was also accompanied by beatings.

«He delivered me all right, but there was some fierce OMON officer standing near the cells, who just threw me headfirst into the wall. I had a bruise on my forehead.»

They were reluctant to take people to the toilet, also beating and humiliating them on the way there. Some detainees were not taken to the toilet at all during the whole time in the police station.

«At night, some law enforcement officers would let you go to the toilet – others would command you to «do it in your pants»»

«...he said go, it's a couple meters to the toilet, he let me walk a little bit and sort of kicked me so hard that I flew into the doorjamb.»

«I was allowed to go to the toilet after 10 hours approximately. It's literally two hours before I was released.»

August 11, 2020

«What struck me most was that one of them was yelling that 'we are just waiting for permission to use guns and we'll shoot you bitches. We will shoot everyone!」»

From a survivor's statement

«We crawled through various kinds of filth. Blood, drool, perhaps even urine, because even the officers were saying, «Oh, it smells like shit, someone's already shit themselves.»

From a survivor's statement

According to detainees, violence and brutality in the Maskouskaye RUVD increased after midnight on August 11. On that night, detained protesters from Kamennaya Horka and the area of «Riga» store were brought there.

Protesters were brought in all night, and there were rumors among the officers that there were around 300 people in the RUVD. The entire building was filled with detainees, the majority of whom were in the assembly hall (around 150 people) – lying face down on the floor or sitting on chairs. Detainees were occasionally given water, but there wasn't enough for everyone: there were two bottles that were periodically refilled and shared for drinking. Some of the previously detained protesters were moved to the RUVD cells. The hallways and other rooms were also packed with people. People were being beaten.

«New people were brought in periodically, every thirty minutes or so until three o'clock in the morning, five or six times... And this constant roar. They didn't talk; they only roared and screamed at people like lunatics. People have been through it all. They've been thrown on the floor, they've been beaten on the floor, they've been made to crawl on the floor. It was simply unbearable.»

00:00 • 04:00

Those who were detained in the city at night and brought to the RUVD around two o'clock were beaten the most severely. The main beatings took place in a room adjacent to the assembly hall. The detainees could hear blows, screams, and groans. Special attention was given to non-Belarusian citizens and those who came from other cities within Belarus. They were taken out of the assembly hall, where the other detainees were held, and beaten. The

torture in the room adjacent to the assembly hall was mainly carried out by OMON officers, who had brought in a new group of detainees by that time. The corridors were covered in blood.

The RUVD officers ignored the torture and abuse that took place on their territory. For searches, people were taken out of the assembly hall into the corridor. In the corridors, people knelt with their foreheads against the wall, hands behind their backs, and legs crossed. On the basement floor, people were held in cramped and stuffy cells, where RUVD officers also carried out torture.

«Behind the wall of the assembly hall — I don't know what kind of wall it is, and I'm not familiar with the RUVD building layout — ...someone was being beaten. There were sounds of blows, groans, and screams, so intense that the walls shook. They weren't just hitting a person; they were slamming the person against the floor and the walls.»

«You hear blows with a baton, with fists. There was some kind of fuss. Maybe someone was resisting, then you would hear the sounds of blows — some people screaming, others just enduring, groaning but not hysterically.»

«All the police officers who were there knew what was going on: they closed the doors so it wouldn't be so loud. They fell silent and didn't say anything to each other during all those beatings.»

Despite people needing medical assistance, the officers ignored requests and demands to call for medical help. No one received any medical assistance. People soiled themselves from pain and fear. Several detainees suspect that one person was beaten to death in the room adjacent to the assembly hall.

«They beat him so severely that they eventually stopped, but the poor guy was making strange sounds... It turned out he had some kind of seizure. And no one paid any attention to him.»

«He was making this half-animal rasping sound, and the other detainees were asking for an ambulance to be called for him. The police said that they knew what to do without their advice. Then the moaning stopped, I don't know why: whether he died, or they took him somewhere.»

«One such person, he called him Aleh, I suspect he was killed there.»

«People peed and crapped themselves, some from the pain.»

«I told the officer I was passing out, and for that he punched me, lifted me up by my hair and put a sneaker under my head. So that I

would not lie on the ground with my forehead on the floor, but that I would lie on my own sneaker, without laces.»

The officers showed particular cruelty to those who, in any way, deviated from their imagined norm. Excess weight, dark skin, tattoos, piercings, and long hair became reasons for mistreatment. Activists and journalists were given special treatment, being beaten brutally.

«He [the journalist] was treated more harshly. His kidneys were injured, and a rib was broken. He said he worked for TUT.by and they beat him for that. He also told me that he was detained at Stela, there were three of them, and one of his friends... He was taken by the hair and his hair was cut off with a knife.»

«One guy... everyone kept questioning why he had an Orthodox cross tattooed on his back. They forced him to loudly recite the Lord's prayer while beating him.»

Unlike in other areas of the RUVD, the women in the assembly hall were not subjected to violence. In one of the offices on the upper floors of the building, there was a female officer who, on the contrary, showed particular cruelty and mistreated the women. Among the detainees, there was also a minor.

«One of the detained girls had a piercing, probably a micro dermal, on her chest. It was removed with pliers.»

«The girls were also threatened by a female officer saying, 'I'm going to cut your hair now, you prostitute!' Why can't you just stay at home? Do you know what will happen to you in prison? I'll make sure of it. I'll see to it that you have a 'good' time there!»

«One girl was crying very hard. He asked: "What are you crying for, bitch?" One of them started yelling at her. She says, "There are pools of blood under me, I can't look at it. I feel sick, I'm nauseous.» They continued to mock her for another 15 minutes, saying things like, «Look, look,» and so on. «So that you know what blood is.»

«There was a guy who was 16 years old. He kept demanding that his parents be called.»

Some detainees were interrogated, and the interrogations were recorded on video. When people were taken out for inspection, they were struck, forced to kneel, and had their arms twisted. Those who tried to disagree with the reports were beaten. Among the interrogating officers were two women who, despite what was happening, flirted with their colleagues.

«I remember that it was all filmed on a video camera. There was a cameraman with a portable video camera, or they filmed and documented some moments of interrogation.»

«At the same time, they were immediately forced to kneel. I heard commands, accompanied by very strong punches. Arms had to be raised and spread out.»

«Someone began to disagree with the report, then there was silence, followed by a lot of beatings. Afterwards, they said, 'Why did you splatter blood everywhere?'''»

«There were two women sitting there. They were laughing. Then, in the process, I heard them flirting with men. It was surreal, moaning, screaming, beatings, and amidst it all, life for them went on, bustling and flowing.»

04:00 • 08:00

Beatings and abuse of detainees continued. They beat people in such a way that everyone in the assembly hall could see and hear it. During this time there was constantly some kind of movement going on. People were taken to the cells, then brought to the assembly hall, then taken back to the cells. New detainees continued to be brought to RUVD until morning. Interrogations and searches continued, and people were beaten during the searches.

«But I have never heard such noises, such screams in my life. It's a nightmare. They beat him up so much that I'm not sure if this guy is still alive, really.»

«All this time that we stayed in the assembly hall, I heard constant beatings and screams. In other words, it was impossible to stay there; everyone's morale was already so utterly broken.»

The conditions in the cells were becoming increasingly horrific: overcrowding, high humidity, and deliberately disabled ventilation system. In response to people's attempts to defend their rights, they were beaten again.

«... there was not enough oxygen. They turned off the ventilation on purpose, even though it could be turned on. They tormented us by depriving us of oxygen.»

«There was a lot of blood on the tiles during this time, especially near the cells.»

«In addition, there is no fresh air, no ventilation. Literally half an hour later, the walls of the cell were wet, not to mention us. We were so drenched that you could wring out my shirt.»

«One woman said: «I am a citizen of the Russian Federation; you have no right to do that.» I heard the door to her cell open and as if something was poured on her. Then later, the detainees were saying, «It burns, it burns, it burns,» meaning something was poured on them, something other than water.»

The beatings were carried out both by the OMON officers present at the RUVD and by the RUVD personnel. There were threats of sexual violence during the beatings. The detainees who were in the corridor were tortured with water and dunked in the toilet bowl and sink in the RUVD restroom.

«He also cried and asked to stop. When the OMON officer finished [beating], he asked him: '... with or without a condom?」»

«They immediately threw him aside and grabbed me. As it turned out later, they were taken to the toilet and dunked in the toilet bowl. While the toilet tank was being refilled, they were moved to the sink and dunked in the sink. Then, once the tank was refilled, they were moved back to the toilet bowl, flushed, and dunked again.

«It was also said about Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya that 'your prostitute is now in Cyprus, with your money, and you have fallen for it, for the illusion of change. Here are the changes for you, we will organize a big change for you, we will rape you with batons, record everything on video and send it to prisons, so that your life there is not wine and roses.»

Detainees were forced to sit on chairs with their heads down. Those who raised their heads were beaten. Some were forced to squeeze their heads between the knees, and they were beaten for any movement. Some detainees in the assembly hall sat in this position for 6-8 hours or more. Toilet facilities were available upon request, but many did not ask for them for fear of being beaten again. Occasionally they gave detainees drinking water, while insulting them in every possible way.

«They gave us water, but very sparingly and infrequently. When we ran out of water, an officer would say, 'When will you bastards finally quench your thirst?」»

«... they forced me to hold my head between my knees, they didn't let anyone move. Whoever raised their head was also beaten either on the collarbones or on the head.»

The detainees were not told what would happen to them next, nor were they allowed to call their families. From the officers, there were endless threats, insults, and obscene language. Some detainees remarked that among the officers, many had a provincial accent, and some tried to change their voices.

«Everything was accompanied by foul language and constant insults. Some of the officers distorted their voices, likely to avoid being recognized. In other words, they spoke in a different tone of voice.»

«Then they came up to me and said, 'Why are you bullshitting us? We'll take you to another place, and you'll tell us everything.'»

Around 7 a.m., about 30-50 people, mostly minors and some girls, were released. They were first made to sign a commitment to appear in court.

Additionally, in the morning, at least one paddy wagon with approximately 35 detainees left the RUVD for Zhodzina. People were beaten with batons while being loaded into the police vehicle.

«They loaded us into the paddy wagon again. «Probably everyone received two baton strikes each — this was how the OMON officers sped up the process of loading people into the paddy wagon.»

«Everyone was beaten up. One person sat nearby, completely beaten, having wet and soiled himself. A young guy, but he was terribly battered.»

«...when we arrived at the RUVD in the paddy wagon, we were met by some guys in plain dark blue clothes, without even wearing masks. They beat us with batons to speed up the unloading process, and again when we were loaded back into the paddy wagon to be taken to prison.»

08:00 • 16:00

«I can say that those were the two most terrifying hours of my life. They beat us there, they tormented us.»

From a survivor's statement

«Another terrifying moment was when they said, 'If any one of you makes a move, I'll use live ammunition. I don't give a damn. You know what the most pleasant thing about this is? «It won't cost me anything!'»

From a survivor's statement

After some of the detainees were released in the morning on their own recognizance to appear in court, the RUVD personnel continued to draw up reports. Many victims noted that the RUVD officers were very concerned about the detainees' belongings, fearing they would be punished if anything was lost. This seemed very strange considering they had no concern whatsoever about the fact that people were being tortured and abused all night in the RUVD. There was constant confusion and lack of order in the department. At some point, they seemed to have lost track of two detainees or given someone the wrong belongings. The officers openly discussed which charges to «cook up» for each person in the report.

«Before they handed out the reports, I overheard them mentioning names and deciding which charges to pin on them. I didn't catch the exact charges, just heard them saying, «Let's give him this one, or maybe that one.» And there was a moment when they said, «Let's charge half of them under this article, and the other half – under that one...»

«The police officers, you could see that they were maintaining their aggressiveness, but they were... sort of confused.»

There were many people with obvious injuries and serious illnesses in the RUVD, but all requests for help were ignored, no one called the doctors.

«There was a badly beaten young man next to me. He was quite sturdy, but he had a large hematoma, could barely see out of one eye, and was dizzy.»

They started to send the detainees from the assembly hall to the cells and continued to beat them. In one of the cells, people were ordered to stand, and they were allowed to sit only an hour later. Ventilation was almost never on, water was given in scanty quantities (2 liters for 35 people in 2 hours), the heat was unbearable. About 10 people were placed in a punishment cell. No water was provided there at all, and they weren't taken to the toilet.

«These are some kind of preliminary detention cells designed for two people. I think we were about 30 or 35 people crammed in there. That is, we had to stand, and we stood, probably for 40 minutes.»

«It was a complete shitshow there. We, of course, were all breathing, and the temperature in there was around 40 degrees Celsius. Naturally, that bottle of water was gone in five minutes, with everyone taking a sip. Just ten minutes after we got there, I was completely drenched, with sweat pouring off me.»

«Around lunchtime they took us downstairs into a small cell, beating us very hard. They pushed in as many people as they could. We stood shoulder to shoulder; it was impossible to sit down or even shift from one foot to the other.»

As the paddy wagons arrived, people were distributed among them. They were taken to Zhodzina, to the Akrestsina Offenders' Isolation Center and Temporary Detention Facility.

In the daytime, paddy wagons arrived at the RUVD, bringing OMON officers. The loading of people into paddy wagons was accompanied by violence and threats. Many detainees recount that an officer entered the paddy wagon, switched his weapon to combat mode, and said that any movement would result in him shooting to kill, and no one would punish him for that.

Some detainees were loaded into the paddy wagons in stacks, creating layers of people, with those at the bottom unable to breathe. Some others were forced to kneel. They were forced to crawl over those lying down and sing the official anthem of Belarus. The only one who was allowed to sit on the bench was an elderly man in his 70s.

«A man is lying face down in a paddy wagon, with his hands behind his head. There is another one lying right on top of him in the same position, just like that. Then a third one on top of them both. The fourth, and the fifth. And about ten people like that. Like pancakes, they lie on top of each other. I lie down on people and after that I have five more people lying on top of me.»

«We... began to be stacked on top of each other. But someone at the bottom started yelling, «You're going to break my spine, I'm going to die.» They squatted us down.»

«And the guy said, 'No, I'll slit my wrists, I'll kill myself, but I won't get back into that paddy wagon with them.'»

16:00 • 20:00

«...»What do you dislike about this country? The president feeds you...» [the officers said] But, you know, every uttered word meant getting hit with club, or a fist, or a foot.»

From a survivor's statement

From 5 p.m., new detainees began to be brought to the police department. Paddy wagons stopped right in front of the main entrance to the building. They were met by a line of officers who beat people with their hands, feet,

and batons. Then they were taken up the stairs to the fourth floor, where the assembly hall was located. They were beaten by OMON while walking the stairs. In the assembly hall, for greater humiliation, people were forced to crawl to the podium where the RUV D officers were sitting. The floor was stained with blood. People were thrown face down, forced to keep their hands behind their backs.

«Then they brought me to the stairs in this police department. I couldn't practically stand there anymore; they made me crawl. While you had to hold your hands behind your back... That is, I'm on my knees, doing as best I could...»

«I saw people in front of me falling, they were also being beaten... And at the beginning of the corridor, we were forced to crawl to the podium, in their assembly hall or something like that. It's a room with chairs or seats on one side, like in a cinema, and on the other side, a podium... And there were screams, crying, all at once. They put me down and ordered: «Crawl!»

«Almost the entire way, this was accompanied by insults and random blows.» Let's say if we walked by some officer, he could just hit absolutely randomly any part of our body wherever he happens to hit.»

«In short, I was ordered to lie down, put my hands behind my back, and push myself with my legs, crawling toward the people already lying there. Naturally, I didn't resist and crawled as best as I could. I crawled forward following the traces of blood.»

People lying on the floor in the assembly hall continued to be beaten. They were stomped on with boots, constantly hit, and insulted. Some were marked — crosses were painted on their backs with spray cans of paint.

«One time an officer apparently had no room to walk, he just walked on my back, stepping on me with both feet, as if he was walking on the floor.»

«Let's say he just walks and randomly kicks me on my head or other parts of his body. I can't even make an account of the sequence of all these blows, there were many of them, they were constant.»

«Another officer ran up to me from behind with a can of paint and drew one line from the top of my head to the waist and crossed it out with another, that is, he drew such a peculiar cross on me.»

Particular aggression was directed towards detainees associated with law enforcement agencies. Motorcyclists were also beaten badly.

Ironically, there were detainees in the assembly hall who supported the Lukashenko regime. They didn't understand what was happening and tried to prove their innocence, for which they were also beaten.

«The pro-government supporters got it pretty bad because they didn't listen when told to lie down. They got it even worse because they, well, they tried to argue. Although it was clear that every word, every move you make would just result in an extra blow.»

20:00 • 24:00

«And just... blood was running down the T-shirt, and jeans, and sneakers. I sat like that, with blood dripping the whole time. Eventually, it dried up and stopped.»

From a survivor's statement

The delivery of detainees to the RUV D continued. After unloading them from paddy wagons and vans, they were thrown onto the asphalt and beaten there. Then they were picked up and led through the «corridor of death» to the assembly hall.

In the assembly hall, people were lying on the floor, they were forbidden to move or raise their heads. For inspection, they were taken to the next corridor, where they were also beaten and forced to strip naked. Police officers constantly demanded personal data (full name, address) from those lying down, and kept asking who paid them and how much.

Most detainees in the assembly hall did not take part in the protests, they were picked up in their neighborhoods, on the way from work, or pulled out of a taxi.

There were at least three women among the police officers, and the beatings of the detainees happened right before their eyes and with their tacit approval.

«I couldn't even breathe anymore, because they were dragging me and hitting me on the doorjamb along the way, yelling: "What kind of man are you, you can't take punches," and so on. I shouted to them that I had a son: "Don't hit me, I still need to raise him." Because it felt like they were just ready to kill me.»

«They threw me on this bloody floor, hands behind my back, and said, «Crawl forward.» I crawled as long as I could, without using my hands. Periodically, those who stood on the sides beat me from above with their batons.»

«They also hit me under the buttock at the point where the sciatic nerve exits – they kicked me there. Then they kicked him under the armpit. Then, when I was almost falling, they struck me with the edge of their hand at the base of my skull, and I fell to the floor.»

«You walk, you do your best not to step on people somehow, you raise your head – and you get another blow. In the end, they tell you that someone's hand is under my feet, and they push and throw me on the floor covered with someone's blood and shit. Apparently, someone soiled himself. «And I fell, and it was fortunate that I had a cloth mask on.»

«Motherfuckers, we'll kill you! What's your problem, damn it? Is life so bad for you? Are your salaries really that low? Do you want there to be a riot, like in Ukraine, so that everything is destabilized?» And it wasn't a dialogue, it was just them talking.»

They especially beat people with national symbols (embroidered shirts, pins, bracelets) and those in camouflage clothing. Those who were labeled with yellow paint (they could be labeled for anything, including embroidered shirt) – were beaten stronger and longer. There were also minors and women in the assembly hall.

«They threw me on the floor on the third floor, smashing my chin, and forced me to crawl. I was crawling across the tiles to some kind of assembly hall... I was also sprayed with yellow paint. And those who were marked with paint, got beaten up harder...».

«But when I was sitting and looking down, I was at the edge of the chairs in the assembly hall, and in the middle was a corridor where people were put down, and they were forced to crawl. And as they crawled, they were beaten with hands and feet. I saw people crawling, and they left a trail of blood, it was scary. People were beaten right in this assembly hall.»

«They targeted people with certain items like boots, military camouflage pants, white shirts with the Pahonia, and white ribbons, asking, 'Are you for Tsikhanouskaya? You'll get it from her' – and those people were beaten much harder.»

Closer to midnight, people in the assembly hall were ordered to sit on chairs, put their hands on the seats in front of them, palms up, and lower their heads down between their hands. They were held in this position until lunch the next day. Some remained lying face down on the floor. Requests for medical assistance were met with rudeness and insults from the officers, and no one

received any help. One of the detainees was beaten to such an extent that he was carried out of the assembly hall on a stretcher. Some people were beaten for asking to go to the toilet, so detainees were afraid to make such requests.

«They twisted our arms behind our backs and put us in chairs. They made us stay in a position where you sit with your head almost on your knees, bent forward, arms stretched above your head, resting on the backrest of the chair in front. So, we had been sitting for 10 hours in this position.»

«I asked to call an ambulance, but the people who were there, these women who examined us, said, «What ambulance? We have people fainting eight times here and no one gets called an ambulance.»

«And there was a terrible moment when they brought us in, and someone was screaming very loudly. He was being beaten, and he began to wheeze, moan and at some point, he fell silent... I look out of the corner of my eye, as I can't turn around, and I see the people in military boots carrying stretchers. Someone is lying on a stretcher and the military boots move in absolute silence.»

Detainees who were suspected of being protest coordinators were interrogated in offices on the 4th floor. The interrogation was conducted with the use of torture. They were constantly asked questions about how much they had been paid and who hired them. The phones were inspected.

«They dragged me to the 4th floor, ... (inaudible) office. Three officers went in there at once. ... They took my phone and began to interrogate me. I was periodically beaten with a baton... This went on for about an hour. In the office, they questioned me who paid me, and how we communicated. How much they pay. When they tortured me, or I could say beat me, they asked: "Why don't you like Russians? Why don't you like Russians?"

This is how one of the detainees briefly described the events in the Maskouskaye RUVD on August 11:

«That is, they were beaten with batons there. Bruises, torn clothes, traces of blood, and screams. This continued for quite a while. The procedure was as follows: they brought you in, put you on the floor, searched you, and then you either went back to the floor or were seated in a chair somewhere in the hall. In the chair, you had to sit with your head bent forward and your arms stretched out. If you lifted

your arms or head, they would hit you with a baton to make sure you stayed in that position. They interrogated me: they asked me what exactly I was doing, and how much I was paid.»

August 12, 2020

«People were brought in all night, along this corridor. They called it the “corridor of death.” When people were brought in, we could hear the screams, groans, cries, and pleas from below as we sat there. They then dragged all these people upstairs, threw them on the floor at the entrance, and shouted, «Crawl.» Then came the cursing, insults, and every derogatory term you can imagine. «Crawl on your belly,» they would say, throwing people on top of each other, «crawl with this one,» and they beat everyone around with their feet and rubber batons as people crawl.»

From a survivor’s statement

People brought to the Maskouskaye RUVD on August 12 were also forced to run through the «corridor of death.» Passing through this corridor was accompanied by beatings and insults. The people detained on this day were also rarely given water, not fed, and hardly allowed to use the toilet.

The beatings in the assembly hall and other rooms were so severe that people sometimes couldn't endure it and involuntarily soiled themselves. The interviewees repeatedly pointed out that the entire corridor in the police department was covered in blood, urine and feces.

The officers also showed incredible cruelty towards women. The detained women reported beatings, insults and threats of rape. The RUVD staff were so aggressive that some women began to think that they would be killed there. They were ready to lie that someone had paid them to take part in the rally, as long as they didn't get killed.

The survivors also testify that there were minor children, aged 15-17, among the detainees in the RUVD that day.

The RUVD leadership did not react to what was happening and made no attempt to stop the torture of detainees. On the evening of August 12, during an interrogation, one of the officers committed an act of sexual violence

against the detainee he interrogated. The victim himself reported this to the International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus. The rape was committed by an officer of the RUVB between 20:00 and 24:00.

00:00 • 04:00

«And so, it went on all night. New arrivals, torture, people being dragged, and threats like, «We'll kill you and get away with it!» They weren't shy to say it. I realized later that they would get away with it and they really did.»

From a survivor's statement

On the night of August 12, the delivery of detainees to the RUVB continued. People were made to climb the «staircase of death,» where 3-4 officers stood on each landing, randomly striking them with batons, hands, and feet. They continued to be beaten in the assembly hall. Those lying face down on the floor were mercilessly beaten with feet and batons on all parts of their bodies.

“... a guy was running in front of me. He got hit in the face, probably with a boot, and right there I saw several of his teeth just fly out of his mouth. That's when I realized I needed to at least try to protect my own face...”

«They beat us for real... Some hit with their feet, others with batons — wherever they landed.» When you go up to the fourth floor, you can see detainees lying there on the right, and on the left. They were beaten in front of me by uniformed officers.»

«They hit all over, including the head, not caring where the blows landed. I know they seriously injured some people. Judging by the screams and groans, they did this to a doctor, a young man who was brought in at night, though I don't remember exactly what time. They beat him with zeal because he had provided medical assistance, which infuriated them: «You were helping those who are trying to resist us, those who are trying to throw stones at us!»... Some were beaten extremely badly, judging by the screams, pleas and moans.»

The assembly hall has become a special place of torture. According to the victims, there were about 50 people there at night. People testified that when they were brought to the assembly hall, they were thrown on the floor face down where the rest of the detainees were. There were traces of blood and even broken teeth on the floor. There, they «processed» people: asking for

their first name, last name, patronymic, and all the circumstances of their detention. They also asked some about their income, and confiscated their clothing, belts, and the contents of their pockets.

«As soon as we entered the assembly hall, everyone was thrown face down. The guys were told to crawl to the nearest empty seat, the girls were then lifted and sat face down on a chair, too. At some point, as you walk «face down,» you see blood, sweat, someone's teeth.»

«In the assembly hall, they started checking us again, took my sweatshirt off me, the laces, and the belt. They took everything out of my pockets. They left me in a T-shirt and pants. And sneakers.»

«There were beaten people... That someone's hands were blue. Everyone sat in different positions everywhere. And they also brought two men there. One of them was beaten with batons for quite a long time right in the assembly hall. He kept snapping at them. He responded to them. And they kept striking him.»

«They realized that they couldn't get anything out of me and took me to the general assembly hall, where people were lying on the floor. Someone had an epileptic seizure; another was continuously vomiting because he had a concussion. He kept saying that felt like his head was splitting, he had vomited everything he had in his stomach, and now he felt like he was vomiting his brains out and urgently needed an ambulance. No one reacted to this, when he almost died, they took him away, laughing: "Well, you could get up, what else do you want?"

Selectively, some detainees were marked with spray paint, crosses or other marks drawn on their bodies – these people were beaten stronger. Detainees with distinctive signs in the form of tattoos or dreadlocks were beaten mercilessly. Among other things, officers humiliated and insulted citizens based on their skin color.

«And at that moment they also brought my friend. The guy I arrested with. They placed him next to me. And we were spray-painted. And they put us face down on the floor of the assembly hall. They drew a cross with a circle. On my back. Some paint was on my pants, too. And on the T-shirt. My friend's T-shirt and jeans were painted too.»

«They approached me; each new squad that arrived would ask about my tattoos. In other words, they beat me for my tattoos – on my back with a baton, on my head with their hands, and in other ways. And so, it happened to everyone.»

«There was a boy named Hleb, dark-skinned, sitting next to me... It was as if they had never seen dark-skinned people or tattoos before. It was as if they were at a zoo, staring at people. The officers were just so narrow-minded, or I don't know. There was a girl sitting next to me who was wearing a pink sweatshirt, maybe you saw her, with dreadlocks. Later, I just read what happened to her: that four of them beat her with batons, cut off her hair, and kicked the chair out from under her — such a horror.»

«And so, we sat, well, for twelve hours. And in between, the officers were bullying me all the time, well, they picked on me because I was black. And also, well, dyed hair, I had pink hair then, with some blue parts. And the bullying never stopped.»

Some of the people held in the assembly hall were lying face down on the floor, others were forced to sit motionless on chairs in extremely uncomfortable positions, with their heads down and hands on the shoulders of the person sitting in front of them. People spent about 13-15 hours in this position.

«They already put me on the seat, that is, they told me to put my head down and put my hands on the shoulders of the person in front of me, like that. And just sit there, don't raise your head or move... and we sat like that for about, I don't know, 13 hours, 15, I can't say for sure. Yes, until about lunch time, until 2 p.m. the next day.»

«Well, whoever raised his head was immediately warned, then beaten. It's hard to sit like that for so long; your arms get swollen, and your neck goes numb. And for me, it's bearable since I'm in relatively good physical shape, but there were elderly people there, people not in good physical condition, and overweight people. And it was very hard for them. They couldn't handle it; they kept shifting around. They raised their heads, and they were beaten for that.»

A man in medical clothes and with medicines in his bag was beaten with particular cruelty. According to survivors, he was a doctor. A detainee who was found with gasoline in his bag had that gasoline poured into his mouth in a room located behind the stage of the assembly hall.

«There was a guy, he was a doctor, he was wearing a doctor's uniform... And they beat him because he had some medicines in his bag. He says, "I had a shift yesterday, and today, given what is happening, I wanted to help people." But they beat him and called him names because of the medications in his bag, which they wanted to present as having some sort of combat value.»

«As far as I understand, they forced him to drink it — the gasoline they found in his possession — they shoved the bottle right into his mouth.»

The situation for the detainees that night was worsened by the fact that the officers mostly did not allow them to use the toilet, forcing people to relieve themselves where they stood. According to the detainees, out of every three requests to use the toilet or get water, two would be met with additional blows, and on the third request, they might show mercy and allow them to go to the toilet.

«Being allowed to use the toilet was rare. People ended up urinating on themselves. Well, some also defecated on themselves, from pain or other reasons...»

«...the usual procedure was, when you asked the first time, you would get hit somewhere, you know, just a blow. You ask a second time — you get hit again, but by the third time, they'd most likely take you to the toilet or give you some water. That was more or less the routine.»

Among those detained in the RUVD that night were girls and underage boys aged 15 to 17. They were also beaten.

«The hardest thing was when a boy, 17-18 years old, is brought in, searched, his underwear is taken off, they reach everywhere... And there are two women sitting there, calmly taking notes. That is, guys are being killed before their eyes, and they are just calmly writing something.»

«There were several children, boys and girls. When they put me on the floor, they put a child, a boy, next to me. They started asking him how old he was. He said he was 15. They pounced on me, saying, «Why did you bring a kid with you? What are you going to teach him?» And they hit me with batons from above. That boy said, «I don't know this man, and I'm not with him.» ... Then they also brought in other kids, around 15 years old, and dragged them around in the same position as everyone else. This was before the questioning. I don't know what happened to them afterwards.»

The girls were tortured during interrogations, forcing them to confess to participating in protests for money.

«They put me in a chair in the center, and started asking me how much and who paid me. I still didn't know what to say to that, after which they said, "It's okay, you can't say, okay!"» They knocked the

chair out from under me, made me sit on the ground and for every answer that was wrong in their view, they gave me two blows with a baton. I earned six blows on the buttocks, I cried... Can you explain what this even means? And additional blows to the legs.»

Threats of sexual violence were constant, directed at both men and women.

«The girls were in the assembly hall, too. One of them was talking to an OMON policeman. They were tormented: threatened with rape, with being thrown into a cell with convicts, and subjected to psychological pressure.»

04:00 • 08:00

«I was sitting in the second row. In front of me was a young guy, bandaged with his own T-shirt, his head was smashed, and dried blood was on the back. There was blood on his back, his T-shirt is torn, and he is bandaged with it.»

From a survivor's statement

Later that night, people began to be taken to the RUV D cells. They were transferred from one room to another in painful poses. Victims reported that the journey to the cell (or as the detainees called it, the punishment cell), as well as to the assembly hall and sometimes the toilet, was accompanied by two officers who twisted each detainee into a «swallow» position.

«Two officers came, twisted me into a swallow and led me down the stairs somewhere. As it turned out, they took me to the punishment cell, which was already filled with people.»

«Then they lead you to the assembly hall 'face down, hands behind your back.»

«I also asked to go to the bathroom once. I opened the bathroom door with my head, still in this position, bent in half, head first into the door. I closed the door behind me. He opened the door and hit me with a baton, but mostly against the door frame. For closing the door. Although I didn't even know. I went, and they bent me again, to this place.»

The cells were stuffy because they were incredibly overcrowded. The victims reported that the cell was a completely enclosed concrete room measuring 2 by 4 meters. Most of the time, the ventilation was turned off, and therefore

there was a catastrophic lack of air. Everyone was wet and sweaty. Survivors report that it was impossible to breathe. In response to requests to the police to turn on the ventilation, it was turned on briefly in rare cases, then turned off again on purpose. It was so hot that condensation formed on the walls of the cell.

«The ventilation was turned off, and staying in this punishment cell, by and large, was one of the most terrible experiences during the entire time of my detention. Because it was incredibly hot there, the sweat just flowed like a river, you wipe it off, and it accumulates again.»

«In general, it was very, very hot there. It was very difficult to breathe, and in order to somehow cool down, we tried to touch the concrete walls with as much body area as possible. They gave a slight feeling of coldness, at least a little bit.»

The cells were overcrowded. According to the victims, the single and double cells held up to 30 people at a time. People were not fed, given almost no water, and were refused access to the toilet.

«They started taking us to solitary cells and putting us with our backs to each other. There were 30 of us in a cell designed for one person. They crammed us all into the cells, which were designed with ventilation shafts, but the fans were covered with something. With 30 people in a cell, there was no air to breathe.»

«We were shoved into a cell, 13 people. A maximum of three people can lie down there in a normal position. It was incredibly stuffy and hot there. It was impossible to breathe or do anything there; we just tried to sit quietly and not move because everything was completely sealed off. The lights were on all the time.»

«I can quote [the dialogue] verbatim. We knock — «You should have used the toilet at home.» We knock — «You should have drunk water at home.» This is verbatim.»

In addition to creating inhumane conditions, the police resorted to other ways of humiliating the people in the cell. So, they kept video surveillance of the detainees and required them to be in the cell only with their hands behind their backs and their heads bowed to the floor.

«We were only allowed to stand in the cell facing the wall with our hands behind our backs. All of this was closely monitored because, if I'm not mistaken, there were two cameras in the punishment cell, and an officer would periodically check them to make sure we didn't change our positions, lower our hands, or sit down.»

In order for the detainees to comply with the demands, the officers resorted to threats to spray gas into an already stuffy cell. These threats were perceived by the detainees as realistic ones. While some reported that they were only threatened with the spraying of gas in their cell, others testified that tear gas was sprayed into their overcrowded cell. According to the survivors, the police officer on duty also threatened to pour bleach into the cell.

«... And at some point, he knocked and told one of the guys that if he lowered his hands again, they would release gas into the cell. At that moment, I did not understand what kind of gas he was talking about, I realized it later, because people in the cell next to ours apparently received similar threats. As it turned out later, a viewing window or perhaps a door opened, and they sprayed pepper gas into the cell from an ordinary can. And people there coughed very hard, they coughed for a long time. At that point in time, of course, there was complete silence in our cell, because everyone was in complete shock.»

«Some time passes, he opens the door, turns to us and says, «I warned you.» And he sprays gas, right on top of the shirt. Everyone gets sick. I tell the guys not to move. Those who are feeling unwell lie down on the floor because the gas will rise and it will be easier to breathe, and don't rub your face. We stood in the gas for a while. That's the worst thing about it all. All that pain wasn't as frightening, but this was terrifying... This was the lowest act. I think this is unacceptable. Well, it's just the lowest possible thing to do. In an enclosed space, spraying from a canister, and he seemed to get some kind of satisfaction from it or something.»

«The duty officer said we must follow his orders: 'There are nine of you, only four should sit, and five should stand, and you must take turns, or else you're screwed. I will pour chlorine in your cell.» That's verbatim. I looked around, there really were some white spots.... We were there for a long time. 10 hours.»

The officers also tormented the detainees using the so-called «restraint chair» or «glass,» where people were forced to sit in an uncomfortable position until 4 or 5 a.m.

And they said to me, «What, do you think you're too smart?» And there's a restraining chair, it's bolted to the floor. In other words, it can't move left or right. They... tied me up, no, they handcuffed me. I remembered well the one who did it. Well, I probably sat like that until about 4 or 5 a.m.»

«The second man who was being beaten on the floor was put into what they called the 'glass,' where a stool is bolted to the floor. His feet were chained to a stool all night. And his hands were chained to the stool, too. And he was sitting on that stool all night. He screamed all night for them to loosen his handcuffs.»

At the RUVD, victims did not receive medical assistance, and their requests for help were ignored. People with severe injuries spent the night in incredible pain.

«... many people have already been taken to cells, two at a time, where they could sleep. Here a man was thrown into their cell, he was barely breathing, they did not call an ambulance for him. Only when the duty shift changed, the new policeman called an ambulance, and it turned out that his spine was fractured.»

Those of the detainees who remained in the assembly hall reported that closer to morning they were moved to the stage and began the process of drawing up and signing protocols. The detainees were also videotaped in a room behind the stage of the assembly hall, where they gave their details: name, last name, place of detention, and date of birth.

«They give me some papers; I straighten up and that's it ... They give me something, I can't read anything. They said: "Go on, you'll stay here for three days, we have the right to keep you for three days, and you'll be charged under some other article." I only remember that it was about "participation in an unauthorized rally at 115 Dziarzhynski Avenue" and then everything went blurry. According to them, it was a paper saying that I had been warned about criminal liability, and next time it would be charged as a criminal offence. They gave me more papers. There was also something else about some refusal, under the signatures, it was written in brackets — «refusal», couldn't figure out from what.... In my condition, I couldn't read anything, but they forced me to sign it. Or you don't sign, and you spend three days there, but I couldn't feel my legs and body from being in this position.»

Those who were taken away from the assembly hall for inspection or interrogation to another room reported being subjected to violence there. Female survivor reported that she was grabbed and held by her hair and slapped once.

«At about 7:30 a.m., I was taken to a small room for inspection. There were two women, who were supposed to inspect me. They started yelling at me right off the bat that I was the reason they were working double time. I mean, she should have been home a long time ago, but I showed up here. To which I replied, something harsh, and received a

slap in the face. They put me face to the wall and began to undress me to inspect. At some point, the OMON or police officers or those who work in the RUV D — guys in uniform — came by and saw that she was holding me by the hair. Some young guy said, "Don't do it, she's about 15 years old" (I look young). To which she said, "It's none of your business, we'll figure it out ourselves." And they just left. She slapped me, grabbed my hair, and told me that if I said anything harsh one more time, I would know what pain was.»

Another detainee said that she was completely stripped during the inspection in the presence of three officers.

«After that I was called in for inspection. ... We went with this young lady into the office, where three cops were sitting at the desk. She said « we're going out» and they said «ah no, we'll turn away». I didn't have the energy to argue, and at the inspection one has to undress completely. I had to take off all my clothes. It didn't really bother me at the time, but now I'm outraged. Why were there three men sitting there?»

08:00 • 12:00

«Then they brought me back to the assembly hall. We sat there all night in a certain position, we were not allowed to sleep. Men were beaten if they fell asleep, moaned or screamed.»

From a survivor's statement

On the morning of August 12, the detainees began to be loaded from their cells into paddy wagons and taken to the Akrestsina Offenders Isolation Center. The transfer from the cells to the paddy wagons was accompanied by screams and beatings. People were literally thrown on top of each other, face down on the ground. After that, in the paddy wagon, the officers ordered them to squat with their hands behind their backs. Those failing to do so were beaten with batons.

«Two hours go by, I hear a door nearby start to open, and I hear banging and screaming, someone starts punching someone, and then the door to our cell opens. We got our hands clasped by OMON officers. However, later they told us they were SOBR. They just throw us all into police vehicles, face to the floor, no explanations given...»

12:00 • 16:00

«Someone started crying, someone asked to at least kneel down, and not lie on the floor... They responded with «Shut up!» and «None of your business!».

From a survivor's statement

Closer to 2 p.m., some of the detainees were taken out for transportation, but there were not enough police vans and not enough room for everybody. The officers began to abuse them by putting them on their knees on the concrete floor, head down. Detainees had to stand in such positions for about an hour, suffering unbearable pain. Victims said that some began to cry and moan, as many had spent the entire night without movement.

«... They put us all on our knees on the concrete floor, with our heads on the floor, and told us to wait. We stood like that for about an hour... There were both guys and girls with us... Many people got really unwell after 20-30 minutes because you've been sitting up all night without moving and then they put you on concrete ground. At some point, they allowed us to stand facing the wall, because everyone was writhing in pain and exhaustion.»

16:00 • 20:00

«I eventually cracked, let's just say, after the threats. They threatened to put my head in the toilet bowl and rape me – a lot of words like that and a lot of beatings.»

From a survivor's statement

New detainees continued to be brought to the RUVD. Victims reported relentless violence, abuse, insults and threats of rape. At the same time, they noted that the police officers understood the unlawfulness of their actions. In the breaks between the beatings, they warned each other that the screams of the people they were abusing could be heard in the adjacent offices of the police department.

«They took me there, to the second floor, where they immediately began to beat me, without saying a word. I asked them to stop, I screamed. On the second floor, I was beaten for maybe 15-20 minutes, after which a man came in and said: «Shush, there are civilians in the office next door». After that, they stopped for about five minutes.»

To continue beating the victim without fear that others might hear them, the officers decided to change the location and moved the detainee to the 4th floor. The torture continued there for another hour.

«And five minutes later I had the back of my sweatshirt pulled over my head, over my eyes so I couldn't see anything. They picked me up and dragged me upstairs to the fourth floor. Along the way, they said that "Now we will go up to the fourth floor, there is no one there, and no one will hear you there." It felt like the beatings continued for a little over an hour.»

The physical violence was accompanied by threats to find and beat the victim's girlfriend, as well as rape him. He perceived the threats of rape as real, as the officers had already started to perform sexual violence on him. Among other things, they used threats in order to get the detainee to sign the protocol.

«My girlfriend has been calling me on my phone all this time. They made threats that if I didn't sign everything, they would find my girlfriend, go to her place, and bring her here, too. One of them said that although the girls have a higher pain threshold, they start talking faster. I begged them, I swore. Please don't hit me, and so on. But it had absolutely no effect on them. They poked me in the anus with a baton. Let's say, through my pants.»

The beatings and abuse were of the most sophisticated nature. They beat in such a way as to cause special pain and humiliation.

«They stepped on my hands with their feet. My hands were just turning blue. Because you try to defend yourself, cover yourself with your hands, and they don't let you — they pull your hands forward and step on them so you can't defend yourself. They beat on the heels, too, as my doctor friends told me later, it was to affect the kidneys.»

20:00 • 24:00

«He says again, «Now you're gonna get it...» Well, then I saw him face to face by this time. He looks right in my face, and says: «Do you realize we're going to fuck you hard right now?» He describes in detail how and so on and says, we'll do it if you don't tell me who paid you.»

From a survivor's statement

New detainees continued to be brought to the RUVD and beaten. The most beaten were those who resisted, refused to sign the report or unlock the

phone. They were transferred to the 4th floor and there they were humiliated, tortured, and threatened with rape.

«I was alone, there was no one else there, I mean, other victims. Some dude was there, I don't know if he was the boss or not. He says: "Closer!". Well, I am lying face down on the floor, so somehow, I crawl up to them with my shoulders like this for five meters. Well, then it also started with the phone, that I don't give them the password to unlock it. Accordingly, they start beating me up. That is, I'm already lying on my stomach here, and they're hitting my ass there, roughly speaking.»

August 13, 2020

«They took us out, hands behind our backs. They talked amongst themselves and ordered to throw me in with the worst people. And they took me to the fourth floor, to what turned out to be the assembly hall. There were officials there (the police and OMON officers).»

From a survivor's statement

As detainees note, there were simultaneously officers from the RUVD and OMON in the assembly hall. The beatings continued.

«The OMON police were constantly talking, joking at us, laughing, and insulting us. They also beat one man who said he went to buy some vodka and did not take part in the rallies. Well, he was beaten constantly, just constantly for every word he uttered. That's all that happened in the RUVD.»

00:00 • 04:00

«Mom saw how my body looked like. And she immediately told me to go get the beatings documented. We did it a day after the detention. There were multiple bruises, there were traces of kicks. Several on the back and many on the buttocks (they were almost all red) and on the legs. On my right elbow, it hurt for two more days.»

From an underage survivor's statement

After registration, some detainees were placed in cells. The cells were overcrowded. Detainees recount that a single-occupancy cell was crammed with people «to the brim,» making it very stuffy inside. People had to sit on the only wooden bench in the cell, with no access to drinking water or toilet facilities.

«The cells are rooms with a tiled floor and a small wooden platform. Grey plaster on the walls, all wet. There is absolutely no air. And only two light bulbs under the ceiling. There is no window, nothing.»

«All the people there were much older than me, that is, well over 30, 40, or 50. And most of them felt really unwell. It was incredibly hot in that cell, and we had to strip down there. And I begged, I knocked on this door that had closed behind us, and I begged for at least some water, just not even for myself, just for these people. He said that people felt unwell. The man behind the door answered me. He replied: «You should have drunk water at home.»

The detainees were not given the necessary medication. Their requests for medical assistance were ignored. They stayed in such conditions for more than five hours.

«There was a dude who... probably he was diabetic. And he did not receive any medications for a long time. And he knocked, asked for medicines. All of us ... tried to get him an ambulance, what's it called, what's needed...? Yes, insulin, what he needs... The first thing we did was to address this issue. ...an hour went by, nothing changed. The toilet was not that important... It was important to help him.»

At the same time, the detainees on the floor of the assembly hall continued to be beaten. Among them were minors, who were also beaten and forced to lie on the ground in stress positions.

«They talked, joked, beat those lying on the ground with batons (not constantly, but from time to time). I was ordered to lie down on the floor, after that I was hit several times (I don't remember with what) on the legs. And they told me not to raise my head and ordered me to put my legs crosswise. We lay like that for 40 minutes. After about 20 minutes, my legs got extremely sore. I asked if I could change my position. A police officer came up and led me into a chair. I begged very hard because I couldn't take it anymore.»

04:00 • 08:00

In the early morning at dawn, around 5 a.m., the detainees began to be transported out of the RUVD. As it turned out, some of the people were taken to the Akrestsina OIC, while some others — to Zhodzina TDF.

«They called some people by their last names [when] they took them out. Then the rest, without calling out names: «Everyone else, get out too.» They put us in a vehicle, a van, and said, «You're not gonna do anything stupid, are you?» Because it wasn't a paddy wagon at all, it was just a [car] with windows...».

CONSEQUENCES: INJURIES AND TRAUMAS OF THE DETAINEES

«They cut his leg open, I don't know if it happened during the arrest or later at the RUVD. Because when we were already at the RUVD, on our knees, they used me like a rag to wipe up the puddle of blood that had pooled from his injury...»

From a survivor's statement

The situation with injuries and traumas in the Maskouskaye RUVD was not much different from the overall situation during August 9 - 13, 2020 in other RUVDs of Minsk city. People were severely beaten during arrest, and at every stage of detention they were not provided with medical assistance (or provided insufficiently and in the most exceptional cases). The detainees had no access to water and food. People with chronic diseases often lacked access to necessary medications, which only worsened their condition and could lead to severe consequences later.

In many of the questionnaires, people indicate that they consider their injuries to be mild (this was reported by detainees with varying degrees of injuries) compared to the injuries they observed in others during their detention on August 9-13, 2020. Therefore, some of the interviewees decided not to undergo medical examination and/or screening, believing that other people need help more than they do.

«I basically got off very lightly because there were some very battered people there. Well, in general, many of my bruises just came off.»

«I'm a young guy, I know I'll recover. It's not a big deal. Well, the BSMP hospital documented multiple hematomas, bruises, internal muscle tissue damage, and blood in the urine. Something like that. Physically, it's still not that bad compared to other people I saw there. I mean, to be honest, I think I'm lucky, physically.»

«These are just bruises; they are just hematomas – there are some more on the back. Well, my nose was bleeding, so what. My eyebrow, elbow – they healed eventually. What's wrong with my spine? Well, my back hurts a bit, but that needs an examination. (...) I think there are clearly people who need it more than I do now. So, I don't have any obvious symptoms, which is why I'm not seeking any medical help.»

The most common injuries of varying degrees of severity were soft tissue hematomas, wounds, contusions, dislocations and fractures. Since the beatings took place at different stages of detention, and people were hit chaotically and with different objects, hands and feet, the traces were left all over the body. Most often, the back of the body was injured – the back, buttocks and legs.

«There is a large hematoma in the shoulder area under the left shoulder blade, and a cross-shaped mark on the back from batons.»

There were multiple bruises, there were traces of kicks. Several on the back and many on the buttocks (they were almost all red) and on the legs. On my right elbow, it hurt for two more days.»

«I have one broken rib, bruises, this side is bruised too, my arms, my legs are bruised. On the arm, it's almost gone, and everything is healing somehow already.»

Injuries to the arms and shoulders were frequent. The detainees had their arms twisted behind their backs as they were led around the RUVD. People were kept in uncomfortable positions for extended periods, which eventually led to numbness in their limbs and subsequent nerve compression.

« They twisted the joints on my shoulders. (...) When they took me to the RUVD, they twisted my arms very hard. They twisted them any way they could.»

«To this day, my left hand's index and thumb still go numb periodically. Initially, I would wake up at night from the pain in my left hand's index and thumb.»

Head injuries are quite common, ranging from hematomas and scratches to fractures and closed head injuries (CHI). Many described injuries such as broken noses, cartilage damage in the ears, and open wounds on their faces. One victim indicated that his eyesight had deteriorated significantly after his stay at the RUVD. At least two people described losing consciousness in the police department, which is one of the signs of traumatic brain injury and requires immediate medical attention.

«My vision deteriorated almost to nothing after that — optic nerve atrophy.»

«My head was smashed, not at the back, but above the ear. I had a black eye, and my nose was probably not broken, but it was swollen and badly bruised. Blood was flowing even at the Maskouskaye RUVD, but then it eventually stopped. The nose must have been healing for two or three weeks.»

«I had a head injury, a mild traumatic brain injury. I fainted. My entire right arm and my entire left leg, including the thigh, calves, forearm, and shoulders, were all bruised and blue. It was almost the same on the left side, only a bit easier. I mean, my left arm wasn't broken, and my left knee wasn't damaged, so it was easier in that respect. My chest was slightly injured, with a small hematoma there.»

When victims sought medical help in healthcare institutions after their release, they underwent comprehensive examinations, including checks of internal organs, which could be damaged by severe beatings. One of the interviewees pointed out that he had kidney hematoma.

«It was a little hard to urinate. Perhaps there were some blows to the abdomen when I fell, there were minor bruises all over the body.»

It took anywhere from a week to several months to recover from the injuries, depending on the extent of the injuries and the general condition of the body.

«My muscles were all banged up. For two months I couldn't work, I couldn't physically [do] anything, it hurt me to move... Well, let's just say I didn't work for about a month.»

«By the way, I was also constantly thirsty at home, these are the consequences of injuries. Two days later, I had a fever, around the 13th [August 2020]. That is, I came home on Tuesday, and the temperature started to rise somewhere on Wednesday evening.»

After the release, the psychological state of the people was difficult. From the moment of arrest, the officers treated the detainees in such a way as to

intimidate them as much as possible, humiliate them and deprive them of the desire to participate in future protests. Most of those interviewed indicated that, despite their own injuries, it was very difficult for them to see and hear the cruelty inflicted on other detainees. The whole experience caused extreme frustration, helplessness and fear for their own and other people's lives.

«When I was there, the feeling of being helpless never left me. Because they can do anything to you. Basically, you can't really counter it in any way. I realized that they could do anything if they wanted to. In other words, they had free rein. They said it themselves more than once. I don't remember the exact words, but they meant they could do anything.»

In eight interviews, people described in detail their state of mind after surviving the experience. Based on these records, three of the interviewees were prescribed medication to stabilize their psychological state. Almost all interviewees describe that after the experience they feared leaving the house and were afraid of getting back into a situation that could have caused them to be detained. Also, many describe that they stopped trusting people in uniform, some began to be seriously afraid of them. One interviewee describes having a persistent nervous tic at the time of the interview (late November 2020). Four people reported that they developed paranoia and a persecution complex.

«As for the psychological state, in fact, it's just terrible. Because the intense fear I experienced there stayed with me every second. Fear for my family. Because I was, roughly speaking, threatened that they would find my girlfriend and beat her up as well. That is, it is a terrible fear, first of all, for my family, for myself. And finally, after I got out, the fear that they would come for me again because of what I signed there never left me for a second. And therefore, it is impossible to sleep peacefully.»

«In general, yes, such stress will not go away for nothing. You think about where to stand and where not to stand next time.»

Some of the victims described experiencing panic attacks, insomnia, loss of appetite, increased irritability, and heightened anxiety after what they had been through.

«Now I'm terrified... I only travel by taxi or car because I'm afraid to go to the store, and I'm scared to take my kid for a bike ride.»

«After that, it didn't end there. I returned home and I started having panic attacks. I'm still fine during the day, but in the evenings, I had a feeling that the OMON squad would return now, and they would kill us all.»

«I had insomnia, I had no appetite, my wife said that I became more nervous, twitchy, irritable.»

Recovery from psychological shocks could last from several weeks to a year or more. In some cases, the situation was complicated by ongoing repression, which pushed people to flee the country.

INDIVIDUALS RESPONSIBLE FOR TORTURE OF DETAINEES AT THE MASKOUSKAYE RUVD IN MINSK

«Some shouted: "What are you doing?! You're the police, you are to protect us! Call him an ambulance!" They totally ignored us, and we even got hit for it.»

From a survivor's statement

«It seemed that the RUVD officers were very afraid of the OMON: they tortured and mutilated people on their territory, right before their eyes, but they offered no resistance.»

From a survivor's statement

Along with the identified officers, we find it necessary to name the senior officials responsible for the mass torture in Belarus, particularly at the Maskouskaye RUVD in Minsk, as well as for the impunity of these officers.

1. The person holding the post of President of the Republic of Belarus, **Lukashenko, Alexander Grigoryevich** (aka Aliaksandr Lukashenka).
2. Former Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus **Karaev, Yury Khadzhimuratovich** (June 11, 2019 - October 29, 2020).
3. Former Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus **Barsukov, Alexander Petrovich** (aka Aliaksandr Barsukou) (2017 - 2020).

4. Former Head of the Main Department of Internal Affairs of Minsk City Executive Committee **Kubrakov, Ivan Vladimirovich** (aka Ivan Kubrakou) (since October 29, 2020 — Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus).

5. Commander of the OMON GUVB of the Minsk City Executive Committee **Balaba, Dmitry Vladimirovich** (aka Dzmitry Balaba).

6. Former Prosecutor General of the Republic of Belarus, **Alexander Vladimirovich Konyuk** (aka Aliaksandr Kaniuk), (2011-2020).

7. Prosecutor General of the Republic of Belarus **Andrey Ivanovich Shved**.

8. Former Chairman of the Investigative Committee of the Republic of Belarus **Noskevich, Ivan Danilovich** (aka Ivan Naskevich) (November 10, 2015 - March 11, 2021).

9. Chairman of the Investigative Committee of the Republic of Belarus **Gora, Dmitry Yuryevich** (aka Dzmitry Hara), (since March 11, 2021).

10. Prosecutor of the city of Minsk **Lavrukhin, Oleg Vladimirovich** (ak Aleh Laurukhin).

11. Prosecutor of the Maskouski district of Minsk, **Ukrainets, Igor Vladimirovich** (aka Ihar Ukrainets).

It should be noted that during these days, the officers mostly tried to hide their personal information in every possible way. This is why they did not wear badges indicating their name, position, and rank. Also, many of them wore balaclavas or medical masks over their faces, making it difficult for victims to identify them.

According to the testimonies of witnesses, the main punitive function in the territory and premises of Maskouskaye RUVB of Minsk on August 9-13, 2020, was taken over by OMON (Special Purpose Police Unit) of the Minsk City Executive Committee under the leadership of its commander **Balaba, Dmitry Vladimirovich**¹. He is personally responsible for the serious human rights violations committed by OMON after the elections on August 9. In particular regarding the arbitrary arrests and ill-treatment, including torture, of peaceful protesters, as well as intimidation and violence against journalists.

The head of Maskouskaye RUVB of Minsk **Gamola, Maksim Aleksandrovich**, as a direct superior, also bears personal responsibility for torture and inhuman treatment of people in the RUVB.

¹ Placed on the EU and UK sanctions lists for serious human rights violations in Belarus after the August 9, 2020 elections.

It should be noted that all employees of the Maskouskaye RUVD who were on its territory at that time were involved in criminal actions against the detainees in one way or another and, after a thorough investigation of these actions, must be held accountable for the crimes they committed.

The list of the Maskouskaye RUVD personnel is posted **here** https://torturesbelarus2020.org/moskovskoe_ruvd_enforcers/

Experts analyzed several sources to gather information about the alleged perpetrators.

ДЕЛО № Maskouskaye RUND

The employees of the
Maskouskaye RUND of
Minsk identified by the
victims

20²⁴ Г.
Хранить __ лет



FULL NAME

GARKUSHA, VLADIMIR ANDREEVICH
(aka Uladzimir Harkusha)

post, rank

senior detective in charge of special cases

Involvement in torture

.....

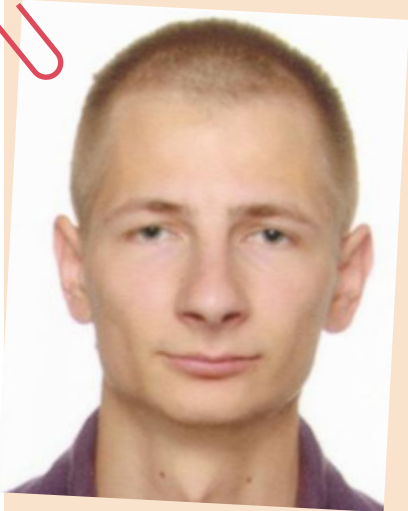
He videotaped the detainees and everything that was happening in the RUVD. He did not take any action to prevent torture by other officers. The victim saw the officer at close range.

Testimony of the victim:

«...this officer looks like the person who filmed our data on a video camera in the basement. That is, data, like a face, tattoos, first and last name, year of birth, some other signs, scars, things like that.»

This took place on the night of August 10-11, 2020.

N°002



FULL NAME

BAIDALOV, ALEXANDER GENNADIEVICH
(aka Aliaksandr Baidalau)

post, rank

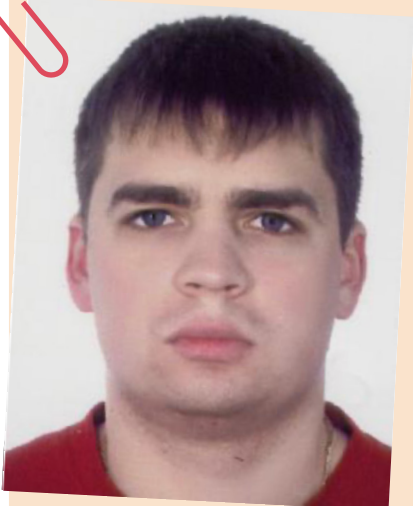
policeman

Involvement in torture
.....

He is an accomplice in the beatings and torture of detainees in the Maskouskaye RUVD of Minsk.

According to the victims, he participated in the beating of people together with Dmitry Androsov.

N°003



FULL NAME

ANDROSOV, DMITRY ALEXANDROVICH
(aka Dzmitry Androsau)

post, rank

platoon commander (2019), an officer of the Patrol-Guard Service in 2020

Involvement in torture
.....

According to the victims' stories, from August 9 to 10, 2020, he was on the territory of the Maskouskaye RUVD and was involved in the mistreatment of detainees.

N°004



FULL NAME

RUKHLIANSKY, PAVEL NIKOLAEVICH

post, rank

leading specialist

Involvement in torture

.....

He was directly involved in the torture.

Testimony of the victim:

«I was being interrogated, and he would come up and grab me by the neck and bend me over like this. "On your knees,» he yelled, «get down!"



FULL NAME

BALBUTSKI, NIKOLAI VLADIMIROVICH
(aka Mikalai Balbutski)

post, rank

district police inspector

Involvement in torture

.....

He was directly involved in the torture. According to the victim's statement, he beat up people detained in his district in Paulau Park.

«[in Malinauka] there's a garden of some kind. And people were brought in from there, it's somewhere near «Almi» store, yeah, right across the street, that's where people were arrested. And he's some kind of a precinct officer at that precinct. And he was running around, "Who's from my precinct?» He picked up these people and beat them up.»

«... face against the floor. First of all, we were lying on the floor, and the whole floor was covered with blood, you could say we were all wet, the blood was running down the floor. They didn't let us raise our heads. Well, he was lifting some people up, I could hear blows and groans.»

This happened on August 11, 2020 in the assembly hall of the Maskouskaye RUVD in Minsk.



FULL NAME

MALINOVSKY, SERGEY ANATOLYEVICH
(aka Siarhei Malinouski)

post, rank

inspector of the operational duty service

Involvement in torture

.....

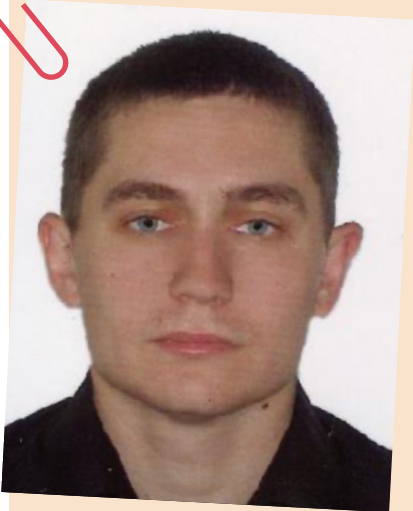
He did not take any action to prevent torture by other officers. He interrogated the victim on the night of August 11, 2020.

Testimony of the victim:

«He was asking questions. Who I am, my name, who I work for. I believe, they also asked what my mother did for living and that's it, there were literally 5 or 6 questions. Also he asked about tattoos.»

«His tone was neutral. Well, he was taking notes».

N°007



FULL NAME

BOKACHEVSKI, PAVEL GENNADIEVICH
(aka Pavel Bakacheuski)

post, rank

worked in the Department of Public Order Protection and Prevention of Offenses for Mass Events; (2019)

precinct police inspector

Involvement in torture

.....
He did not take any action to prevent torture by other officers.

Testimony of the victim:

«[he looks] like a policeman who returned my things when they released me. It was at night.»

N°008



FULL NAME

ANDREENKO, SERGEY NIKOLAEVICH
(aka Sirhei Andreyenka)

post, rank

Senior Inspector of the Road Patrol Service

Involvement in torture

.....
He did not take any action to prevent torture by other officers.

Testimony of the victim:

«The guard who handed out things and, in fact, escorted us out of the assembly hall.»

N°009



FULL NAME

DROZD, ALEXANDER NIKOLAEVICH

post, rank

driver of the operational duty unit, policeman of the special rapid response group

Involvement in torture

.....

He did not take any action to prevent torture by other officers. He was involved in registration procedures of detainees on August 11, 2020.

Testimony of the victim:

«He did not talk much, I mean, he showed up at the end when they started announcing all this stuff, some lists were brought in. And he just read it out, as per protocol. That is, such-and-such, year of birth, here, come over there, here's a form for you. Then such-and-such, year of birth, stand up, come over. He was acting like a robot, you know, just doing the technical part of it.»



FULL NAME

BABAK, ALINA SERGEEVNA

post, rank

Deputy Company Commander; officer of the youth liaison service

Involvement in torture

.....

She participated in the beating of a woman. The incident occurred on the night of August 11-12, 2020 in a small room next to the assembly hall of the Maskouskaye RUVD.

Testimony of the victim:

«She looks like the woman who examined us at the Maskouskaye RUVD at night, before we were taken to Akrestsina. There were three or four women there, one of them was this blonde type.

They were generally unhappy that my inspection was skipped/ We were inspected one by one, but then they stopped on me for some reason. And at some point, when they asked if everyone had been inspected already, I said that I had not. And a not so pleasant conversation started because they started getting on me about not having been inspected. And, after sitting there for quite a while, in the RUVD and in the paddy wagon, I replied, «that's your job». I got slapped in the face by one of the blondes for that, not hard, but still.

...I was told to shut up in a rude way and that's it.»



FULL NAME

ABMETKA, MARIA SERGEEVNA

post, rank

specialist

Involvement in torture

.....

She did not take any action to prevent torture by other officers.

Testimony of the victim:

«She made an inventory of belongings. In short, when we were first gathered, then brought out one by one, she was engaged exactly in the inventory of possessions, that is, what you are wearing, what you have in your pocket, everything you have in your backpack.

She didn't actually say anything, she was just recording the possessions, let's say, that you had on you.

It was August 10, it's hard to tell the exact time, I suppose, if I was picked up at 18:00, it was around 21:00-22:00 I guess»



FULL NAME

ZELENOVSKY, NIKOLAY ANATOLYEVICH
(aka Mikalai Zeliankouski)

post, rank

Head of City Department of Police, Head of Department

Involvement in torture

.....

He did not take any action to prevent torture by other officers. He forged the detention reports.

From a survivor's statement:

«He was just the kind of person who would say in a very polite way, you are about to be released, please sign the documents, you know how it works, and was generally pretty friendly. He was just making sure that we signed the documents before getting released. Well, it's clear that they didn't let you read that you were signing, some half-empty forms. But we signed them, and he wished us a good day...»

This was the last officer before release, who gave us the final papers to sign. There were several documents sign, I didn't sign anything. But with him, it would no longer be possible – either you sign and get out, or... there's no other option.»

N°013



FULL NAME

ALESHKEVICH, ALEXANDER IVANOVICH
(aka Aliaksandr Aleshkevich)

post, rank

Detective/ Head of the Maskouskaye State Automobile Inspection

Involvement in torture

.....

He did not take any action to prevent torture by other officers.

Testimony of the victim:

«This fellow gave us a lecture when we were released from there [Maskouskaye RUV]. When some of the guys had already been taken to the Akrestsina. He lectured us on how badly we had behaved and what would happen to us if we got caught again.

[it happened] on the night of August 9-10, 2020.»

N°014

FULL NAME

GOMON, PAVEL ALEXANDROVICH
(aka Pavel Homan)

post, rank

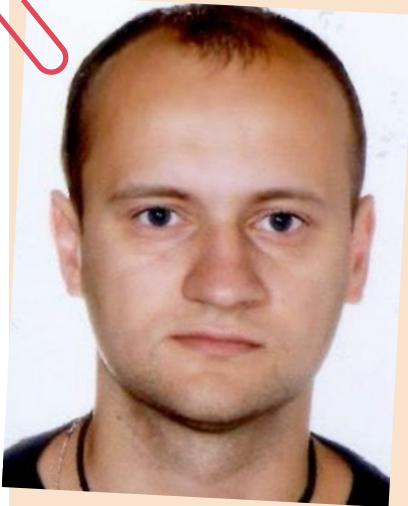
senior detective of the Maskouskaye RUVD of Minsk,
police captain

Involvement in torture

.....
He did not take any action to prevent torture by other officers.
He forged the detention reports.

Testimony of the victim:

«The one who drew up the report. I made a copy of it. They didn't allow me to take pictures, I copied all the case materials by hand.»



If you know or recognize any of the officers from this list or the published photos, please contact the *International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus*.

Website: <https://torturesbelarus2020.org/ru/>

Email: contact@torturesbelarus2020.org

Telegram: [@ICITB2020_contact](https://t.me/@ICITB2020_contact)

We guarantee maximum security in communication!

LEGAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ACTIONS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS IN BELARUS

«One man who was coming out of there, he says, 'Oh, look how the baton got bent.' In other words, he noticed... He didn't realize that he might have just killed someone... He was more interested in seeing how his baton got bent.»

From a survivor's statement

The events of August 9–13, 2020, that took place at the Maskouskaye RUVD in Minsk clearly show that its leadership and officers violated their duties to protect citizens' rights. They carried out criminal orders based on political considerations to combat dissent. As part of a large-scale intimidation action, they committed a number of crimes in violation of both Belarusian and international law.

The evidence of these crimes was documented by the *International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus* in the form of numerous testimonies of victims and the documents they shared. They provide convincing evidence that officers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus at the Maskouskaye RUVD in Minsk committed widespread and systematic acts of torture and violence, including sexual violence, abuse and cruel treatment of detainees.

Arrested protesters who were brought to the Maskouskaye RUVD, including minors, women, and the elderly, were subjected to coordinated brutal

beatings by being forced to run through rows of officers with batons (the so-called «corridors/staircases of death»¹).

The detainees were chased into the assembly hall, where they were beaten and forced to lie face down on the floor. The women were forced to sit in a static, uncomfortable posture, with their arms stretched forward and their heads down, for many hours.

During interrogations and processing, people were treated with extreme cruelty: they were choked, their heads were covered with clothing, they were sat on, and beaten with batons. Those who were marked with paint (during the arrest and at the RUVD), had tattoos with national Belarusian symbols, spoke the Belarusian language, young men with long hair, and girls with dreadlocks were beaten most severely.

Some women were also beaten with a baton during interrogations. One of the girls had her breast piercing removed with pliers. There were documented instances of women being searched in the presence of male RUVD officers. In one case, a woman was forced to strip completely naked. Such actions are in complete contradiction to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women² and other international documents regarding the treatment of detained women.

Injured and beaten detainees were kept in overcrowded, stuffy and humid cells, where they could not even sit, let alone lie down and rest. At the slightest deviation from the officers' demands (changing position, talking), beatings would follow. There was also a case of pepper spray gas being used in a crowded cell.

Basic human needs were not met at the RUVD. The detainees were not fed throughout their detention and were restricted in drinking water. They were allowed to use the toilet in rare cases, while being insulted and beaten. While being escorted to the toilet, detainees were subjected to attempts to «drown» them in the toilet. Adults, fearing beatings and abuse, were forced to soil themselves.

As a rule, no medical assistance was provided to detainees. Necessary medications were not provided, and emergency medical assistance was called only in exceptional cases. As a result of their detention in the Maskouskaye RUVD, many detainees have developed serious physical and mental health problems, some of which are of permanent nature.

1 This practice of "processing" citizens was carried out in all RUVs in the city of Minsk from August 9 to 13, 2020.

2 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Adopted by General Assembly resolution 34/180 of December 18, 1979. https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_34_180.pdf

Such treatment of detainees amounts to torture and ill-treatment.

Thus, the actions of the officers at the Maskouskaye RUVD in Minsk from August 9 to 13, 2020, fully constitute a crime under Article 128 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus (Crimes Against the Security of Humanity), according to which illegal detention followed by torture or cruel acts committed in connection with the political beliefs of the civilian population is punishable by imprisonment for a term of seven to twenty-five years, or life imprisonment, or the death penalty.

Unrestrained acts of humiliation and abuse of detainees, encouraged by the RUVD leadership, during interrogations turned into torture, including **sexual violence**³. When reviewing the statements of the victims, the experts came across a statement by one of them about sexual violence against him by penetrating his anus with a truncheon⁴, as well as violence and threats of sexual violence against several other detainees, including women.

Victims also described the incident of the police gaining access to the contents of a detainee's phone and publicly viewing his home video of a sexual nature. This is an act of sexual violence against a person, an invasion of their physical, mental and emotional space⁵. Forcing all those present in the assembly hall, including minors, to listen to an audio recording of a sexual nature also constitutes sexual violence against them and is generally considered a violation of freedom and personal integrity⁶.

Thus, these actions by the officers at the Maskouskaye RUVD in Minsk can be classified as systematic acts of sexual violence committed by state representatives as part of structural or institutional violence. These acts were coupled with inaction on the part of the state and other actors (the immediate heads of the RUVD and the Ministry of Internal Affairs as a whole), as well as the inability and unwillingness of the Belarusian authorities to protect people from sexual violence.

Under international criminal law, these acts of violence also fall entirely under article 7, (1) (e), (f) and (k) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, as imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law, as well as torture

3 Experts have increasingly replaced the term "sexual violence" with the term "sexualized violence". This indicates the perpetrator's motive is not to gain sexual gratification, but to demonstrate power and control.

4 In many frameworks, including the ICC, such conduct constitutes rape if it is committed by force or without genuine, voluntary, specific and lasting consent.

5 The Hague Principles on Sexual Violence <https://thehagueprinciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ExecSum-RUS-Activists.pdf>

6 General comment No. 35, Article 9 (Freedom and personal inviolability), paragraph 9. <https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2FPPRiCAqhKb7yhsrcdBoH1l5979OVGG%2B2BWPAXjdnG1mwFFfPYGIINfb%2F6T%2FOE3Tt13ZSwvka7iWGvD2B%2FgeeQQPaa55YqUIQjkmBoUSiyoo%2BcMzoUCHbZNIvhcW#:~:text=%Do%9F%Do%BE%Do%B4%2o%Do%BB%Do%B8%D1%87%Do%BD%Do%BE%Do%B9%2o%D1%81%Do%B2%Do%BE%Do%B1%Do%BE%Do%B4%Do%BE%Do%B9%2o%Do%BF%Do%BE%Do%BD%Do%B8%Do%BC%Do%Bo%Do%B5%D1%82%D1%81%D1%8F%2o%D1%81%Do%B2%Do%BE%Do%B1%Do%BE%Do%B4%Do%Bo.%Do%B3%Do%BE%Do%B2%Do%BE%D1%8o%Do%B8%D1%82%D1%81%D1%8F%2o%Do%B2%2o%Do%BF%D1%83%Do%BD%Do%BA%D1%82%Do%B5%2o9%2o%Do%BD%Do%B8%Do%B6%Do%B5>

and other inhumane acts of a similar character, including sexual violence, by intentionally inflicting great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health.

Based on the facts and testimonies presented in this investigation, we can conclude that the criminal conduct of law enforcement officers on the territory and in the premises of the Maskouskaye RUVD of Minsk is a deliberate action as part of a deliberate large-scale and systematic attack against the civilian population on the territory of the entire country and can be qualified as international crimes — **crimes against humanity**, which significantly distinguishes it from ordinary crimes and violations of human rights⁷.

Belarus also shares the view that crimes against humanity constitute a crime regardless of the criminalization of the conduct in question under domestic law. It is noteworthy that since the crime under Article 128 of the Criminal Code refers to the most dangerous crimes against the peace and security of mankind, Article 85 of the Criminal Code stipulates that those guilty of committing this crime **shall not be exempt from criminal liability or punishment due to the statute of limitations**.

⁷ See Belarus: Crimes against humanity. Legal qualification of crimes of the Lukashenka regime. . Chapter 2. Crimes against humanity: a widespread and systematic attack on civilians. Pp. 21-30. https://torturesbelarus2020.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/belarus_prestuplen%D0%B8ya_prot%D0%B8v_chelovechnost%D0%B8_2021-1.pdf

