

for

Belarus

Tenth progress report

1 October 2025 to 30 March 2026

PUBLIC VERSION



10th PROGRESS REPORT
1 October 2025 to 31 March 2026

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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY HUMAN RIGHTS IN BELARUS

During the reporting period (October 2025 – March 2026), the human rights situation in Belarus remained systematically repressive, marked by continued political persecution, entrenched use of coercive legal frameworks, and expanding transnational repression. While large-scale pardons occurred, these did not reflect structural improvement but rather tactical concessions within a broader environment of repression.

Scale and Nature of Repression

- At least 390 new instances of politically motivated persecution were documented, including arrests, searches, and prosecutions.
- Since May 2020, over 8,269 politically motivated convictions have been recorded.
- As of March 2026, 911 political prisoners remain detained, with 4,470 individuals recognised as political prisoners since 2020.
- Reduced transparency—such as removal of public court schedules—likely obscures the true scale of ongoing repression.

Detention Conditions and Ill-Treatment

- Detainees continue to face systematic ill-treatment, including beatings, asphyxiation, use of stun guns, and prolonged incommunicado detention.
- Reports highlight severe health consequences, exacerbated by denial of medical care and punitive detention conditions.
- Arbitrary sentence extensions under Article 411 of the Criminal Code continue.

Pardons, Deportations, and Post-Release Repression

- 448 detainees were pardoned in the reporting period, linked to diplomatic negotiations or conditional “repentance.”
- Many releases involved subsequent deportations, sometimes without identity documents.
- Former prisoners continue to face surveillance, coercion, restrictions on civil life, and threats of re-arrest, indicating repression persists beyond pardons and releases.

Misuse of Extremism and Terrorism Legislation

- Authorities continue to weaponise legal frameworks to suppress dissent:
 - 609 individuals added to the “extremist list.”
 - 38 individuals designated as terrorists.
 - 27 entities denounced as extremist formations.
 - Over 9,000 online resources criminalised as “extremist content.”
- These measures impose long-term socio-economic exclusion, including employment bans and financial restrictions.

Transnational Repression

- Continued targeting of Belarusians abroad through:
 - Trials *in absentia*, property seizures, and intimidation of relatives.
 - Misuse of legal and administrative tools, including passport invalidation.
- Evidence suggests systematic cross-border repression, including coercion and surveillance of diaspora communities.

Ukraine-Related Prosecutions

- At least 403 individuals convicted for activities linked to support for Ukraine.
- The “Belaruski Hajun” case led to mass arrests and prosecutions following a data leak.

International Response and Accountability Developments

- The UN Human Rights Council renewed mandates monitoring Belarus and condemned widespread violations.
- The Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (OTP/ICC) opened an investigation into the alleged crimes against humanity of deportation and persecution through deportation in the transboundary setting of Lithuania/ Belarus.
- International bodies continue to highlight systematic violations, lack of accountability, and state policy driving repression.

B. IAPB's KEY DELIVERABLES

➔ For **short summary information about the IAPB** see Annex 1.

Strategic Outcome 1: Consolidate the IAPB's evidence hub by continuing to expand evidentiary sources, centralise the preservation of information and evidence, and analyse crimes under international law committed in Belarus in the context of the August 2020 election and its aftermath.

During the reporting period, the IAPB once more expanded its evidence base, analytical work, and cooperation with accountability mechanisms, and continued to provide survivor-centred support:

Evidence-Gathering and Documentation

- 79 new witness interviews conducted, contributing to a database of:
 - 38,146 documents
 - 3,351 interview transcripts
 - 2,911 witnesses
- Over 1,150 witnesses consented to sharing evidence with accountability bodies.
- Evidence includes medical records, audiovisual materials, and court documents, systematically catalogued.

Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT)

- Collection expanded to over 2.19 million open-source items from 1,124 sources, including:
 - 420,000+ videos
 - 1 million+ images
 - 726,000+ text items

Strategic Outcome 2: Expand the range of evidentiary and analytical products, accountability processes and other actors the IAPB's work outputs will effectively serve (including the OHCHR examination, other human rights mechanisms and bodies and criminal justice authorities).

In the reporting period, the IAPB provided substantial evidence and information to the OTP/ICC in support of the then ongoing preliminary examination of the situation in Lithuania/ Belarus, and responded to requests of national criminal justice authorities.

Support to Accountability Mechanisms

- Substantial cooperation with:
 - Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC (including multiple evidence submissions)
 - Two national prosecution authorities (case-specific dossiers and witness summaries)

- UN Group of Independent Experts (GIEB) (3,000+ files shared)
- Since establishment of the IAPB, contributions include:
 - 14 responses to requests of national criminal justice authorities in six countries,
 - 6 submissions to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court,
 - 6 submissions to the UN Group of Independent Experts on the Human Rights Situation in Belarus (GIEB) and its predecessor (the OHCHR Examination of the Human Rights Situation in Belarus - OEB),
 - 1 submission in response to a request by the OSCE Moscow Mechanism, and
 - 5 batches of information to lawyers and civil society organisations.

ICC Investigation Milestone

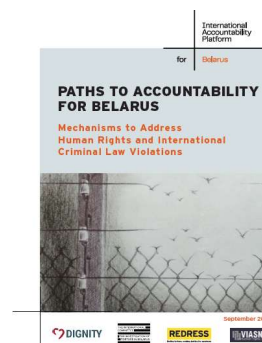
- The Prosecutor of the ICC formally opened an investigation into the Lithuania/ Belarus situation, confirming:
 - A reasonable basis to believe crimes against humanity have been committed
 - State-level involvement in deportation and persecution through deportation
- IAPB played a key role through comprehensive evidence provision.

Linkage Evidence and Case-Building

- Continued development of linkage analysis connecting Belarusian officials to crimes.
- Focus on crimes committed between May and December 2020, with an emphasis on arrests, mistreatment, and deportations conducted in Minsk City and Minsk region.
- Outputs are designed to support criminal prosecutions at national and international levels.

Comprehensive overview of accountability mechanisms

- Publication of report “[Paths to Accountability for Belarus: Mechanisms to Address Human Rights and International Criminal Law Violations](#)” to support States in identifying possible avenues to address the severe violations of human rights and international criminal law in Belarus.
- Mapping accountability mechanisms applicable to Belarus, covering individual criminal liability, state responsibility, and hybrid mechanisms.



Advocacy for accountability mechanisms:

- Additional States to open extraterritorial or universal investigations relating to Belarus.
- EU Member States to consider the establishment of a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) under the coordination of Eurojust, to facilitate coordination and sharing of evidence in Belarus-related investigations.
- New OSCE Mechanism to be triggered on Belarus.
- Further referrals of the underlying acts of deportation and persecution through deportation to the International Criminal Court.

Strategic Outcome 3: Mainstream a survivor-centred and trauma informed approach to all aspects of the IAPB's work.

Survivor-Centred Approach / Mental Health and Psychological Support

- 133 additional survivors (77 women, 55 men and 1 non-binary) received mental health and psychosocial support in the reporting period – bringing the total of survivor beneficiaries up to 850.
- Former political prisoners identified as a high-risk group with:
 - High prevalence of PTSD, depression, and complex trauma
 - Reintegration challenges following prolonged detention

- Services remain trauma-informed and evidence-based, tailored to evolving survivor needs.

Strategic Outcome 4: Ensure creation of standing infrastructure and the sustainability of the IAPB's operations.

Sharing of tools and lessons learned:

- Convened Working Group on universal jurisdiction in Poland twice to exchange lessons learned on practice, legislative reform, and case-building.
- Participated in international technical briefings (e.g. EU Genocide Network Meeting and Eurojust technical briefing) to share IAPB experience.

Procedures, tools, and infrastructure for sustainability

- Guidelines for streamlined, trauma-informed initial interviews aligned with the PEACE model, supporting consistent documentation practices, were refined.
- Documenters' capabilities were strengthened through targeted briefings, mock interview exercises, and regular feedback loops.

Communication and Social Media:

- IAPB significantly expanded its social media reach, with LinkedIn followers increasing by 24.5% (from 752 to 1,017) and total cross-platform audience reaching 1,119, including growth on Bluesky.
- Content performance was strong, generating 21,613 impressions and 2,378 engagements across 23 posts during the reporting period.
- The average engagement rate reached 11%, substantially exceeding the 3% benchmark for non-profit organisations on LinkedIn.
- Top-performing content included the *Paths to Accountability* report launch, reactions to political prisoner releases, and promotion of the ICC Assembly of States Parties side event.

Events and presentations:

- Launch of IAPB report "*Paths to Accountability for Belarus – Mechanisms to Address Human Rights and International Criminal Law Violations*" (online event) – 3 October 2025
- OSCE Warsaw Human Dimension Meeting side event (report presentation, Warsaw) – 7 October 2025
- Advisory Council hybrid meeting – 8 October 2025
- Presentation at the 38th Meeting of the Genocide Network, The Hague – 19 November 2025
- DIGNITY international conference on investigation and prosecution of international crimes, Danish Parliament – 27 November 2025
- ICC Assembly of States Parties side event: "Persecution and Forced Exile from Belarus: A Crime Against Humanity" – 3 December 2025
- OSCE Ministerial Council 2025 side event: "Preparing the democratic future of Belarus: A conversation with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya" – 4 December 2025
- Advisory Council online meeting (geopolitical scenarios for Belarus) – 19 March 2026

C. DETAILED PROGRESS REPORT

1. Human Rights Situation in Belarus

1.1 Politically motivated prosecutions

Between October 2025 and February 2026, at least 390 instances of politically motivated persecution have been documented, including arbitrary arrests, home searches, and the initiation of criminal and administrative cases.¹ People continue to be prosecuted for their participation in the 2020 protests, for critical statements about Lukashenko and Belarusian officials, and for supporting political prisoners.² Arrests at the border, or shortly after return to Belarus, also continued.³

As of 20 March 2026, the number of convictions in politically motivated cases documented by Human Rights Center Viasna since May 2020 reached at least 8,269, resulting in imprisonment, other types of restriction of liberty, fines and compulsory psychiatric treatment.⁴ The Belarusian authorities' removal of public access to the electronic schedule of court hearings has significantly constrained trial monitoring. The apparent decline in new cases compared with March 2025 can therefore more plausibly be attributable to reduced transparency than to a genuine decrease in politically motivated cases.⁵

In addition, authorities continue to arbitrarily extend the deprivation of liberty of political prisoners by using Article 411 of the Criminal Code,⁶ on some occasions repeatedly.⁷ From May 2020 to 31 March 2026, the imprisonment terms of 78 political prisoners were extended under Article 411.⁸

1.2 Political prisoners

As of 31 March 2026, 911 political prisoners remained in detention.⁹ Since May 2020, Human Rights Center Viasna has recognised 4,470 persons as political prisoners,¹⁰ 274 between October 2025 and March 2026 alone.¹¹

¹ At least 114 cases in October 2025, 50 cases in November 2025, 80 cases in December 2025, 81 cases in January 2026, 65 cases in February 2026. See "[Human rights situation in Belarus. October 2025](#)", *Viasna*, 06-Nov-2025; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. November 2025](#)", *Viasna*, 08-Dec-2025; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. December 2025](#)", *Viasna*, 31-Dec-2025; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. January 2026](#)", *Viasna*, 04-Feb-2026; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)", *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026.

² "[Human rights situation in Belarus. December 2025](#)", *Viasna*, 31-Dec-2025; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)", *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026.

³ "[Human rights situation in Belarus. December 2025](#)", *Viasna*, 31-Dec-2025; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. January 2026](#)", *Viasna*, 04-Feb-2026; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)", *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026.

⁴ "[List of political prisoners and persons convicted in political criminal cases](#)", *Viasna*, undated.

⁵ "[Human rights situation in Belarus. April 2025](#)", *Viasna*, 12-May-2025; "[Human rights in Belarus: the main trends of public policy: January – April '25](#)", *Belarusian Helsinki Committee*, 03-Jun-2025, p. 18.

⁶ "[Human rights situation in Belarus. October 2025](#)", *Viasna*, 06-Nov-2025; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. November 2025](#)", *Viasna*, 08-Dec-2025; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. December 2025](#)", *Viasna*, 31-Dec-2025; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)", *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026.

⁷ "[Imprisonment of a political prisoner Tikhon Osipov was extended for another one year and a half](#)", *Viasna*, 21-Mar-2026.

⁸ The list includes both currently imprisoned and already released political prisoners. See "[List of political prisoners and persons convicted in political criminal cases](#)", *Viasna*, undated.

⁹ "[Political prisoners in Belarus](#)", *Viasna*, undated; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. March 2026](#)", *Viasna*, 07-Apr-2026.

¹⁰ "[Political prisoners in Belarus](#)", *Viasna*, undated; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. March 2026](#)", *Viasna*, 07-Apr-2026.

¹¹ 78 persons in October 2025, 33 – in November 2025, 50 – in December 2025, 51 – in January 2026, 16 – in February 2026, 46 – in March 2026. See "[Human rights situation in Belarus. October 2025](#)", *Viasna*, 06-Nov-2025; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. November 2025](#)", *Viasna*, 08-Dec-2025; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. December 2025](#)", *Viasna*, 31-Dec-2025; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. January 2026](#)", *Viasna*, 04-Feb-2026; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)", *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. March 2026](#)", *Viasna*, 07-Apr-2026.

Routine placement in punishment cells, in the cold and denial of medical care continued to be reported, leading to serious health consequences.¹² Human rights organisations continued to receive reports of ill-treatment in detention facilities, including beatings, suspension by a hook, the use of stun guns, asphyxiation with plastic bags being put over detainees' head, and being kicked and beaten in the groin with sticks.¹³ Some detainees are held in incommunicado detention for prolonged periods.¹⁴

Between 26 February and 6 March 2026, three journalists were sentenced under Article 356 ("High treason"), one under Article 361-1 ("Creation or participation in an extremist formation") and one media representative under Article 361-4 ("Facilitating extremist activities") of the Criminal Code.¹⁵ On 19 March 2026, six media representatives were pardoned, and two of them deported to Lithuania - journalist Katsiaryna Andreyeva and blogger Eduard Palchys.¹⁶ The Belarusian Association of Journalists stated that 24 media representatives are imprisoned as of March 2026.¹⁷

According to reports received by UN Special Procedures, over the past five years until November 2025, the number of attorneys in the country has decreased by 597 individuals to 1,603, and 14 lawyers faced criminal prosecution.¹⁸ In the reporting period, at least one lawyer was convicted under politically motivated charges (Article 130 "Incitement of discord" of the Criminal Code) and added to the "extremists list".¹⁹

1.3 Pardons and deportations

During the reporting period, Lukashenko pardoned and released 448 detainees who had been convicted of political (among others, extremism-related crimes) and non-political crimes.²⁰ Releases took place on 20 November 2025 (2 Catholic priests), 22 November 2025 (31 Ukrainian citizens), 13 December 2025 (123 detainees), 30 December 2025 (22 detainees), 19 February (Mikalai Statkevich and Natallia Levaya), 5 March 2026 (18 detainees) and 19 March 2026 (250 detainees).²¹

While the majority of the detainees was freed in exchange for US sanctions relief as a result of

¹² ["Human rights situation in Belarus. December 2025"](#), *Viasna*, 31-Dec-2025; ["Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026"](#), *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026.

¹³ ["Human rights situation in Belarus. January 2026"](#), *Viasna*, 04-Feb-2026; ["Brought my wife and told they would torture her", a family from Ukraine told a horrible story of persecution in Belarus"](#), *Viasna*, 29-Dec-2025; ["The name of another DFI colonel arrested by the KGB has become known. He told his cellmates how he was tortured"](#), *Nasha Niva*, 13-Jan-2026.

¹⁴ ["Human rights situation in Belarus. December 2025"](#), *Viasna*, 31-Dec-2025; ["Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026"](#), *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026.

¹⁵ ["Two former heads of Baranovich independent media Intex-Press were sentenced to lengthy prison terms"](#), *BG.Media*, 27-Feb-2026; ["Journalist Pavel Dabravolski sentenced to 9 years in prison"](#), *BAJ*, 09-Mar-2026; ["A journalist Tyna Palynskaia and her daughter Margarita Rabinovich were sentenced to imprisonment"](#), *Viasna*, 06-Mar-2026; ["Human rights situation in Belarus. March 2026"](#), *Viasna*, 07-Apr-2026.

¹⁶ ["Human rights situation in Belarus. March 2026"](#), *Viasna*, 07-Apr-2026; ["Pensioners, activists, parents with many children: who are the pardoned political prisoners"](#), *Viasna*, 20-Mar-2026; ["Journalist Katsiaryna Andreyeva released"](#), *BAJ*, 19-Mar-2026; ["Major release: 250 political prisoners freed in Belarus, including key journalists"](#), *BAJ*, 20-Mar-2026.

¹⁷ ["Repressions against journalists in Belarus 2026. list of colleagues in prison"](#), *BAJ*, 17-Feb-2026.

¹⁸ ["UN experts urge Belarus to stop interfering in the legal profession"](#), *OHCHR*, 17-Nov-2025.

¹⁹ ["An attorney Ekaterina Zheltonoga was convicted under the criminal case"](#), *Right to defence*, 13-Nov-2025; ["Ekaterina Zheltonoga"](#), *Viasna*, undated.

²⁰ ["President of Belarus pardoned and released two Catholic priests"](#), *Belta*, 20-Nov-2025; ["Lukashenko pardoned 31 Ukrainian citizens following agreements with Trump"](#), *Belta*, 22-Nov-2025; ["123 people, including political prisoners, pardoned in Belarus"](#), *Viasna*, 18-Dec-2025; ["Lukashenko signed a pardon decree in the eve of New Year"](#), *Belta*, 30-Dec-2025; ["15 political prisoners were pardoned in Belarus"](#), *Viasna*, 05-Mar-2026; ["Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026"](#), *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026; ["250 political prisoners released in Belarus"](#), *Viasna*, 20-Mar-2026.

²¹ ["President of Belarus pardoned and released two Catholic priests"](#), *Belta*, 20-Nov-2025; ["Lukashenko pardoned 31 Ukrainian citizens following agreements with Trump"](#), *Belta*, 22-Nov-2025; ["123 people, including political prisoners, pardoned in Belarus"](#), *Viasna*, 18-Dec-2025; ["Lukashenko signed a pardon decree in the eve of New Year"](#), *Belta*, 30-Dec-2025; ["15 political prisoners were pardoned in Belarus"](#), *Viasna*, 05-Mar-2026; ["Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026"](#), *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026; ["250 political prisoners released in Belarus"](#), *Viasna*, 20-Mar-2026.

negotiations with the US President's Special Envoy for Belarus John Coale,²² others were released following "intensification of contacts with the Vatican" and one due to pregnancy. The release on 30 December 2025 of 22 individuals and of 15 individuals on 5 March followed their "repentance" towards the Belarusian authorities and requests for a pardon.

Among those released were Ales Bialiatski, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and founder of Human Rights Center Viasna; Uladz Labkovich, Viasna human rights defender; politician Pavel Seviarynets; lawyer Maksim Znak; Maryna Zolatava, journalist and editor-in-chief of the TUT.BY; Viktor Babaryka, former presidential candidate; Maryia Kalesnikava, head of Viktor Babaryka's campaign team,²³ as well as human rights defenders Valiantsin Stefanovich, Marfa Rabkova and Nasta Loika.²⁴

Of the 123 detainees released on 13 December 2025,²⁵ nine were deported to Lithuania and the remainder 114 to Ukraine, including 104 Belarusians and five Ukrainian citizens,²⁶ of which at least 18 did not have a passport or other identity document. Some reported having been transferred with a blindfold.²⁷

Fewer deportations were seen among the 250 individuals detained on political grounds, and pardoned on 19 March 2026.²⁸ Fifteen were deported to Lithuania without documents and 235 remained in Belarus.²⁹ Those pardoned had been sentenced to imprisonment, restriction of liberty with or without referral to an open-type correctional facility, for participation in protests and for making donations to "extremist formations", including in support of political prisoners.³⁰

UN human rights experts denounced the deportation of the released Belarusian prisoners and confiscation of their identity documents.³¹

Following a stroke suffered in prison, opposition politician Mikalai Statkevich was released from the penal colony in Glubokoe on 19 February 2026.³² However, deprived of his passport, he is facing obstacles in accessing hospitals, in retrieving his pension, and in traveling abroad for treatment.³³ After preventing his deportation on 11 September 2025, by refusing to cross the border, the authorities returned him to the penal colony without disclosing his whereabouts to his relatives up until his release (i.e. for five months).³⁴ UN Special Procedures had denounced Statkevich's

²² 31 Ukrainian citizens were pardoned and released to Ukraine – on 22 November 2025; 123 detainees – on 13 December 2025; Mikalai Statkevich – on 19 February 2026; 250 detainees – on 19 March 2026. See "[Lukashenko pardoned 31 Ukrainian citizens following agreements with Trump](#)", *Belta*, 22-Nov-2025; "[123 people, including political prisoners, pardoned in Belarus](#)", *Viasna*, 18-Dec-2025; "[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)", *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026; "[250 political prisoners released in Belarus](#)", *Viasna*, 20-Mar-2026.

²³ "[123 people, including political prisoners, pardoned in Belarus](#)", *Viasna*, 18-Dec-2025.

²⁴ "[Viasna human rights defenders Valiantsin Stefanovic and Marfa Rabkova are free!](#)", *Viasna*, 19-Mar-2026.

²⁵ "[123 people, including political prisoners, pardoned in Belarus](#)", *Viasna*, 18-Dec-2025.

²⁶ "[123 people, including political prisoners, pardoned in Belarus](#)", *Viasna*, 18-Dec-2025; Yuras Karmanau, "[Prisoners freed by Belarus say their passports are taken away in a final 'dirty trick' by officials](#)", *AP News*, 20-Dec-2025.

²⁷ ; Yuras Karmanau, "[Prisoners freed by Belarus say their passports are taken away in a final 'dirty trick' by officials](#)", *AP News*, 20-Dec-2025.

²⁸ "[250 political prisoners released in Belarus](#)", *Viasna*, 20-Mar-2026; "[Pensioners, activists, parents with many children: who are the pardoned political prisoners](#)", *Viasna*, 20-Mar-2026.

²⁹ "[250 political prisoners released in Belarus](#)", *Viasna*, 20-Mar-2026; "[Pensioners, activists, parents with many children: who are the pardoned political prisoners](#)", *Viasna*, 20-Mar-2026.

³⁰ "[Pensioners, activists, parents with many children: who are the pardoned political prisoners](#)", *Viasna*, 20-Mar-2026.

³¹ "[Belarus: UN experts denounce expulsion of citizens, warn about risk of statelessness](#)", *OHCHR*, 08-Dec-2025; "[Belarus: UN experts welcome prisoner releases, but warn that forced expulsion and deportation violate human rights](#)", *OHCHR*, 27-Feb-2026.

³² "[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)", *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026.

³³ "[New political criminal cases and extremist formation: chronicle of persecution 18 March](#)", *Viasna*, 18-Mar-2026.

³⁴ "[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)", *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026; "['What is happening to Statkevich is a clear demonstration of the regime's lies.' Tikhonovskaia's adviser commented on the news about the politician](#)", *Zerkalo*, 25-Nov-2025; Telegram Channel @viasna96, edited 07:45, 25-Nov-2025, <https://t.me/viasna96/32745>.

attempted deportation from Belarus and his subsequent disappearance, given the lack of information about his whereabouts for some time.³⁵

1.4 Continued harassment of prisoners following pardons and release

While comprehensive documentation of this aspect is lacking to date, reports indicate that releases of political prisoners did not end their persecution by the authorities, let alone led to their rehabilitation.

On 20 March 2026, Lukashenko stated, in relation to the 235 former prisoners who remained in Belarus following their release, that some 30 or 40 of them “*may take white-red-white flags in hands*” and were already “*put under the supervision by special services and police.*”³⁶ With reference to 15 deported former detainees, Lukashenko stated that “*we don’t need them in our country. Whether they are released or not, they should not be here. [...] These are the people through whom the funding flowed, who played tricks on us and our people here. And the crazed ones followed them. Nobody needs those crazed people now, nobody.*”³⁷

Dissident by, an organisation supporting political prisoners, reported on 21 March 2026 that the authorities threatened the released individuals with imprisonment in case of “repeated violations”.³⁸ *Pink Scarves*, an initiative of Belarusian women who suffered repression, stated that some of the political prisoners from penal colonies on 19 March were told that they are prohibited from using bank cards or obtaining SIM cards.³⁹

Moreover, authorities reportedly continue to coerce former political prisoners to leave Belarus under threat of new criminal proceedings. For example, in November 2025, law enforcement officers reportedly searched a pardoned political prisoner’s house and stated that they may qualify his participation in the 2020 protests as participation in “mass riots” under Article 293 of the Criminal Code.⁴⁰ Fearing re-arrest, the man left Belarus.⁴¹

Harassment appears also to extend to family members of political prisoners. On 17 March 2026, Marina Adamovich, wife of Mikalai Statkevich, was arrested and kept for several hours at Leninskoe RUVD in connection with her travel to Prague to receive a human rights award on behalf of her

³⁵ “[Belarus: UN experts denounce disappearance of Mikalai Statkevich after his attempted deportation](#)”, *OHCHR*, 23-Sep-2025.

³⁶ “[‘Everything is under control. 2020 year will never happen again.’ Lukashenko about prisoners released in Belarus](#)”, *Belta*, 20-Mar-2026. “No one there [in the US] is particularly worried about those 235 [released prisoners remaining in Belarus]. 235 – so what? We know each of them personally; we know what they’re talking about, how they live, and so on. Out of those 235 people, well, maybe 30, maybe 40, might, if something were to happen, take up the BChB flags again, but we know who they are. And before they’re released, they’re all being put under the supervision by the special services and the police. So don’t worry that we’ve let them out. Everything here is under control.” [00:28:14 – 00:28:59] In Russian: «Никто там за эти 235 особо не переживает. 235, ну и что? Мы знаем каждого персонально, мы знаем о чем они говорят, как они живут и прочее. Там, из 235 человек, ну, может 30, может 40, которые могут если вдруг что-то произойдет, могут опять бчб флаги взять, но мы их знем. И прежде, чем выпускать, они все взяты на контроль спецслужбами и милицией. Поэтому вы не переживайте, что мы их выпустили. Все здесь под контролем.»

³⁷ “[‘Everything is under control. 2020 year will never happen again.’ Lukashenko about prisoners released in Belarus](#)”, *Belta*, 20-Mar-2026. In Russian: «Они нам здесь не нужны в стране. Вышли бы они завтра или не вышли, но они быть здесь не должны. [...] Это их люди, через которых шло финансирование, которые дурили тут нам и нашим людям головы. А очумелые за ними шли. Эти очумелые сейчас никому не нужны, никому.»

³⁸ Telegram Channel @dissidentBY, edited 16:55, 21-Mar-2026, <https://t.me/dissidentBY/2937>.

³⁹ Telegram Channel @pinkscarvesbelarus, edited 14:24, 21-Mar-2026, <https://t.me/pinkscarvesbelarus/620>.

⁴⁰ “[Former political prisoner: ‘I had an allergic reaction to bedbug bites, so they had to call an ambulance’](#)”, *Viasna*, 16-Feb-2026.

⁴¹ “[Former political prisoner: ‘I had an allergic reaction to bedbug bites, so they had to call an ambulance’](#)”, *Viasna*, 16-Feb-2026.

husband.⁴² On 19 March 2026, the wife of a political prisoner pardoned on 19 March 2026 was sentenced to eight and a half years of imprisonment under the “yard chats” case.⁴³

1.5 Misuse of terrorism and extremism legislation

The Belarusian authorities continued to misuse extremism- and terrorism-related legislation to persecute those who oppose, or are perceived to oppose, the current government. Persons listed as “extremists” face financial restrictions concerning opening of bank accounts and money transfers and are banned from working in education, public administration, military service, and specific areas of medicine.⁴⁴ The restrictions remain in force even five years after expungement of the criminal record.⁴⁵

Between October 2025 and March 2026,⁴⁶ at least 609 persons were added to the “*List of Citizens of the Republic of Belarus, Foreign Citizens or Stateless Persons Involved in Extremist Activities*”.⁴⁷ A significant proportion of the respective individuals are participants in the 2020 protests, individuals convicted in the “yard chats” case and defendants in the “*Belaruski Hajun*” case (see below).⁴⁸ Usually, people are listed following their conviction under Articles 361-4 (“Facilitating extremist activities”), 342 (“Actions grossly violating public order”) or Article 368 (“Insulting the President”).⁴⁹ However, some individuals were listed without being convicted after the statute of limitations under Article 342 expired.⁵⁰

Between October 2025 and March 2026, the State Security Committee added at least 38 persons to the “*List of Persons involved in Terrorist Activities*”.⁵¹

At least 27 entities were denounced as extremist organisations by the State Security Committee and

⁴² “[Marina Adamovich was released](#)”, *Mediazona*, 17-Mar-2026; Telegram Channel @statkevichm, posted 15:22, 17-Mar-2026, <https://t.me/statkevichm/44>.

⁴³ “[A group of women was sentenced to lengthy sentences under ‘yard chats’ case](#)”, *Viasna*, 21-Mar-2026. The “yard chats” or “neighbourhood chats” case relates to persecution of people, who participated in local Telegram group chats, under Articles 357 (“Conspiracy or other actions aimed at seizing state power”) and 361-1 (“Creation or participation in an extremist formation”) of the Criminal Code. The chats often served as organising platforms for joint protest actions after 2020 protests and as spaces for public discussion. See “[The Yard Chats case: How neighbors’ chats became a criminal case](#)”, *Viasna*, 17-Nov-2025; “[At least 50 people convicted in the ‘yard chats case’](#)”, *Nasha Niva*, 01-Apr-2026.

⁴⁴ “[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026.

⁴⁵ “[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026.

⁴⁶ As of 31 March 2026, the list includes 6,448 persons. “[Human rights situation in Belarus. March 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 07-Apr-2026.

⁴⁷ 125 individuals were listed in October 2025, 100 – in November 2025, 85 – in December 2025, 77 – in January 2026 (6,226 people listed as of January), about 127 – in February 2026 (6,353 people listed as of February), 95 – in March 2026. See “[Human rights situation in Belarus. October 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 06-Nov-2025; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. November 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 08-Dec-2025; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. December 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 31-Dec-2025; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. January 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 04-Feb-2026; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. March 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 07-Apr-2026.

⁴⁸ “[Human rights situation in Belarus. October 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 06-Nov-2025; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. November 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 08-Dec-2025; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026.

⁴⁹ “[Human rights situation in Belarus. October 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 06-Nov-2025.

⁵⁰ In particular, 23 persons in October 2025, six – in November 2025. “[Human rights situation in Belarus. October 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 06-Nov-2025; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. November 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 08-Dec-2025.

⁵¹ Six persons were listed in October 2025, three – in November 2025, seven – in December 2025, 18 – in February 2026, four – in March 2026. See “[Human rights situation in Belarus. October 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 06-Nov-2025; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. November 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 08-Dec-2025; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. December 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 31-Dec-2025; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. January 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 04-Feb-2026; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026; “[Update of the ‘terrorists list’ and a new criminal case: chronicle of persecution 5 March](#)”, *Viasna*, 05-Mar-2026.

As of 11 March 2026, of the 1,425 persons currently on the “terrorist list”, 680 are Belarusian nationals, who were added for political reasons. See “[A singer Ekaterina Vodonosova is charged with ‘rehabilitation of Nazism’ for a YouTube lecture: chronicle of persecution 11 March](#)”, *Viasna*, 11-Mar-2026.

the Ministry of Internal Affairs between October 2025 and March 2026,⁵² including human rights organisation *Human Constanta*, the Belarusian publishing house in exile *Gutenberg Publisher* and foreign commercial entities.⁵³

The designation of organisations as “extremist formations” according to the government counters the creation, leadership, participation in, facilitation and financing of extremist activities (Articles 361-1, 361-2, and 361-4 of the Criminal Code), but is used to criminalise various forms of activism against the regime.⁵⁴ On 17 November 2025, UN human rights experts recalled that the Belarusian anti-extremist legal framework is incompatible with international human rights law.⁵⁵ The UN Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus (GIEB), in its recent report of 6 February 2026, “*continued to observe a misuse of national security and extremism-related legislation to silence any dissent and target opposition figures, human rights defenders, members of civil society organizations, journalists, lawyers, trade unionists and citizens expressing opinions considered to be hostile to the authorities*”.⁵⁶

The Ministry of Information reported that as of the end of February 2026, the “*National List of Extremist Publications and Content*” contained more than 9,000 webpages,⁵⁷ penalising the subscription, reporting and “liking” of such materials under Article 19.11 of the Code of Administrative Offences.⁵⁸ In the reporting period, a chat of prisoners’ relatives, the website of the Council of Europe and social media pages of human rights organisation *International Society for Human Rights* were designated “extremist”.⁵⁹

1.6 Transnational repression / Belarusians in exile

Transnational repression against Belarusians in exile also continued during the reporting period. Between October 2025 and March 2026, at least 12 people were tried *in absentia* under politically motivated charges, the majority resulting in lengthy prison sentences.⁶⁰

Law enforcement officers also continued to pressure relatives of activists in exile. In particular,

⁵² In October 2025, three organisations were denounced as “extremist formation”, in November 2025 – three, in December 2025 – six, in January 2026 – four, in February 2026 – three, in March 2026 – eight. See “[Human rights situation in Belarus. October 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 06-Nov-2025; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. November 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 08-Dec-2025; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. December 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 31-Dec-2025; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. January 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 04-Feb-2026; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. March 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 07-Apr-2026. As of February 2026, the list is comprised of 334 entities, while at the end of August 2025, the list of contained 307 entities. See “[Human rights situation in Belarus. August 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 08-Sep-2025. “[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. March 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 07-Apr-2026.

⁵³ “[New political criminal cases and extremist formation: chronicle of persecution 18 March](#)”, *Viasna*, 18-Mar-2026; “[New ‘extremist groups’ in Belarus](#)”, *Viasna*, 19-Mar-2026; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026.

⁵⁴ “[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026.

⁵⁵ “[UN experts urge Belarus to stop interfering in the legal profession](#)”, *OHCHR*, 17-Nov-2025.

⁵⁶ UN HRC, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the situation of human rights in Belarus, 06-Feb-2026, [A/HRC/61/57](#), para. 19. See also GIEB findings in earlier reports, UN HRC, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the situation of human rights in Belarus “Closing the accountability gap for human rights violations and related crimes in Belarus”, 04-Sep-2025, [A/HRC/60/CRP.1](#), para. 55; UN HRC, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, 07-Feb-2025, [A/HRC/58/68](#), para. 84(c).

⁵⁷ Telegram Channel @viasna96, posted 10:37, 27-Feb-2026, <https://t.me/viasna96/33831>; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026.

⁵⁸ “[Human rights situation in Belarus. October 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 06-Nov-2025.

⁵⁹ “[The biggest chat of the relatives of political prisoners was recognised as ‘extremist’](#)”, *Viasna*, 20-Mar-2026; “[A singer Ekaterina Vodonosova is charged with ‘rehabilitation of Nazism’ for a YouTube lecture: chronicle of persecution 11 March](#)”, *Viasna*, 11-Mar-2026; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. December 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 31-Dec-2025.

⁶⁰ “[List of political prisoners and persons convicted in political criminal cases](#)”, *Viasna*, undated. See also “[Former director of Freestyle Olympic Centre was sentenced to 12 years in absentia](#)”, *Viasna*, 23-Mar-2026; “[Up to 10 years of penal colony with hefty fines: a conviction in absentia under the case of ‘Honest People’](#)”, *Viasna*, 22-Jan-2026.

people reported being summoned by the KGB and offered cooperation with the authorities; law enforcement visits to relatives to locate people abroad; or a person being dismissed because of relatives residing in a country “unfriendly” to Belarus”.⁶¹ Also, law enforcement officers called activists abroad and/ or sent emails impersonating Ukrainian human rights organisation ZMINA to collect information about defendants in criminal cases for supporting Ukraine, and letters demanding to return to Belarus and contact the authorities. Seizure of property of those convicted *in absentia* also continued.⁶²

In the same vein, persecution of former political detainees continued after their release and deportation. For example, law enforcement officers initiated new criminal cases *in absentia*, lawsuits demanding payment for “damages” and “debts” and visited relatives of deported individuals.⁶³ The Ministry of Internal Affairs declared passports of deported political prisoners invalid, including the passports of human rights defenders Ales Bialiatski and Uladz Labkovich, and bloggers Zmitser Kazlou and Eduard Palchys.⁶⁴

Human Rights Center Viasna further reported that law enforcement officers coerce detainees and/or their relatives to make charitable contributions to state-designated organisations in exchange for terminating the criminal proceedings, a practice that started in the context of Hajun case, but has since expanded to families of those charged with other offenses.⁶⁵

On 22 October 2025, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in Belarus, calling on EU Member States to “*put an end to the alarming level of transnational repression conducted by the Lukashenko regime, including on the territory of the EU.*”⁶⁶ The European Parliament further expressed concern about “*the abuse of Interpol arrest warrants by the Lukashenko regime to bring about the extradition of political opponents from non-EU countries.*”⁶⁷

1.7 Ukraine-related penal action

As of February 2026, since May 2020, at least 403 persons were convicted for supporting Ukraine in some way, mostly under Articles 289 (Act of terrorism), 356 (High treason), 358 (Espionage), 358-1 (Agent activity) and 361-4 (Facilitating extremist activities),⁶⁸ for fighting or intending to fight on the side of Ukraine, obstructing the movement of Russian military equipment on the railways, donating to the Ukrainian Armed Forces, and for sharing information about the movement of military

⁶¹ “[Human rights situation in Belarus. October 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 06-Nov-2025; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. January 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 04-Feb-2026; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026; “[KGB summons relatives of emigrants in Grodno region](#)”, *MOST Media*, 23-Feb-2026; Telegram Channel @viasna96, posted 10:05, 08-Dec-2025, <https://t.me/viasna96/32873>.

⁶² Telegram Channel @viasna96, edited 11:31, 09-Oct-2025, <https://t.me/viasna96/32286>; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. October 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 06-Nov-2025; “[Human rights situation in Belarus. December 2025](#)”, *Viasna*, 31-Dec-2025; “[Authorities sell apartment of journalist convicted in absentia for ‘extremism’](#)”, *BAJ*, 27-Mar-2026.

⁶³ “[New criminal case opened against blogger Mikola Dziadok](#)”, *BAJ*, 29-Jan-2026; “[Prosecutor General’s Office in Belarus files \\$7 million lawsuit against Ihar Losik](#)”, *BAJ*, 11-Nov-2025; “[Authorities demand \\$80 from journalist forcibly expelled from Belarus](#)”, *BAJ*, 31-Mar-2026; “[Police officers visited the mother of former political prisoner journalist Vyacheslav Lazarev on March 8](#)”, *BAJ*, 09-Mar-2026; Telegram Channel @viasna96, posted 13:04, 14-Mar-2026, <https://t.me/viasna96/34046>.

⁶⁴ “[‘This is another crime of Lukashenko.’ The regime invalidates the passports of exiled political prisoners](#)”, *Viasna*, 02-Apr-2026; “[The regime declared invalid the passport of the Nobel Prize laureate Ales Bialiatskii](#)”, *Viasna*, 03-Apr-2026.

⁶⁵ “[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026; “[‘Refuse, and you’ll go to detention’: Belarus forces political detainees to pay ‘charity’ for freedom](#)”, *Viasna*, 02-Feb-2026.

⁶⁶ European Parliament resolution of 22 October 2025 on the situation in Belarus, five years after the fraudulent presidential elections, 22-Oct-2025, [2025/2900\(RSP\)](#), para. 10.

⁶⁷ European Parliament resolution of 22 October 2025 on the situation in Belarus, five years after the fraudulent presidential elections, 22-Oct-2025, [2025/2900\(RSP\)](#), para. 10.

⁶⁸ “[The fourth year of the war and the fourth year of repression: Belarusians persecuted for supporting Ukraine](#)”, *Viasna*, 24-Feb-2026.

equipment on the *Belaruski Hajun* Telegram channel.⁶⁹

Out of 403 individuals prosecuted for supporting Ukraine, at least 183 people were arrested in connection with the “*Belaruski Hajun*” case between February 2025 and February 2026. This refers to a campaign of arrests and criminal charges against individuals who had monitored military movements from Belarusian territory relating to the war in Ukraine on the *Belaruski Hajun* Telegram channel and whose identities were exposed following a data leak in February 2025.⁷⁰ Reportedly, some 180 individuals have been charged under Article 361-4 of the Criminal Code (“Facilitating extremist activities”), resulting in at least 102 convictions, 31 prison sentences and 21 sentences of restriction of liberty with referral to an open-type correctional facility.⁷¹ In addition, the convicted individuals were/are often fined for 500-800 basic units⁷² (from 7,300 to 11,700 USD).⁷³

According to a witness, the majority of the political detainees were held in SIZO No. 1 in Minsk,⁷⁴ after transfer of some 40 people from Okrestina to SIZO No. 1.⁷⁵ Forty-two prisoners convicted under the *Hajun* case were pardoned on 19 March 2026.⁷⁶

1.8 International organisations and Belarus

On 30 March 2026, the **Human Rights Council** adopted Resolution A/HRC/61/L.14 on Belarus, extending the mandates of both the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus and of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus for a further period of one year.⁷⁷

It further strongly condemned “*the widespread and systematic violations of international human rights law, among them arbitrary deprivation of the right to life and to liberty, arbitrary detentions and arrests, including incommunicado detention of individuals on politically motivated grounds or for exercising their human rights, enforced disappearance, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including sexual and gender-based violence, denial of due process and the right to a fair trial, failure to safeguard the rights and best interests of the child, violations of the rights to education, work and to liberty of movement and freedom to choose one’s residence, arbitrary denial of the right to enter one’s own country and violations of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association and to equal protection of the law (...)*.”⁷⁸

At its 356th Session, on 30 March 2026, the Governing Body of the **International Labour Organization**⁷⁹ concluded its discussion of the “Belarus issue” under agenda item 12, following up on the implementation of measures recommended under Article 33 of the ILO Constitution. In this

⁶⁹ “[The fourth year of the war and the fourth year of repression: Belarusians persecuted for supporting Ukraine](#)”, *Viasna*, 24-Feb-2026.

⁷⁰ “[Human rights situation in Belarus. February 2026](#)”, *Viasna*, 09-Mar-2026; Telegram Channel @viasna96, 12:45, 03-Mar-2026, <https://t.me/viasna96/33868>; “[One year of mass persecution for reporting Russian military movements](#)”, *Viasna*, 06-Feb-2026.

⁷¹ “[One year of mass persecution for reporting Russian military movements](#)”, *Viasna*, 06-Feb-2026.

⁷² The basic unit in Belarus (базавая велічыня) is an economic metric used to calculate fines, taxes, social benefits, and fees, ensuring they remain stable against inflation. As of January 1, 2025, this unit is 42 Belarusian rubles. The Government adjusts it annually.

⁷³ “[One year of mass persecution for reporting Russian military movements](#)”, *Viasna*, 06-Feb-2026.

⁷⁴ “[‘In one day, 40 defendants in the Hajun case arrived.’ A defendant in the high-profile case spoke about pre-trial detention](#)”, *Viasna*, 26-Jan-2026.

⁷⁵ “[‘In one day, 40 defendants in the Hajun case arrived.’ A defendant in the high-profile case spoke about pre-trial detention](#)”, *Viasna*, 26-Jan-2026.

⁷⁶ “[Pensioners, activists, parents with many children: who are the pardoned political prisoners](#)”, *Viasna*, 20-Mar-2026.

⁷⁷ UN HRC, Resolution on the situation of human rights in Belarus, 19-Mar-2026, [A/HRC/61/L.14](#), paras 7-8.

⁷⁸ UN HRC, Resolution on the situation of human rights in Belarus, 19-Mar-2026, [A/HRC/61/L.14](#), para. 2.

⁷⁹ On the ILO mechanisms see IAPB, *Paths to Accountability for Belarus: Mechanisms to Address Human Rights and International Criminal Law Violations*, Chapter 4.B.: [Paths-for-Accountability_EN.pdf](#).

context, the Governing Body reiterated its call on Belarus to cooperate fully with the ILO Special Envoy and to facilitate access for international missions, emphasizing that such engagement is essential for assessing progress and ensuring compliance with international labour standards.⁸⁰

On 12 March 2026, the **Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court** announced its **decision to open an investigation into crimes against humanity** in the situation concerning Lithuania/Belarus, affirming the admissibility criteria and concluding that there is a reasonable basis to believe that the crimes against humanity of deportation and persecution through deportation have been committed against actual or perceived opponents of the Belarusian government since 2020. The Prosecutor noted that “*the alleged forced deportation of individuals was caused by a coercive environment allegedly created by the Belarusian authorities (...)*”; that these “*coercive acts constituted a course of conduct against actual or perceived opponents of the Government of Belarus (...) pursuant to or in furtherance of a State policy*”; and that these crimes were committed “*as part of a widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population*”.⁸¹

The **GIEB presented its report** dated 6 February 2026 to the Human Rights Council the same day, on 12 March. It confirmed its previous findings,⁸² and, in particular, noted that Belarusian authorities continued arbitrary arrest and detention of those perceived as opposition to the Belarusian authorities, “*systematically crushed the fundamental human rights of the Belarusian people, including the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly, association and a fair trial*”, and subjected the detainees to inhuman conditions of detention, ill-treatment and torture.⁸³ The GIEB underlined continued transnational repressions towards Belarusians in exile and “*a persistent lack of accountability for the authorities responsible for human rights violations*”.⁸⁴

The report of the **Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on Belarus** dated 14 November 2025 was adopted by the Human Rights Council in plenary on 18 March 2026 during its 61st session.⁸⁵ In response to a number of recommendations, Belarus noted that it “*cannot support politicized recommendations containing unilateral value judgments. Furthermore, it rejects recommendations of a prescriptive character that go beyond the advisory nature of the universal periodic review and do not take into account national specificities, resources and domestic policy developments*”.⁸⁶

2. Evidence-gathering and analysis

2.1 Interviews with victims and witnesses

During the reporting period, the IAPB collected information and evidence from 79 survivors/witnesses (16 women, 62 men, 1 nonbinary) regarding alleged crimes under international law. The newly collected interviews provide information on arrests and ill-treatment of detainees, as well as on the deportations of Belarusian and foreign citizens in 2025.

⁸⁰ Decision concerning the follow-up to the resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject of Belarus, 30-Mar-2026, [GB.356/INS/12\(Rev.2\)/Decision](#).

⁸¹ “[ICC Office of the Prosecutor concludes preliminary examinations into Venezuela II and Lithuania/Belarus | International Criminal Court](#)”, *ICC OTP*, 12-Mar-2026.

⁸² UN HRC, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the situation of human rights in Belarus, 06-Feb-2026, [A/HRC/61/57](#), para. 16.

⁸³ UN HRC, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the situation of human rights in Belarus, 06-Feb-2026, [A/HRC/61/57](#), para. 16.

⁸⁴ UN HRC, Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the situation of human rights in Belarus, 06-Feb-2026, [A/HRC/61/57](#), paras 45, 114-116.

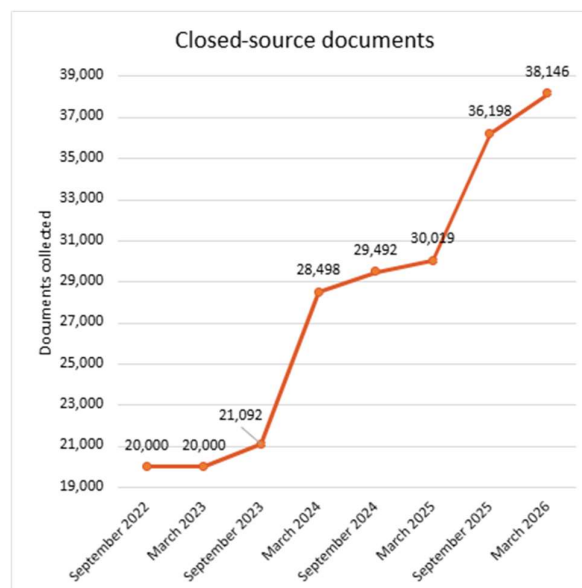
⁸⁵ UN HRC, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on Belarus, 05-Jan-2026, [A/HRC/61/4](#).

⁸⁶ UN HRC, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on Belarus, 05-Jan-2026, [A/HRC/61/4](#), p. 3.

To date, the IAPB witness evidence database hosts 38,146 documents, including 3,351 interview transcripts related to 2,911 witnesses. 1,150 witnesses gave a GDPR-compliant informed consent for sharing their information with accountability bodies.⁸⁷

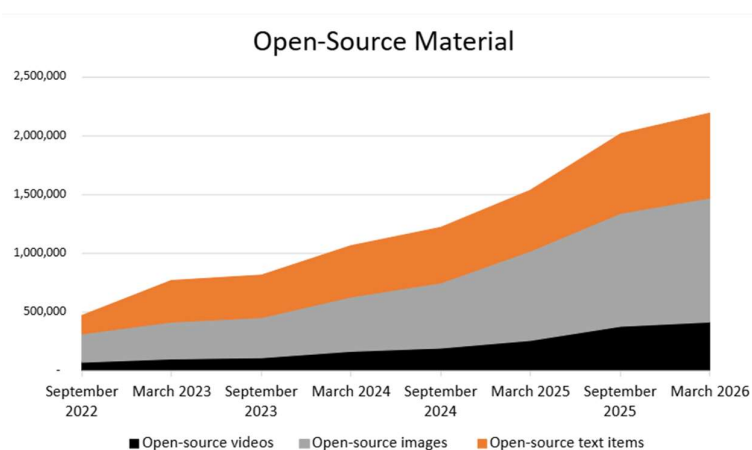
As of March 2026, IAPB has produced 440 witness summaries, of which over 200 summaries have been shared with the ICC and national prosecution authorities, in response to their requests.

The documents in the database include audio-visual materials, medical documents and court records, photographs of injuries, and other relevant items. Translated into English through an automated translation software, the records are catalogued for preservation and analysis in the IAPB's closed-source database.



2.2 Open-source investigation

To date, the IAPB has collected over 2,199,397 open-source items from 1,124 sources. The collection includes over 420,500 videos, 1,051,355 images, and 726,732 text items. Videos containing speech have been processed using automated speech recognition software, resulting in 343,588 transcripts, which facilitates comprehensive textual searches.



2.3 Linkage evidence

The IAPB continues its work providing factual and legal analysis on linkage evidence based on both witness evidence and open-source materials, with a view to assessing the potential criminal liability of Belarusian state officials across different levels of the chain of command.

It is produced to assist national prosecution authorities in building criminal cases against potential suspects and will be also shared with the ICC and other international accountability bodies, subject

⁸⁷ The IAPB continuously works to optimise data storage, including by identifying potential duplicates and artifacts generated during file transfers, both of which can contribute to small fluctuations in the total number of files.

to their request, and the informed consent of victims/ witnesses.

Linkage evidence in international criminal law refers to the body of proof that connects an accused person—often a senior political or military leader—to the crimes committed on the ground, which is particularly critical in establishing responsibility for crimes against humanity. It goes beyond demonstrating that crimes occurred (crime-base evidence) by showing the accused’s role within an organisation or system and establishing a nexus between that role and the widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population. This includes evidence that the individual ordered, enabled, contributed to, or failed to prevent the crimes, as well as their knowledge or intent.

3. Assistance to accountability mechanisms

During the reporting period, the IAPB assisted several national and international accountability bodies by sharing its evidence and analytical products in response to specific requests.

3.1 Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court

As outlined above, on 12 March 2026, the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (OTP/ICC) concluded its preliminary examination into the situation in Lithuania/Belarus and decided to open an investigation.⁸⁸ The decision follows a referral submitted by Lithuania on 30 September 2024 requesting the ICC Prosecutor to examine alleged crimes against humanity—including deportation, persecution and other inhumane acts—committed by Belarusian authorities from 1 May 2020 onwards. While Belarus is not a State Party to the ICC, Lithuania argued that parts of the alleged crimes took place on its territory, which brings them within the Court’s jurisdiction.

Following its preliminary examination, the ICC Prosecutor concluded, and communicated publicly on 12 March 2026, that there is a reasonable basis to believe that crimes within the Court’s jurisdiction have been committed, at least in part on the territory of Lithuania. According to the Office’s findings coercive acts by Belarusian authorities against actual or perceived opponents forced civilians to flee Belarus and cross international borders into Lithuania. These alleged crimes were encouraged or approved by the highest levels of the Belarusian government.

In advance of this OTP decision, the IAPB provided a comprehensive Communication pursuant to Article 15 of the Rome Statute to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (OTP/ICC) in December 2024, and submitted four additional evidence packages in the course of 2025.

3.2 National criminal justice authorities

Between October 2025 and March 2026, the IAPB supported ongoing investigations by national authorities in two states. In response to requests for information and evidence related to specific persons of interest, the IAPB provided summaries of relevant witness interviews as well as analytical briefs presenting the relevant information

3.3 UN Group of Independent Experts (GIEB)

Moreover, the IAPB produced a submission to the Group of Independent Experts on the Human Rights Situation in Belarus (GIEB), the UN investigative mechanism established on 4 April 2024.

⁸⁸ [ICC Office of the Prosecutor concludes preliminary examinations into Venezuela II and Lithuania/Belarus | International Criminal Court.](#)

Based on a Memorandum of Understanding between the IAPB and the GIEB, concluded in October 2025, the IAPB shared information and documentation relevant to the period 2024-2025, as well as to specific thematic areas, such as the crime against humanity of torture, transnational repression, and violations against and affecting children. The Group acknowledged in their report having “consulted materials shared by the International Accountability Platform for Belarus” in assessing trends.⁸⁹

3.4 Overall submission statistics

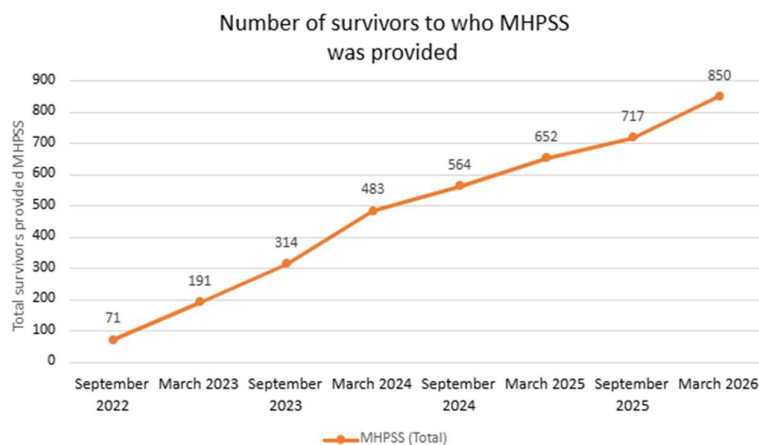
Overall, by 31 March 2026, the IAPB has provided substantive information and evidence to:

1. national criminal justice authorities in six countries in response to 14 requests,
2. 6 submissions to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court,
3. 6 submissions to the UN Group of Independent Experts on the Human Rights Situation in Belarus (GIEB) and its predecessor (the OHCHR Examination of the Human Rights Situation in Belarus - OEB),
4. 1 submission in response to a request by the OSCE Moscow Mechanism, and
5. 5 batches of information to lawyers/ CSOs.

4. Survivor-centered approach

4.1 Provision of Mental Health and Psychological Support (MHPSS)

The IAPB continues to provide survivors with evidence-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in a survivor-centred and trauma-informed manner. Since 1 October 2025, 133 additional survivors (77 women, 55 men and 1 non-binary) have benefitted from this service, bringing the total number to 850 survivor beneficiaries since the establishment of the IAPB.



4.2 MHPSS support for former political prisoners

Former political prisoners represent a distinct patient group within the IAPB’s MHPSS support scheme, with specific, and often severe and complex mental health needs resulting from prolonged detention and persecution.

⁸⁹ Report of the Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, Advance Edited Version, 7 February 2025, A/HRC/58/68, para. 8, <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/61/57>.

Unlike short-term detainees, periods of imprisonment for political prisoners typically exceed three months, requiring individuals to adapt to sustained conditions of deprivation and coercion rather than experiencing detention as a temporary crisis. Clinical observations indicate that the majority of the released political prisoners exhibit symptoms consistent with adjustment disorders, including emotional instability, irritability or emotional numbing, social withdrawal, and difficulties reintegrating into rapidly changing external environments.

Evidence from international research further demonstrates a high prevalence of chronic mental health conditions among this population, with 30–53% experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and 31–46% presenting with chronic depression or anxiety disorders.⁹⁰ Former women political prisoners are particularly affected, with significantly higher rates of diagnosed depression and PTSD. These outcomes are linked to prolonged exposure to violence and result in complex trauma profiles. Comorbid conditions⁹¹ are also common, including substance use disorders and elevated risks of self-harm and suicide.⁹²

In the Belarusian context, these vulnerabilities are further compounded by forced displacement or immediate exile following release, increasing the likelihood of deteriorating mental health outcomes. Medical teams have also identified heightened risks of alcohol misuse and aggressive behaviour, including domestic violence. These factors underscore the need for comprehensive, long-term, and multidisciplinary rehabilitation approaches, combining psychosocial support, medical care, psychological and psychiatric services, as well as targeted social reintegration measures, including support for employment and family-focused interventions.

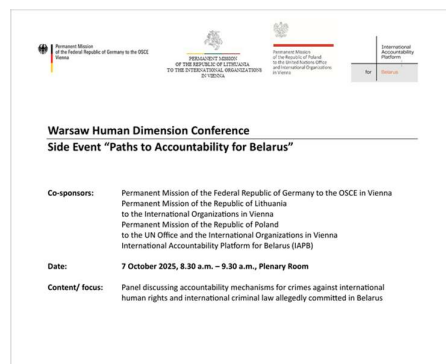
5. Networking, advocacy and communication

5.1 Report on Paths to Accountability for Belarus

On 3 October 2025, the International Accountability Platform for Belarus launched its report “*Paths to Accountability for Belarus – Mechanisms to Address Human Rights and International Criminal Law Violations*” in an online event as an analytical contribution to advancing accountability efforts.

The report provides a comprehensive mapping of available accountability pathways, distinguishing between mechanisms addressing state responsibility, those targeting individual criminal liability, and hybrid approaches bridging both domains. It further assesses how existing international and domestic avenues have been utilised to date, identifies persistent accountability gaps, and outlines additional legal and policy options available to states and other actors to strengthen accountability. In doing so, the report equips stakeholders with a structured ‘menu’ of accountability mechanisms and actionable options to pursue justice for violations committed in Belarus.

The report was subsequently presented at a side-event in the margins of the OSCE Warsaw Human Dimension meeting in Warsaw, on 7 October 2025, alongside presentations on perspectives on accountability for Belarus delivered by representatives of Poland and Lithuania after opening remarks by German Ambassador Susanne Schütz.



⁹⁰ Willis et al., 2015; Navarro Lashaya et al., 2016; Rojas Flores et al., 2017

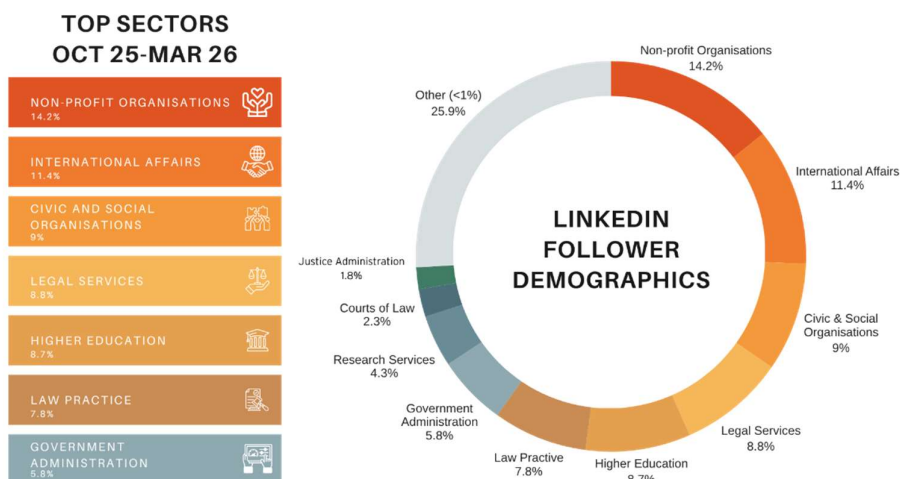
⁹¹ The presence of one or more additional disorders or diseases occurring alongside a primary conditions

⁹² Pietrzak et al., 2011; Ferrada-Noli et al., 1998

5.2 Communications / Social media

Between October 2025 and March 2026, the IAPB has continued to expand its social media presence, with particularly strong performance on LinkedIn. LinkedIn followers increased by 24.5%, rising from 752 to 1,017 followers. Growth of the IAPB's Bluesky account also continued, with a current number of 102 followers, bringing the IAPB's total social media audience across platforms to 1,119.

LinkedIn continues to be an effective channel for reaching key stakeholders. A significant proportion of the IAPB's followers work in International Affairs, Civil Society, and Law, demonstrating that our content is resonating with the audiences most relevant to our mandate.



During the reporting period, IAPB posts generated 21,613 impressions and 2,378 engagements, with an average engagement rate of 11% across 23 posts. According to Hootsuite, a credible resource on social media marketing, the average engagement rate for non-profit organisations on LinkedIn is 3%,⁹³ confirming a particularly high engagement of the IAPB's audience.



Despite this shift, several campaigns performed strongly. Highlights include:

- **Paths to Accountability report and launch webinar** 6,522 impressions | 1,046 engagements
- **Reaction to the release of political prisoners** 4,606 impressions | 568 engagements
- **Promotion of the platform's side event at the ICC Assembly of States Parties** 3,323 impressions | 200 engagements

⁹³ Hootsuite, [Average engagement rates for 12 industries \[January 2025\]](#).

The IAPB issued public statements on 19 December 2025 on “*Belarus: Prisoner Releases Welcome, but Repression Continues and Accountability Remains Urgent*”⁹⁴ and on 13 March 2026 titled “*ICC Investigation into the Situation in Lithuania/ Belarus: International Recognition of the Severity of the Crimes*”⁹⁵.

5.3 Events and presentations

The IAPB was invited on 19 November 2025 to deliver a presentation at the 38th Meeting of the Network for Investigation and Prosecution of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes in The Hague (‘Genocide Network’), and presented at an international conference convened by DIGNITY on investigation and prosecution of international crimes in the Danish Parliament on 27 November 2025.

The request to the IAPB Head to give introductory remarks and moderate an OSCE Ministerial Council 2025 side event organised by the informal Group of Friends of Democratic Belarus on 4 December, titled “Preparing the democratic future of Belarus: A conversation with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya”, underscores the relevance ascribed to the IAPB.

In the margins of the Assembly of States Parties of the International Criminal Court (ICC), on 3 December 2025, the IAPB organised the side event “*Persecution and Forced Exile from Belarus: A Crime Against Humanity*”. Moderated by REDRESS and co-hosted by Denmark and Lithuania, the event brought together Belarusian and international experts to explore the roles of states and civil society in advancing justice efforts, including through the ICC’s then-preliminary examination.

Regular contact was held with the UN Group of Independent Experts, including an exchange of information on Belarusian state institutions and linkage evidence on 5 February 2026, as well as with relevant Belarusian and international human rights organisations, and a number of OSCE delegations.

5.4 Advisory Council

On 8 October, REDRESS convened a hybrid meeting of the Advisory Council members in Warsaw in the margins of the OSCE Warsaw Human Dimension Conference. The IAPB updated the Council on its work on linkage evidence, and held an exchange on strategic directions for accountability efforts, based on the IAPB’s report ‘*Paths to Accountability for Belarus: Mechanisms to Address Human Rights and International Criminal Law Violations*’.

Another Advisory Council meeting was held online on 19 March 2026, focused on exploring long-term geopolitical scenarios for Belarus, assessing their implications for justice and accountability processes.

6. Capacity-building & Sustainability

6.1 Working group on Universal Jurisdiction in Poland

In the reporting period, Working Group meetings were held in person on 10 October 2025, at the Institute of Law Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) in Warsaw, and online on 18 March 2026. The meeting built on three earlier Working Group discussions.

⁹⁴ IAPB Public Statement, [PR_Opening-of-ICC-investigation_13.03.2026.pdf](#).

⁹⁵ IAPB Public Statement, [Microsoft Word - PR_Belarusian prisoners release_19.12.25](#)

The meetings were attended by Polish, Belarusian and international CSOs engaged in documentation and UJ work in Poland, and a representative of the Polish Ministry of Justice.

6.2 Streamlining of interview process

During the reporting period, IAPB Secretariat experts supported documenters in streamlining the documentation process, while consistently applying trauma-informed and survivor-centred approaches. To that end, IAPB developed guidelines for conducting shorter initial interviews, fully in keeping with the PEACE model, and with a view to preparing for the full interview or responding to time-pressing requests.

6.3 Sharing of IAPB's experience

In order to share its experience with other institutions, the IAPB participated in a Technical Briefing on the Guidelines for Civil Society Organisations on Documenting International Crimes and Human Rights Violations for Criminal Accountability Purposes organised by the European Network for investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes (Genocide Network) at Eurojust. The session served as a forum to collect feedback on the Guidelines from CSOs, with a view of revising them in a future version.

7. Infrastructure, staff and finances

The IAPB Secretariat team consists of staff and consultants, including the IAPB Head, a Project Manager, Lead Analyst, Senior Legal Consultant, a Project Officer, investigators, analysts and a translator.

The IAPB continues to liaise with the bilateral and multilateral donors to secure funding for the next phase (IAPB 2026–2029), which is envisaged to commence on 1 October 2026.

Since its establishment, the IAPB has been supported by a wide range of States, notably (countries in alphabetical order): Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, as well as the European Union.

8. Extension of the IAPB for a three-year period until September 2029 – Project Proposal and Theory of Change

8.1 External evaluation and consultation

During the reporting period, the IAPB undertook a consultative process involving its co-leading organisations and consortium partners and a range of Advisory Council members. It further incorporated reflections on the recommendations of the external evaluation of the platform,⁹⁶ completed in October 2025, with a view to developing a proposal to extend the IAPB beyond its current end date of 30 September 2026 to 30 September 2029.

On this basis, the IAPB developed a comprehensive project proposal, including a theory of change

⁹⁶ Blomeyer & Sanz, Final Report: External Evaluation of the International Accountability Platform for Belarus (IAPB), 28 October 2025, pp. iv, 35. Available to donors upon request. Short version available here: <https://iapbelarus.org/app/uploads/2025/12/IAPB-Final-Evaluation-Report-Exec-Summary-website.pdf>.

implementing the evaluation’s respective recommendations. A number of states have confirmed their commitment to funding the IAPB until September 2029, while fundraising efforts continue.

The external evaluation, completed in October 2025, assessed the IAPB’s performance since its establishment and found that it had “*demonstrated very strong results across all evaluation criteria*”.³ The evaluation further noted “*good progress with regard to achieving all four Strategic Outcomes*” and “*good prospects for contributing to the overall objective of accountability for severe violations of human rights and international crimes in Belarus*”.⁴ This performance was attributed to sound design and governance, close partnership with Belarusian organisations, and the exceptional commitment of Secretariat staff, partners, documenters, and MHPSS experts.⁹⁷

To independently appraise its analytical work after approximately four years of operation, the IAPB had further commissioned, in the summer of 2025, an external review of its submissions to accountability bodies and its analytical products by a former ICC judge and a prosecutor with international experience, with a view to assessing the quality and relevance of its outputs.⁹⁸



8.2 Impact, outcomes and new aspects of work

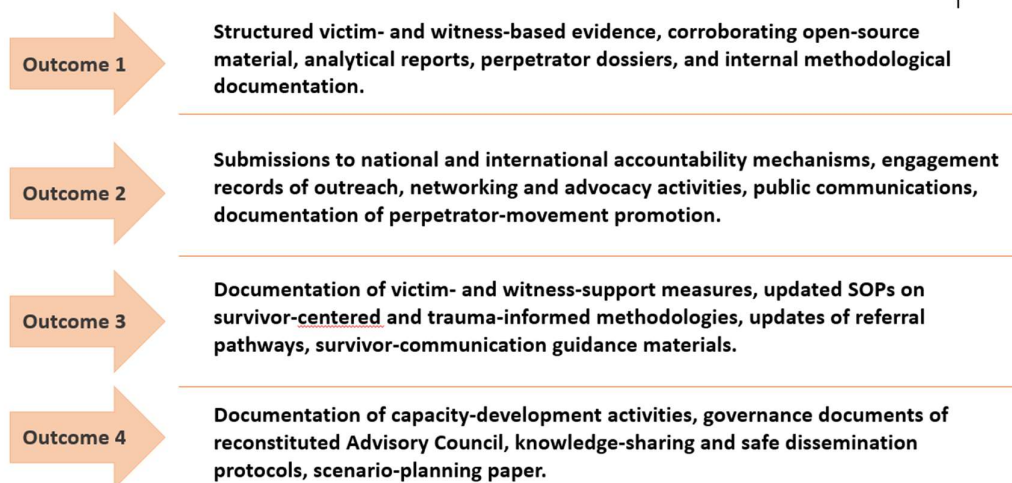
In line with the positive appraisals of its work, the proposal to extend the IAPB’s operations retains its successful model while incorporating new aspects in line with the evolution of the platform over the years.

Outcomes:

- 1 Sustained availability of high-quality evidence and analysis of crimes under international law committed by Belarusian authorities, including perpetrator-related evidence.**
- 2 Advancement and expansion of national and international accountability processes** through effective use of IAPB-generated materials, outreach and advocacy.
- 3 Safe, ethical, and trauma-informed participation of victims and witnesses** in accountability efforts, including evidence-based mental health and psychosocial support.
- 4 Strengthened capacity and ownership of Belarusian co-lead organisations,** with methodologies preserved for future use and replication by legitimate civil society actors in other country-contexts.

⁹⁷ Blomeyer & Sanz, Final Report: External Evaluation of the International Accountability Platform for Belarus (IAPB), 28 October 2025, pp. iv, 35. Available to donors upon request. Short version available here: <https://iapbelarus.org/app/uploads/2025/12/IAPB-Final-Evaluation-Report-Exec-Summary-website.pdf>.

⁹⁸ Both reports can be made available to donors upon request.

Outputs:

9. Risks and challenges

The risks outlined in previous progress reports persisted during the reporting period, particularly the sustained pressure on Belarusian co-lead organisations, which continue to operate under extremely difficult and often hostile conditions.

Survivors remain deeply affected by ongoing security concerns for themselves and their families. These concerns often lead to hesitation in sharing evidence or granting informed consent for their testimonies to be submitted to accountability mechanisms, reflecting the continued tension between their desire to contribute to justice and the need to ensure personal safety.

Annex 1: BRIEF PLATFORM OVERVIEW

The IAPB is a consortium of independent non-government organisations that have joined forces to collect, verify, preserve, and analyse evidence of gross human rights violations constituting crimes under international law allegedly committed by Belarusian authorities in the run-up to the 2020 presidential election and during the following years. The objective of the IAPB is to achieve accountability of perpetrators for serious violations of human rights and international criminal law in Belarus, which enables victims/ survivors to seek justice and redress. To this end, the IAPB directly assists criminal justice authorities and international accountability bodies in their investigation and prosecution of alleged perpetrators of these crimes.

The IAPB was created in March 2021 in response to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) Moscow Mechanism report on alleged human rights violations related to the presidential elections in Belarus, published on 5 November 2020. The report made a series of recommendations calling for accountability for the serious violations of international law in Belarus, and for the documentation and preservation of evidence to this end.

The consortium is composed of two Belarusian and one international co-lead organisations, Human Rights Center Viasna, International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus, and REDRESS, and its lead organisation DIGNITY – Danish Institute against Torture.

Since its establishment, the IAPB is or has been supported by a wide range of States, notably (*countries in alphabetical order*) Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, as well as the European Union.

Theory of Change:

The IAPB overall is based on the theory of change that, **if** information and evidence of serious human rights violations and crimes under international law allegedly committed by Belarusian authorities are collected, consolidated, preserved and analysed in accordance with international standards and made available to national and international accountability mechanisms, **then** those responsible can be held accountable for such violations and crimes in accordance with international law, which will in turn enable access to justice for survivor-victims.