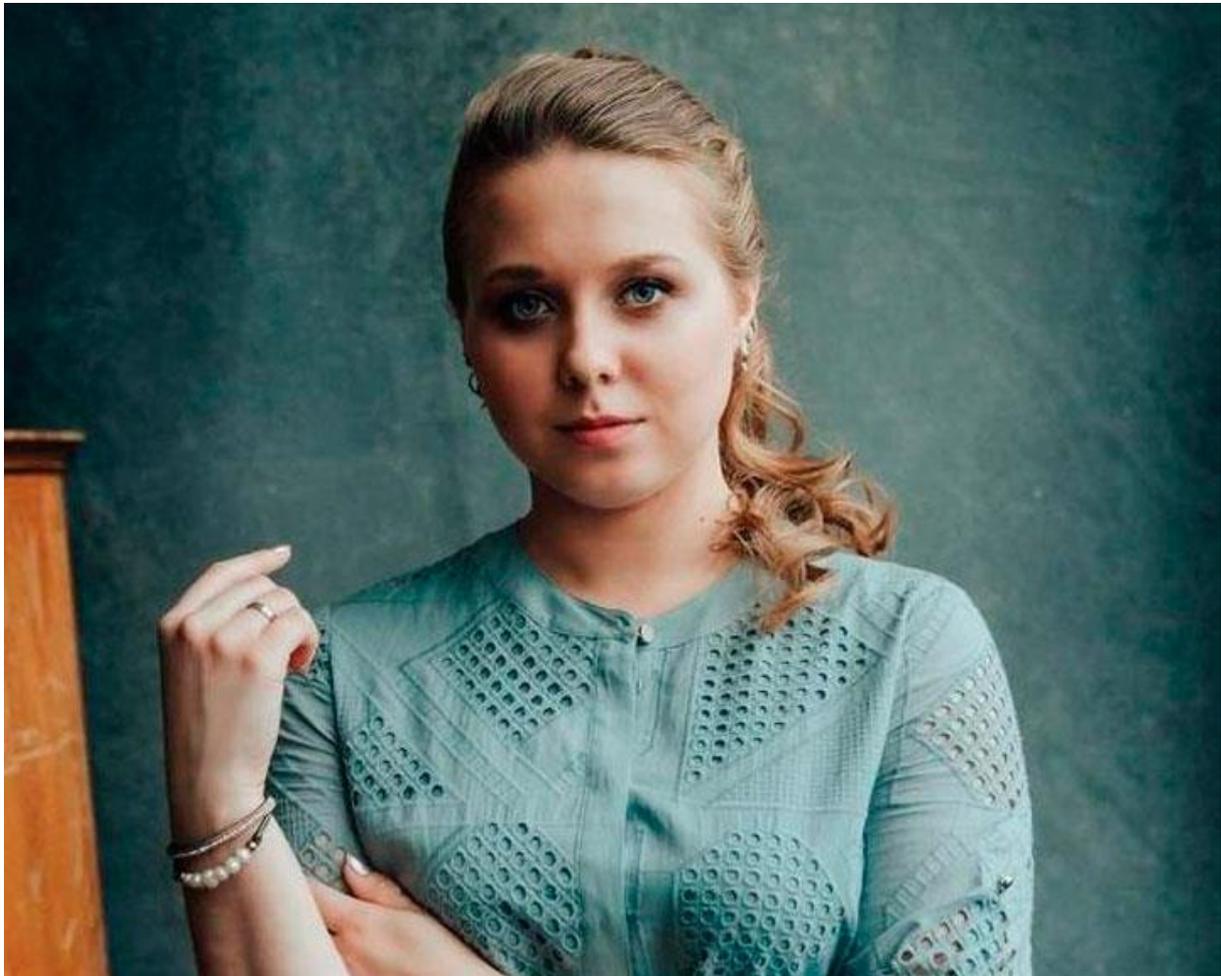


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BELARUS ELECTION ALERT #7

List of political prisoners detained over “rioting” charges increases

A volunteer coordinator of EPDE’s member organization, the Human Rights Center “Viasna”, as well as her husband were detained yesterday over charges of causing mass riots. Meanwhile, her husband has been released, however her whereabouts are unknown. There is a growing pressure on civil society in the country as authorities' repressions continue. Human rights organizations in Belarus as well as the European Parliament and UN experts call for a cessation of violence by authorities against protestors and for the release of now over 80 political prisoners in the country. In this alert, we share further details about the human rights situation in Belarus following the fraudulent presidential election of 9 August.



Marfa Rabkova, volunteer coordinator of the Human Rights Center “Viasna”, detained 17 September 2020. Photo: Viasna.

On September 17, officers of the Interior Ministry’s Main Directorate for Combating Organized Crime and Corruption (GUBAZIK) [detained Marfa Rabkova, coordinator of the volunteer service of the Human](#)

[Rights Center "Viasna"](#). Along with Marfa, her husband Vadzim Zharomski was also detained, but eventually released. Rabkova's whereabouts are still unknown.

As part of her human rights activities, Marfa, together with Viasna's volunteers, has observed peaceful assemblies, taken an active part in the non-partisan election observation initiative "Human Rights Defenders for Free Elections", and participated in documenting evidence of torture and other ill-treatment of detained protesters. Any attempts to accuse Marfa Rabkova of plotting riots are unfounded, far-fetched, and politically motivated.

It should be noted that during the entire presidential election campaign and after the election, members of the regional branches of Viasna [faced pressure and persecution from authorities](#), including attempts to institute criminal prosecution and several administrative penalties of detention.

Human rights organizations in Belarus are calling for the release of Marfa Rabkova and for [all other political prisoners being held over "rioting" charges](#).

In Viasna's [latest report on the human rights situation in Belarus](#), they report that in the past month, more than 7,500 citizens were detained for participating in peaceful protests and currently there are now [over 80 political prisoners](#), including the abducted prominent member of the Coordination Council, [Maryia Kalesnikava](#). Viasna also reports that the large number of detainees after Election Day overloaded the Interior Ministry's system, which resulted in delays of several days in informing families about the whereabouts of detainees. There have also been widespread instances of torture and other cruel and inhumane treatment of detainees. Viasna records at least 500 cases of torture.

[UN human rights experts](#) have issued a statement voicing their alarm over the use of torture against detainees. The [European Parliament issued a similar statement](#) in which they also state that, after his current term expires on 5 November, they will not recognize Alexander Lukashenka as President of Belarus and call for new presidential elections.

More reports on the human rights situation in Belarus can be found on the website of the Human Rights Center "Viasna" [here](#).

More news on Belarus also available at www.epde.org

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