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## BELARUS ELECTION ALERT #3

### Further restrictions disadvantage opposition

The Central Election Commission has until 14 July to complete the registration process of candidates for the presidential race. Observers from the "Human Rights Defenders for Free Elections" campaign report that further measures were taken to disadvantage rival candidates in recent days: locations where election activities can lawfully take place have been restricted, further members of Viktor Babaryka's campaign team have been detained, and nearly all opposition nominees to PECs were blocked. EPDE will host a webinar on 15 July to discuss this and more from the election campaign in Belarus. More on these stories below.



*Image source: tellerreport.com*

Local governments have drastically [reduced the list of legal campaigning locations](#) for outdoor events in an apparent attempt to curb election-related activities. Authorized venues are either unsuitable for this purpose or are likely to be unpopular among voters, with some of them being inaccessible by public transport. According to HRDs, unlike the 2015 Presidential election where local authorities tolerated campaigning events outside of authorized venues, in this year's election gatherings are forbidden anywhere except in one or two of the most inconvenient places.

The human rights situation in Belarus continues to deteriorate during the election campaign. The list of political prisoners in Belarus has grown to 22 people, which is comparable to the situation of the most severe human rights crisis in Belarus in late 2010 – early 2011. According to the [Human Rights Center "Viasna"](#), around 600 people have been brought to administrative responsibility for participating in peaceful assemblies (including short-term detentions and high fines). In this [latest statement](#), human rights organizations call for the release of Alena Karahachava and Dzmitry Karak, members of Viktor Babaryka's campaign team, who himself is also still detained.

Already on 24 June authorities completed the [formation of Precinct Election Commissions \(PECs\)](#) which are an important element of the electoral process directly engaged in the administration of voting and counting of votes. Observers note that the formation of PECs clearly discriminated against representatives of opposition parties: 1.1% of the total number of elected nominees are from opposition parties while 96.7% are from pro-government parties.

Only after the registration process has been completed by 14 July will invitations to international observation missions be issued, so it is still unclear whether the OSCE ODIHR will observe this election. However, the [OSCE Parliamentary Assembly](#) already confirmed that they will not send any observers to Belarus due to the pandemic and its associated risks.

### **EPDE webinar on 15 July**

The registration of candidates for the presidential election ends officially on 14 July. What conclusions can be drawn from the ongoing electoral campaign in Belarus? We will discuss this with **Uladzimir Labkovich** (Human Rights Center “Viasna” and founding member of the initiative “Human Rights Defenders for Free Elections”) and **Michael Georg Link** (Member of the German Bundestag, FDP parliamentary group and former Director of the OSCE ODIHR) in an upcoming webinar on **15 July, 15:00 CEST**. To find out more about the event and how to sign up, please go to the [event page here](#).

More reports on the election campaign in Belarus can be found on the website of the “Human Rights Defenders for Free Elections” [here](#).

More news on Belarus also available at [www.epde.org](http://www.epde.org)

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