



Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP)

**BELARUS:
FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION IN
LABOUR RELATIONS;
FORCED LABOUR**

Geneva,
29 August 2025

UPR Pre-session on Belarus

About BKDP

Founded in 1993 as a national association of independent trade unions.

Defends and promotes workers' rights in Belarus.

Forcibly liquidated by the Government in 2022.

Now operates in exile.



BKDP work includes

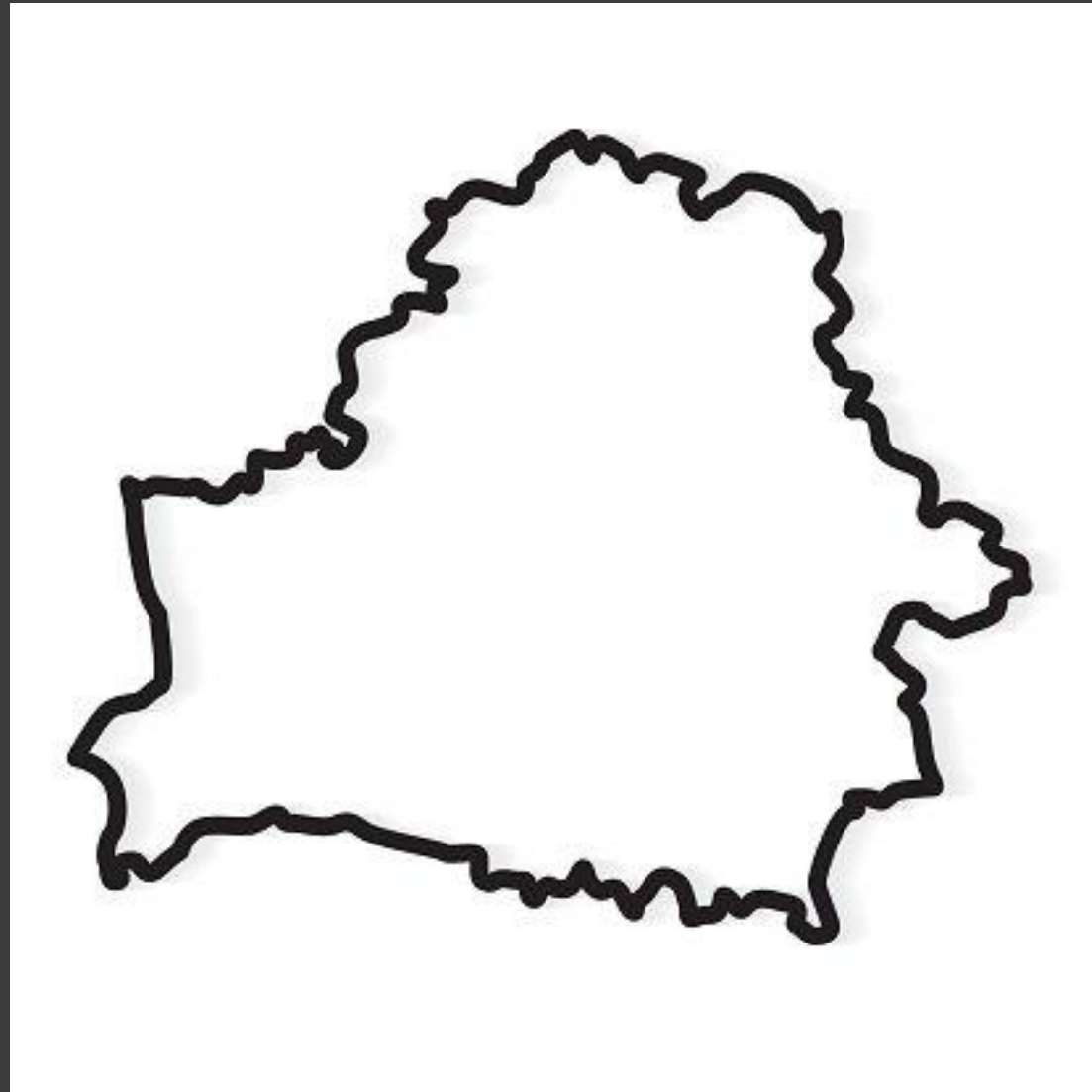
- 1 Documenting violations
- 2 Providing legal support
- 3 Delivering humanitarian aid
- 4 Advocating before the ILO, the UN, and other international organisation
- 5 Information and educational activities

National UPR report: No Civil Society Consultation

- All independent trade unions eliminated in 2022.
- BKDP was excluded from the drafting of the National UPR report.
- Government report fails to reflect real labour and human rights situation.

Key Issues

- No freedom of association in labour relations
- No *good faith* cooperation with the ILO
- State-run forced labour in prisons and medical labour centres (LTPs)



No Freedom of Association

- All independent trade unions and BKDP have been forcibly liquidated by the Government in 2022.
- Impossible to register independent trade unions.
- Criminal liability for trade union activity — up to 12 years of imprisonment.
- State-controlled Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus (FPB) replaces independent unions.

Repression Against Trade Unionists

- ❑ Strikes, organisation of mass events, foreign gratitude aid are effectively banned by national law;
- ❑ New dismissal grounds introduced in the Labour Code:
 - organisation and participation in illegal strikes;
 - serving administrative arrest (penalty applied *en masse* against civil society, NGOs and trade unions members)



Trade unionists
criminally prosecuted



Imprisoned



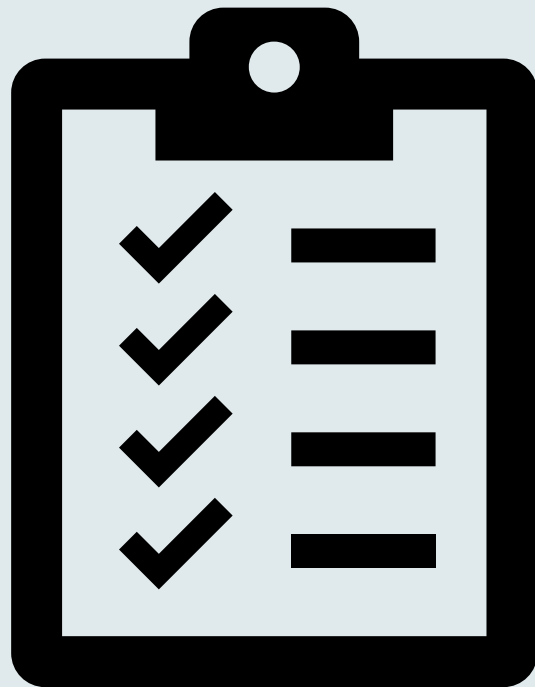
Labelled
“extremists”



Labelled
“terrorists”

Workplace Repression

1. KGB officers monitor State-owned enterprises *inter alia* by serving as deputy directors for ideology.
2. Blacklisting and mass non-renewal of contracts.
3. Dismissals for peaceful protests, anti-war stance, or dissent.
4. Workplace interrogations and detentions.

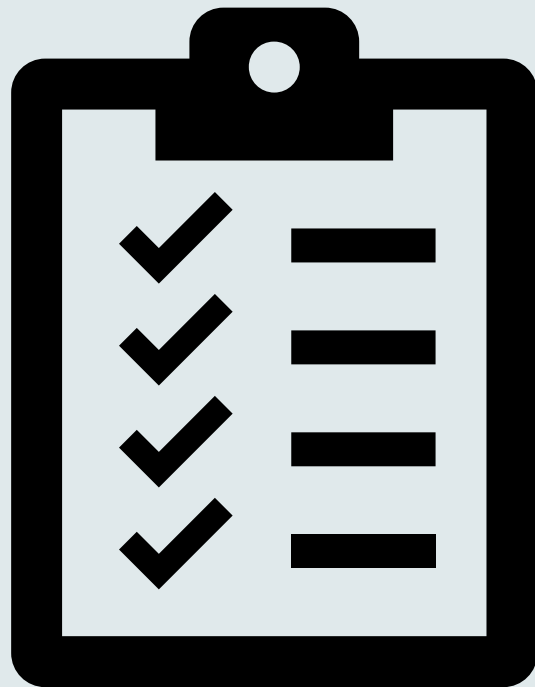


RECOMMENDATIONS

- End repression against workers and independent trade unionists; release and exonerate all political prisoners, reinstate unfairly dismissed workers and pay compensation.
- Restore all independent trade unions (SPM, SPB, BNP, REP and their association - BKDP).
- Amend the Law “On mass events” № 114-Z of 30 December 1997, the Decree of the President “On foreign gratuitous aid” № 3 of 25 May 2020 and other related legislation. The amendments should be directed at: end sanctions for single trade union violations; ensure lawful restrictions on mass events align with freedom of association; bring the scope of activities for which foreign gratitude aid can be used into accordance with freedom of association.

Non-Cooperation with ILO

- Belarus ignores 2004 ILO Commission of Inquiry Recommendations.
- In 2023, ILO applied Article 33 in relation to Belarus (second case in the world).
- Government refuses humanitarian/ILO missions.
- Data provided by the Government have been rendered meaningless by changes to labour legislation, the absence of independent trade unions, repression in the workplace, and the crackdown on dissent.

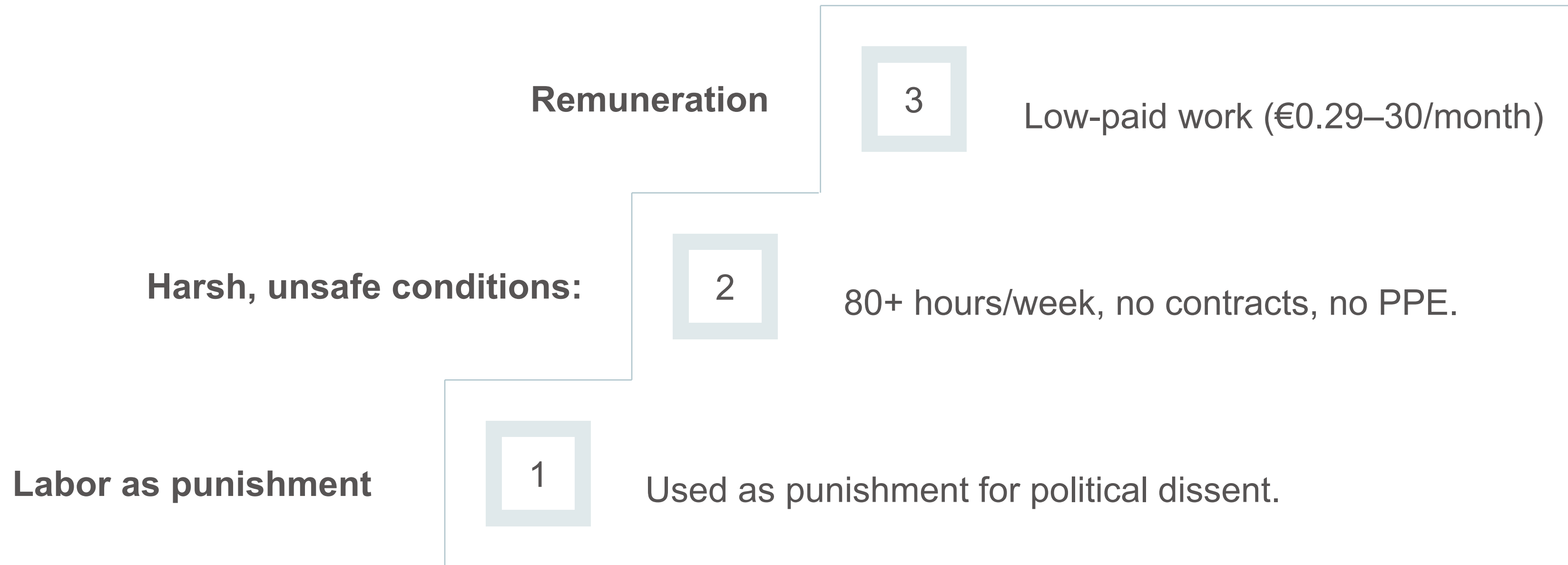


RECOMMENDATIONS

- Engage with the ILO in *good faith* with a view to fully implement all outstanding recommendations of the ILO Commission of Inquiry, supervisory bodies and Article 33 of the ILO Constitution legal mechanism.

Forced Labour in Prisons

All inmates forced to work under threat of punishment



Forced Labour in LTPs

Soviet-era “rehabilitation” centres under Ministry of Internal Affairs

**8,000+ detained
annually for up to 2.5
years.**

**No real medical
treatment, compulsory
labour under threat.**

**No contracts,
symbolic wages, no
labour rights.**



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Stop the use of forced labour in the penitentiary system and LTPs.

Recommendations

Repression 01

End repression against workers and trade unionists.

Prisoners 02

Release and exonerate political prisoners.

Unions 03

Restore all independent trade unions.

ILO 04

Cooperate fully with ILO and implement Recommendations.

LTPs 05

Stop forced labour in prisons and LTPs.

Thank you!

Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP)

<https://www.solidarnast.info/>

E-mail: bkdpcongress@gmail.com

+4915203268972

Salidarnast E.v.

Delbrückstrasse 18, 28209 Bremen Germany