

Belarus: “anti-extremism” and “anti-terrorism” persecution

Despite General Comment No. 34 to ICCPR calling states to clearly define offences like “encouragement of terrorism” and “extremist activity” so that they do not lead to unnecessary or disproportionate interference with freedom of expression, Belarus runs an “ecosystem” of “anti-extremism” persecution, including:

- **specialized laws** on combating “extremism” and “terrorism”
- corresponding **criminal and administrative offenses**
- 7 different “**extremist**” and “**terrorist**” lists
- amendments enabling the **revocation of citizenship** for committing “extremist crimes”
- **death penalty** for “acts of terrorism” and “high treason”
- “**prone to extremism**” **yellow badges** to be worn by political prisoners

<p><i>“The Belarusian authorities continued to weaponize the domestic counter-terrorism and anti-extremist legal framework for persecuting their actual or perceived political opponents.”</i></p> <p>Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, A/HRC/59/59, para. 71</p>	<p><i>“...After the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Belarusian authorities have also used “anti-extremist” legislation to arrest and prosecute people for their anti-war activism and speech.”</i></p> <p>Group of Independent Experts on the Situation of Human Rights in Belarus, A/HRC/58/68, 2025, para. 28</p>	<p><i>“...the Law to Counter Extremism and other related legal instruments contain vaguely defined offences, which makes it usable for widespread political repression, depending on how it would be implemented.”</i></p> <p>Second OSCE Moscow Mechanism Report on Belarus, 2023, para. 64</p>
--	--	---

- **22,500** “extremist crimes” recorded since 2020 (Investigative Committee, Nov 2024)
- **18,000** websites blocked, **7,000** on “extremism” grounds (Ministry of Information, 2025)
- **8,383** items on the “extremist materials” list, including **2,300** Telegram channels (July 2025)
- **299** “extremist formations” on the “extremist organisations and formations” list (Aug 2025)
- **5,589** people on the list of people associated with “extremism” (Aug 2025)
- **1,326** on the “terrorist” list, including at least 630 critics of the regime (Aug 2025)
- **141** books on the list of prohibited books (Aug 2025)

 <p>Report “Quashing Online Dissent: Anti-Extremism Laws Put Digital Rights at Risk in Belarus”</p>	 <p>Report “No Country for Human Rights: Comparative Analysis of Anti-Extremist Legislation and its Implementation in Eastern Europe and Central Asia”</p>	 <p>Release campaign for human rights defender Nasta Lojka (IG page in BY/ENG)</p>	<p>Recommendation: Repeal anti-extremist legislation in its current form as inconsistent with international standards and stop the practice of its arbitrary application. Amend the Law “On the Prevention of Extremism,” the Administrative and Criminal Codes, and related laws to clearly define “extremism” in line with international human rights standards to ensure that they do not lead to unnecessary or disproportionate interference with freedom of expression, online and offline.</p>
--	---	--	--




Belarus: migrants' and foreigners' rights

While an estimated **500 000 Belarusians have become forced migrants** in the years of crackdown, facing threats abroad (from surveillance to statelessness, now that the authorities prohibited Belarusians to exchange passports abroad), foreigners and migrants inside Belarus are an even less visible vulnerable group. The crisis at the Belarus-EU border lingers, claiming lives of **at least 166 people**. There are known facts of violence against migrants by Belarusian law enforcement and forced detention of groups of migrants, including children, in dangerous conditions at the border (in the forest, at low temperatures, without access to shelter, food, drinking water, and medical care). Women are vulnerable to human trafficking and sexual exploitation (para. 33 of CEDAW's 2025 Belarus concluding observations). Belarus lacks a transparent and accessible system of international protection. There is no procedure for documenting irregular migrants' newborn children. The problem is exacerbated by a gaping shortage of organizations who could provide support to vulnerable groups as Belarusian authorities have liquidated over a thousand NGOs.

*"The Special Rapporteur remains concerned about migrants who are still stranded in Belarus. Particularly, he notes the increased difficulty in providing assistance to those in irregular situations, including: individuals who are not eligible for refugee status but who still raise refoulement concerns if they were returned to their countries of origin; those who choose not to apply for asylum as they **fear being subjected to detention, violence or deportation if they approach the Belarusian authorities**; and those who do not qualify for any existing assistance programmes provided by relevant United Nations agencies."*

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, A/HRC/53/26, para. 29

The case of Guinean citizen **Mariam Soumah** is a stark example of human rights abuses faced by migrants in Belarus. After she gave birth prematurely in November 2024, the authorities initiated deportation, and barred her from seeing her newborn girl, who remained in hospital. Despite her willingness to assume parental care, the child was withheld on the condition that she pays €28,000 in medical bills. In July 2025, before custody issues were resolved, Mariam was detained for deportation without charges, legal aid, or interpretation and held in harsh conditions. In August 2025, she was deported and separated from her child, who remains under state control. The case reveals clear violations of family unity, due process, and non-discrimination under treaties to which Belarus is a party, including the CRC, ICCPR, and ICERD.

 <p>Report "Missing and Dead Migrants in Belarus: Law and Practice"</p>	 <p>Report "Humanitarian Crisis in Belarus and at the European Union Border in 2023–2024: A Structural Analysis and Perspectives"</p>	 <p><i>Amicus curiae</i> on the ineffectiveness of the asylum system, disregard of non-refoulement principle, and human rights violations committed by Belarus (<i>C.O.C.G. and Others v. Lithuania</i>, ECtHR)</p>	<p>Recommendation: Address systematic shortcomings in migration procedures, including those of international protection, ensuring that all procedures are properly implemented and migrants have equal access to them; address risk factors that directly or indirectly contribute to the disappearance of migrants and asylum-seekers, especially those arriving in Belarus in the current humanitarian crisis; fulfil international obligations to protect the human rights of migrants.</p>
--	--	--	--