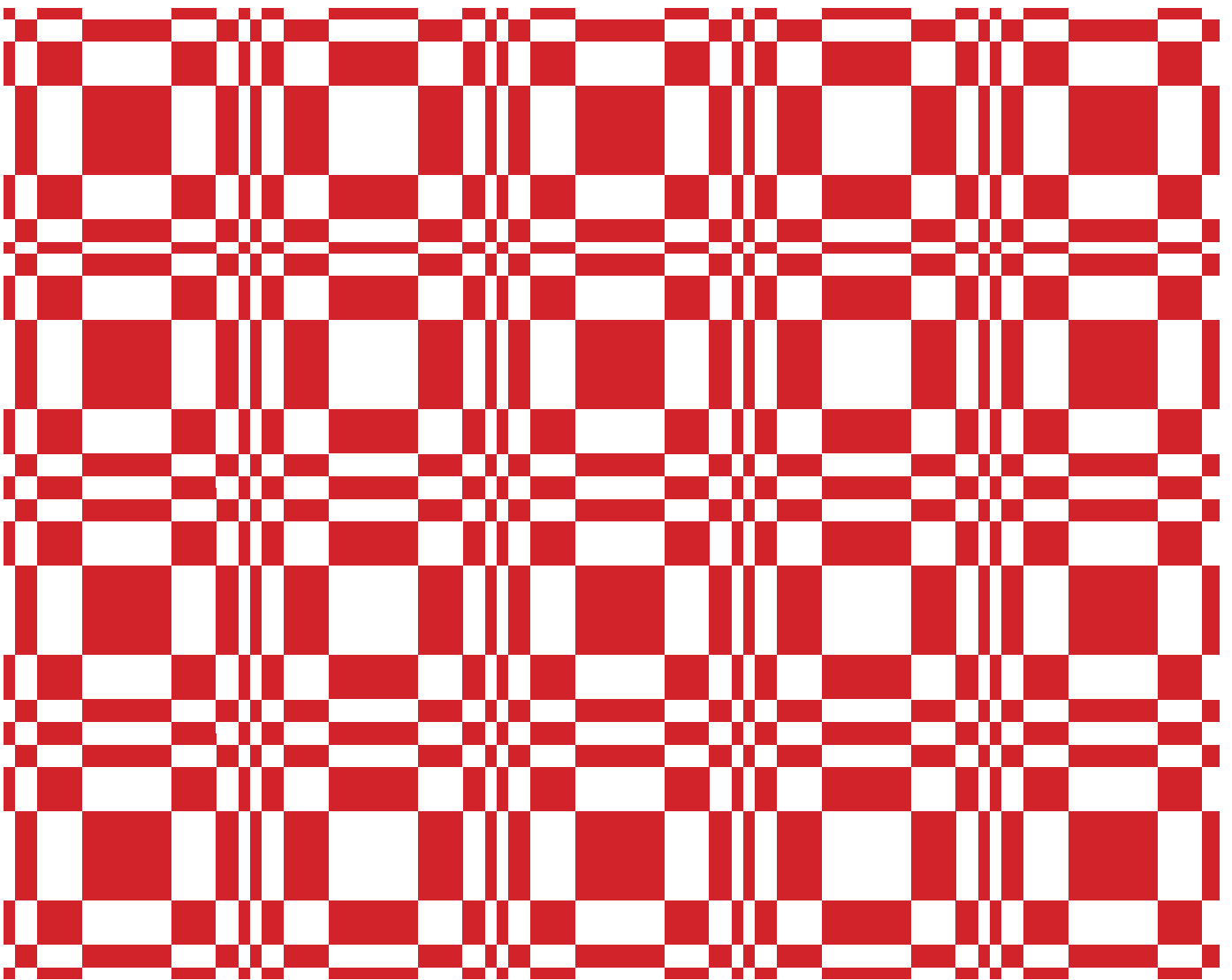


BELARUSIAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT



WHAT ARE THE
DEMOCRATIC FORCES
OF BELARUS

STRUCTURES
OF THE DEMOCRATIC
FORCES

MYTHS ABOUT THE
DEMOCRATIC FORCES
OF BELARUS

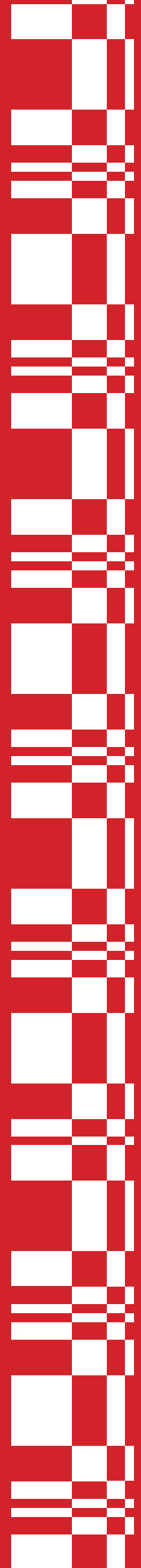
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What Are the Democratic Forces of Belarus

The democratic forces of Belarus are not a single organization but a dynamic network system of political institutions, civic initiatives, media, and activists united by the goal of building a free, sovereign, and democratic Belarus.

The democratic forces of Belarus are a living organism, where every initiative, from a local volunteer group to an expert center, contributes to the common cause. Their strength is in their shared values, not in unification; in solidarity, not in hierarchy. This is a system that is building the foundation of a new Belarus, where human rights are respected, fair elections are held, and national culture flourishes.



Formation of the Democratic Forces of Belarus

The democratic movement in Belarus began to take shape in the last years of the Soviet Union. The turning point was the public awareness of Soviet crimes, in particular, the 1988 publication of the mass graves in Kurapaty, which sparked protests and inspired the creation of the Belarusian Popular Front (BPF). The BPF became the first mass political force advocating for Belarus' independence and democratic transformation.

After the declaration of independence in 1991, conditions for pluralistic politics emerged in the country only to be quickly eroded. In 1994, Aliaksandr Lukashenka came to power, starting the process of dismantling democratic institutions. As early as the mid-1990s, a referendum was held that changed the state symbols, expanded the powers of the president, and ushered in authoritarian rule. The dissolution of the Supreme Council in 1996 cemented the transition to a super-presidential system.

Since then, the political opposition and civil society have been subjected to systematic pressure. Independent media, human rights organizations, and cultural and political initiatives have faced repression, censorship, and liquidation. Despite this, the democratic forces continued their work, participating in elections and organizing educational and advocacy activities. Each presidential campaign – in 2001, 2006, 2010 – was accompanied by attempts to consolidate the opposition, mass public demonstrations, and repression by the authorities.

Outside the electoral process, an important role was played by private businesses, human rights defenders, journalists, cultural figures, and activists. The Viasna Human Rights Center, the Nasha Niva newspaper, the TUT.by website, independent Internet media, and later Telegram channels became the key channels of information dissemination and public mobilization. Projects to support the Belarusian language, national symbols, historical memory, and European identity kept the spirit of resistance alive and formed an alternative to the state ideology.

Despite the repressive regime and the lack of real political freedoms, by 2020, Belarus already had a stable core of the democratic forces, whose influence on public opinion and mobilization potential were underestimated by the regime.

The 2020 election became a turning point in Belarus's modern history and marked a new phase in the development of the democratic movement. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya entered the race in place of her arrested husband and quickly became a symbol of resistance to dictatorship. On July 16, 2020, a key unification took place. After the Central Election Commission refused to register Viktor Babaryka and Valery Tsapkala, the campaign teams of the three candidates decided to join forces. This gave rise to the women's trio – Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Maria Kalesnikava, and Veranika Tsapkala – which became the face of the united campaign and a symbol of hope for change. This alliance turned the presidential campaign into a mass nationwide movement. Millions of Belarusians, regardless of political views, began to stand together as one.

The Voice (Holas) platform, which collected hundreds of thousands of photos of ballots and protocols of precinct commissions, recorded large-scale falsifications. According to a study by Voice, at least three million people voted for Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, or 56% of voters, taking into account the true turnout. These data, as well as the unprecedented scale of peaceful protests, testified that Belarusians expressed their distrust of the current regime and voted for change.

Peaceful demonstrations throughout the country – from Minsk to the district towns – faced an unprecedented level of violence on the part of the authorities. Repression has covered tens of thousands of people; thousands have received prison terms; independent media, civil society organizations, independent trade unions, and democratic parties have been liquidated; and hundreds of thousands of people engaged in pro-democracy efforts have been forced to leave the country.

Under the new conditions, the democratic movement has changed its structure and geography. Institutions in exile came to the fore: the Office of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya has become the center of international representation; the Coordination Council has become a platform for

dialogue and strategic decisions; the United Transitional Cabinet has become a prototype of the future government. New initiatives have emerged, including the National Anti-Crisis Management, political and cultural resistance projects, as well as diaspora structures and People's Embassies. These organizations maintain contact with Belarusians inside the country and speak with a unified agenda in the international arena.

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya herself has been recognized as a national leader of Belarus. Leaders of democratic countries, including the presidents of France and the USA, the chancellor of Germany, and the prime minister of Canada, have received her at the level of heads of state. Her speeches in the European Parliament, the U.S. Congress, the UN, as well as in parliamentary assemblies and other international institutions have secured her status as an authorized representative of the Belarusian people.

At the same time, inside Belarus, the protests have turned into underground and digital forms: street demonstrations have been replaced by self-organization, informational resistance, and individual acts of sabotage.

The democratic forces in exile have managed to build a representative system, conduct a permanent international dialogue, create initiatives to support political prisoners, and work on reform projects. Their recognition by the EU, the USA, Canada, and many other countries has secured their status as legitimate representatives of the Belarusian people. Over these five years, the once fragmented protest movement has evolved into a system of the democratic forces with a clear political vision, qualified personnel, and institutional stability – ready to take responsibility for transforming Belarus.

Common Values and Vision of the New Belarus

The democratic forces of Belarus are united around key values that reflect the aspiration for freedom, justice, human dignity, and national independence. These values serve as a basis for joint decisions, actions, and strategies on the way to building a new Belarus.

(01) Freedom and democracy.

The democratic forces stand for a country where power belongs to citizens, and freedom of speech, assembly, and political competition are ensured. Fair and transparent elections are considered the most important goal.

(02) Human rights and the rule of law.

It is about protecting the freedoms of every person, stopping repression, releasing political prisoners, establishing independent justice, and respecting international legal standards.

(03) National independence and sovereignty.

The democratic forces emphasize the need for Belarus to withdraw from dependent integration structures, restore control over its borders, and build an independent foreign policy.

(04) Belarusian identity and culture.

The democratic movement promotes the revival of the Belarusian language, national symbols, and cultural traditions. Support for Belarusian culture is considered a part of strengthening the state and the nation.

(05) Respect for the individual and social justice.

The democratic forces strive for a society in which everyone can implement their potential, and the state provides equal opportunities, protection for vulnerable groups, and support for a decent standard of living.

(06) Unity and solidarity.

Despite their differences, the democratic forces are united by a common goal. In view of the political crisis, they emphasize the importance of civil peace, mutual respect, and open dialogue between all groups of Belarusian society.

These values are the moral basis of the struggle for a new Belarus. They set the direction of reforms and unite different initiatives into a single system.

The vision of change is based on the conviction that Belarus can become a modern European democracy with effective institutions, a strong civil society, a free economy, and a foreign policy focused on peace and sovereignty.

The first step on this path will be new free elections. They should be held in conditions of guaranteed security, with international observers, a new composition of election commissions, and fair vote counting. This will provide a legitimate basis for the formation of a democratic government and broad reforms.

The democratic forces seek to restore citizens' trust in the state. There are plans to reform the courts, law enforcement agencies, local government, and the electoral system. A new Constitution is envisioned, enshrining the separation of powers, judicial independence, equal rights, and protection from usurpation of power.

Economic priorities will include freedom of enterprise, property protection, and social welfare. Transparency, fight against corruption, modernization of the public sector, and stimulation of private business will be the basis for sustainable growth. Belarus should return to the global economy by achieving the lifting of sanctions, joining the WTO, and concluding agreements with the EU.

In foreign policy, the course will be peaceful and multi-vector, with an emphasis on integration with Europe. Belarus will withdraw from alliances that limit its sovereignty and stop participating in aggression against its neighbors. A democratic Belarus will respect international law and strive to become a guarantor of regional security.

Society will play a key role in the change. Through dialogue, support of grass-roots initiatives, freedom of speech and independent media, solidarity and civic engagement will be strengthened. National unity will be strengthened through national culture, language, and historical memory. Respect for diversity and non-discrimination will be the foundation of the future Belarus.

This vision is not an abstract dream, but a clear plan, which leaders, experts, and activists have already taken up. The democratic forces are training personnel, creating alternative institutions, conducting international dialogue, and forming the basis of future legislation. When the moment of change comes, Belarus will be ready – morally, institutionally, and professionally.

Cooperation System of the Democratic Forces

The democratic forces of Belarus function as a network structure, with organizations and initiatives working autonomously in their respective field while coordinating actions with a common strategy. The work is based on a system of principles that ensures coherence, mutual respect, and effectiveness in achieving common goals. This system allows a variety of structures, from political parties to civil society organizations and diasporas, to work as a single mechanism.

National leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the Coordination Council, the United Transitional Cabinet, and the Office of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya agreed on [the Protocol for Cooperation](#) at the New Belarus Conference 2024. It outlines the main principles of collaboration between the parties, the procedure for developing joint policies and strategies, coordination of actions, and other key issues.

[Platform 2025](#) marked an important step in strengthening cooperation between the entities of the democratic movement. Seventeen organizations signed the document, affirming their agreement on key political principles and shared goals. The platform reaffirms the commitment to democratic transformation and coordinated action and provides a political framework for

joint work in the coming years. The democratic forces outlined strategic priorities, condemned the regime's involvement in Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and defined areas for further collaboration. In this way, Platform 2025 serves both as a declaration of unity and a practical roadmap for coordinated efforts.

Interaction within the democratic movement is based on several key principles:

(01) Equality and respect.

Every participant is an important part of the common cause. All structures recognize each other's contributions, maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect. Equality among partners is the basic norm.

(02) Coordination of actions.

To achieve common strategic goals, we coordinate and harmonize our actions. This coherence is not supported by bureaucratic procedures, but by constant communication and sharing of plans and initiatives.

(03) Decentralization and division of roles.

The democratic movement is a networked, decentralized structure. This approach allows us to be more flexible and resilient to changing conditions. Each organization plays its unique role based on its capacities and competencies and works autonomously on its own directions while maintaining coordination with the overall strategy.

(04) Mutual accountability and transparency.

Each entity is accountable for its actions and the fulfillment of shared commitments. We are open to criticism and willing to learn from mistakes. Transparency is the norm: parties seek to explain their actions and use secure channels to share information.

(05) Initiative and consultation.

Any of the political actors can initiate the development of a common strategy. This process begins with regular consultations to discuss important issues and develop common positions, allowing the views and suggestions of different actors in the movement to be taken into account.

(06) Working groups.

To prepare a specific document, an authorized working group is created, to which each stakeholder sends its representatives. Profile experts may be involved in the work of the group for more in-depth study of the issue.

(07) Consensus and constructive dialogue.

When making strategically important decisions, we strive to achieve common agreement. Any disagreements that arise are resolved through constructive dialogue and the search for compromise, without allowing problems to escalate. Conflicts are not considered a reason for division.

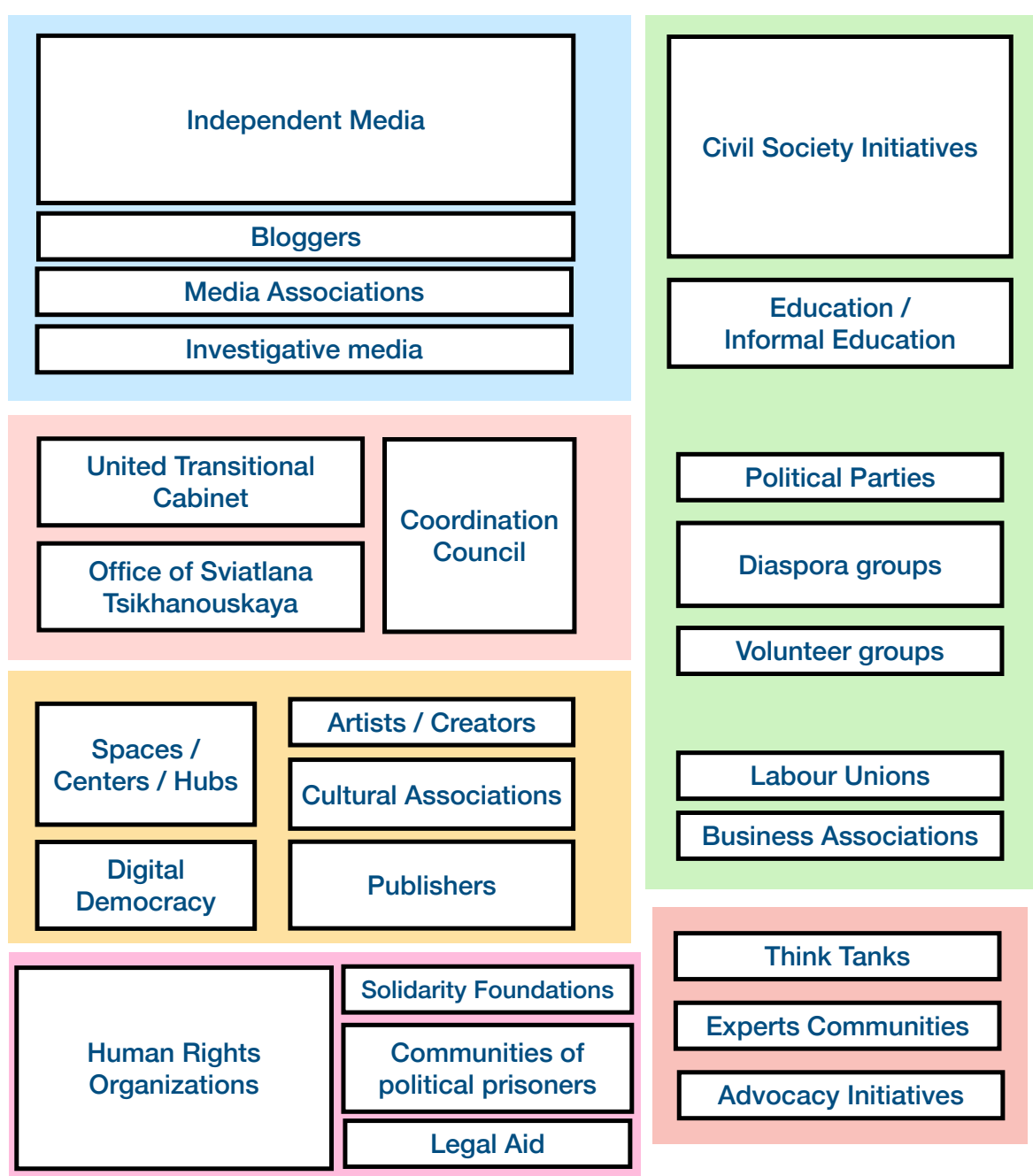
(08) Networking and strategic platforms.

Regular meetings, forums, and other strategic platforms, such as the New Belarus Conference, are an important tool for exchanging views and developing a common vision. These platforms host open discussions that result in declarations and strategic documents that define the

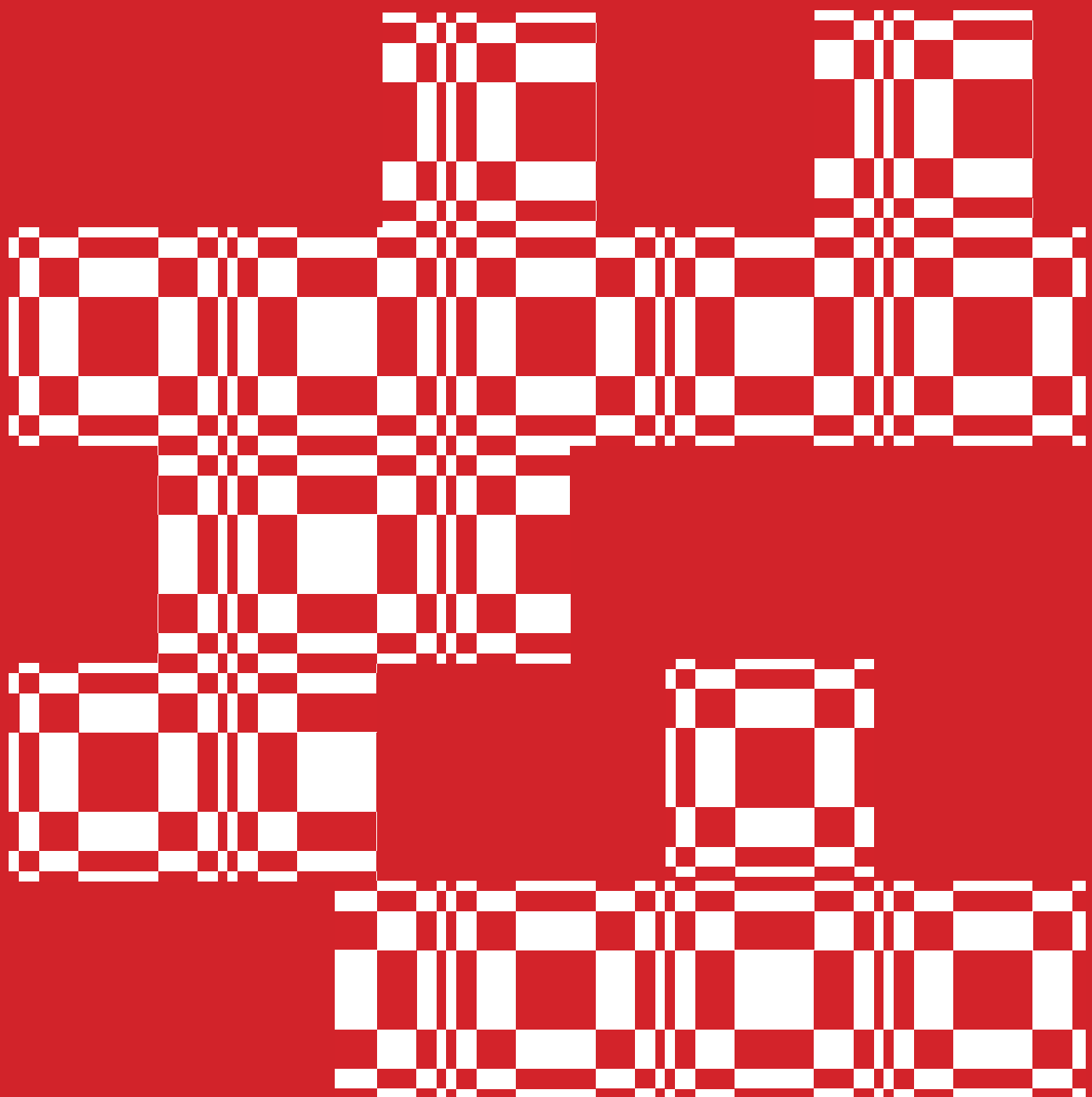
way forward. These events serve as a key basis for discussing issues, developing common positions, and strengthening unity.

As a result, this multifaceted system of cooperation allows the democratic forces of Belarus to work effectively as a single organism while maintaining flexibility and adaptability. The combination of autonomy and coordination, mutual respect and constructive dialogue, and inclusive decision-making creates a solid foundation for achieving common strategic goals and building a new, democratic Belarus.

Ecosystem of the Belarusian Democratic Forces and Civil Society



Structures of the Democratic Forces



Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya came to public attention in 2020 when she took part in the presidential election in Belarus. It was an unexpected decision as she went to the election in place of her husband, who was imprisoned by the authorities. At that time, millions of Belarusians went to the polling stations, hoping that change was possible. People lined up in long lines. According to independent counts, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya received the majority of votes. However, the authorities refused to admit defeat and responded to the will of the people with brutal repression. She had to leave the country.

Despite her exile, she continued to act on behalf of Belarusians. Since then, she has been called the national leader. Her voice is still heard today on behalf of those who want a free, fair, and safe Belarus. She represents Belarus on the international arena, participates in negotiations, talks to world leaders, and helps to form an idea of what the new Belarus should be. She does everything possible so that Belarusians' struggle for freedom would not be forgotten.

Sviatlana has no state power but fulfills an important mission. She tells the world about what is happening in the country and supports Belarusians in exile and those who remain inside the country under the regime's pressure. She is invited to speak in parliaments, at international forums, in large diplomatic organizations. She is listened to because she has the mandate of the people behind her.

Since the events of 2020 began, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya has gone from an ordinary person to a recognized world politician. She has spoken in the European Parliament, in the UN, in the U.S. Congress, and met with the presidents of France, Germany, the U.S., Poland, and other countries. She has received many international awards for her activities. Among them are the Sakharov Prize from the European Parliament and the John McCain Freedom Prize.

But the most important thing about her is not just experience or recognition. It is that she has not backed down. When it seemed that everything was lost, Sviatlana continued to speak on behalf of Belarusians. She acts calmly, responsibly, and with respect for all those who make their choice in favor of change. She became an example for many of how a person, having neither power nor defense, can be responsible for an entire nation.

Until new, free elections are held in Belarus, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya will continue to fulfill her role. She remains the one who holds out hope. For the world, she is the face of the new Belarus. For Belarusians, she is the voice of conscience and movement forward.

Biographical Information

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya was born on September 11, 1982, in the town of Mikashevichi, Brest region. She graduated from school with highest honors, then graduated from the philological faculty of Mazyr State Pedagogical University, specializing in foreign languages (English and German). Worked as a translator, including in charity organizations.

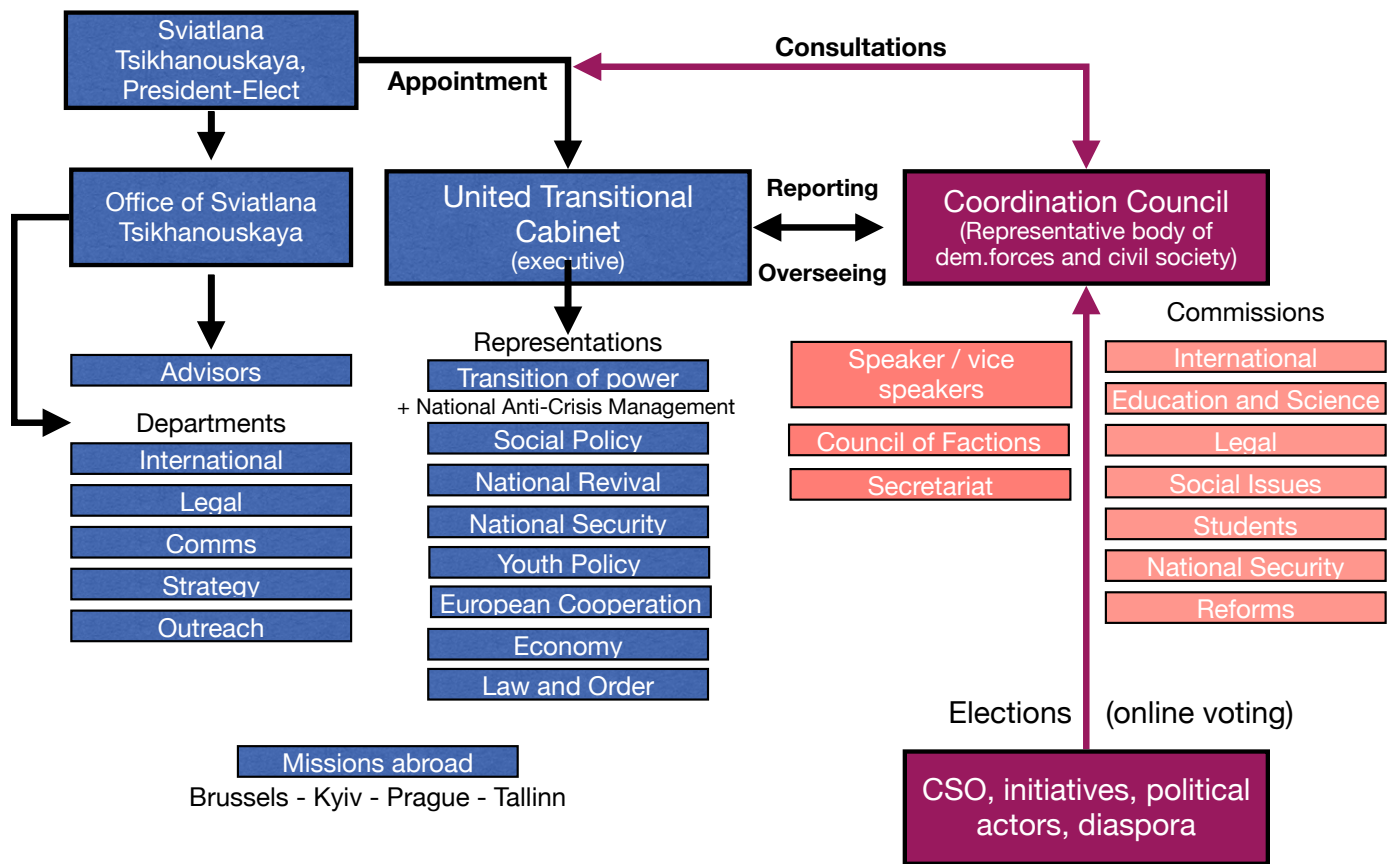
Her political activity began in 2020, when she applied for registration as a presidential candidate after the Central Election Commission refused to register her husband, Siarhei Tsikhanouski. Sviatlana's campaign has united people across the country. According to the Voice platform, at least three million people voted for her, encompassing about 56% of the electorate. After the election, she initiated the creation of the Coordination Council and later the United Transitional Cabinet.

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya is married, raising a son (born 2010) and a daughter (born 2015). Her husband Siarhei was sentenced to 18 years in prison in Belarus. International human rights organizations have recognized him as a prisoner of conscience. In 2025, Siarhei Tsikhanouski was released following a visit to Belarus by U.S. Presidential Envoy Keith Kellogg, who met with Aliaksandr Lukashenka.

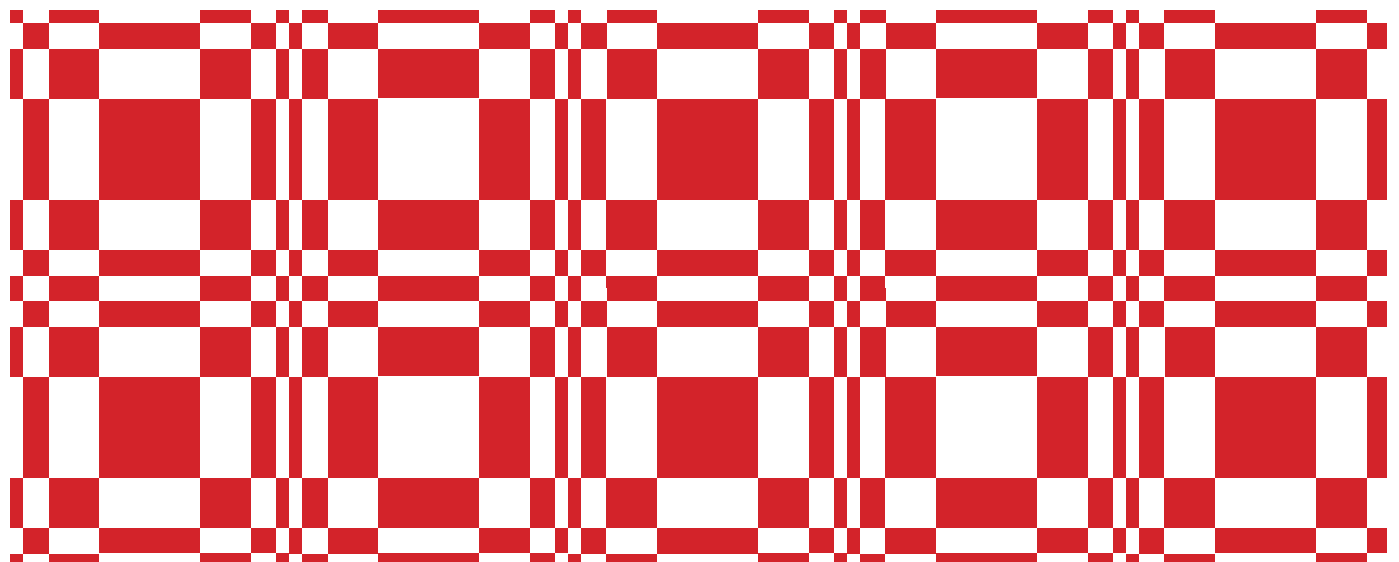


tsikhanouskaya.org

Structure



The structure of the democratic forces is built on the principles of trust, transparency, and mutual accountability. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, as the national leader, appoints representatives to the Cabinet and coordinates these appointments with the Coordination Council. Cabinet representatives carry out their duties through sectoral representations. The Coordination Council is elected through direct elections based on a proportional system. It elects a speaker from among its members and establishes commissions.



Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Office

When Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya won millions of Belarusians' votes, she was faced with the task of continuing her fight for change despite her exile. To do this, she needed a team that could support her activities and ensure permanent representation of the Belarusian people. This is how the political structure known as the Office of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya came into being.

Today, the Office is an organization that helps Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya fulfill her role as a national leader. It represents the interests of Belarusians in the international arena, participates in meetings with state and public leaders, and establishes a dialogue with governments and international organizations. Thanks to this work, the issue of Belarus remains on the agenda all over the world.

The Office's main focus is foreign policy, advocacy, and coordination. It seeks international support for the democratic movement, promotes initiatives to release political prisoners, and facilitates the adoption of sanctions against the regime. The Office actively works to ensure that human rights violations in Belarus do not go unpunished. An important part of this work is the promotion of cases on universal jurisdiction, as well as interaction with other structures of the democratic forces engaged in documenting repression and preparing legal dossiers.

The Office also helps those who are outside the country, in the diaspora. It does so in partnership with the People's Embassies, civic initiatives, and international partners. The center of this work is the protection of Belarusians' rights, their involvement in public processes, and the creation of new forms of participation. The Office also participates in the development of common strategies and policies, bringing together the efforts of different structures so that their actions are coordinated and effective.

Communication remains an important task of the Office. It tells who the democratic forces are, what their goals are, and how they work. It explains to the world why Belarus is not a "problem" but a part of the European reality, where people fight for the same rights and freedoms as in other countries.

Since its establishment, the Office has become a permanent political representative of Belarus in exile. It is registered in Lithuania and based in Vilnius. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's international activities are coordinated from there. There is a team of advisors and coordinators who deal with diplomacy, human rights, relations with the diaspora, and information work. The Office has opened representative offices in Brussels, Czech Republic, Italy, and Ukraine, as well as Estonia and Latvia (joint). Their achievements include the launch of the Strategic Dialogue with the United States and consultations with Canada and the United Kingdom, the signing of the Letter of Intent on Cooperation with the European Parliament, the formation of the Informal Group of Friends of Democratic Belarus in the OSCE, and cooperation with the Alliance of Parliamentary Groups "For a Democratic Belarus," which brings together such groups from 20 countries.

But the most important aspect of the Office's work is not its scale but its purpose. It exists to ensure that Belarusians – wherever they are – still have a voice, that there is someone to speak on their behalf, and that their voice is heard.

Today, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Office is a stable political structure and part of the system of the democratic forces. It does not replace other institutions but helps them coordinate, speak with one voice, and move toward a common goal: a free, peaceful, and democratic Belarus.

tsikhanouskaya.org



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Legal Advisor



Stasia Glinnik
Assistant Director

Coordination Council of Belarus

The Coordination Council is a representative body of the democratic forces and civil society of Belarus. It was established in August 2020 on the initiative of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, in response to the political crisis caused by the falsified presidential election and brutal repression. The main idea was to give Belarusians who do not recognize Lukashenka as the legitimate leader a representative structure that speaks and acts on their behalf.

The Coordination Council is not a parliament in the traditional sense and is not a political party. It is a platform where the democratic forces can discuss issues, make decisions, and represent the will of Belarusian society together. The Council includes people from a wide range of professions and backgrounds: politicians, economists, representatives of culture, youth, and the diaspora. The third composition of the Council was elected in May 2024 through an open online election with voter verification – a key step toward building a new political culture based on transparency, mutual respect, and self-governance. It demonstrated that even in exile, democratic Belarus can organize a fair and transparent process in which everyone has a voice.

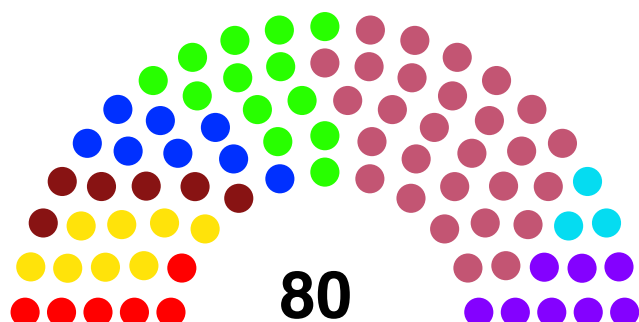
The Council operates through factions and commissions. Factions unite delegates by their views and values, while commissions focus on specific topics: legal affairs, international relations, social policy, reforms, education, and security. In this way, the Coordination Council not only discusses problems but also helps shape the political agenda of future Belarus.

Today, the Coordination Council is one of the key structures of the democratic movement. It cooperates with other institutions, including the United Transitional Cabinet, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya's Office, and the People's Embassies. It takes part in the development of reforms, strategies, and legal initiatives, as well as represents the Belarusian democratic movement in PACE and the Council of Europe. The Council holds hearings, organizes meetings with members of parliaments from different countries, and prepares reports on the situation in Belarus.

Importantly, the Coordination Council exists thanks to people's participation. It is open to new initiatives, dialogue, and cooperation. It is built on the principles of goodwill, mutual respect, and responsibility to the Belarusian people. That is why it serves as a representative institution in a time when legitimate state authority in the country is absent.

www.rada.vision

 Каардынацыйная
Рада



Distribution of mandates in the 3rd convocation of the Coordination Council:

- List "Volya": 6 mandates
- List "European Choice": 8 mandates
- List "Nasha Sprava": 6 mandates
- List "Independent Belarusians": 8 mandates
- List "Prokopyev-Yahorau Bloc": 13 mandates
- List "Latushka Team and Movement 'For Freedom'": 28 mandates
- List "Enough Fear": 3 mandates
- List "Moladzevy nastup": 8 mandates

United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus

When constitutional order is broken and power is seized by those who have no legitimate right to it, a political body is needed, capable of taking responsibility for coordinating actions to overcome the crisis. That body is the United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus (UTCB).

The UTCB was established on August 9, 2022, at the initiative of the national leader, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya. Its goal is to unite the efforts of everyone who seeks democratic change and channel those efforts into concrete action. It is not a symbolic body but a practical one. Its mission is not just to speak, but to act.

The UTCB is a collective executive body, meaning its work is based on joint decisions and shared responsibility. Its members are not just representatives of various sectors – from foreign policy to national security, economy, social affairs, and national revival. They develop strategies, coordinate actions with other structures of the democratic forces, ensure the implementation of decisions, and work to bring Belarus closer to freedom.

The Cabinet's main goal is to prepare and carry out the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy. This includes defending the independence and sovereignty of the country, ending the illegal usurpation of power, freeing political prisoners, and restoring the rule of law and legal order in Belarus.

One of the key areas of the UTCB's work is foreign and international policy. Its representatives maintain dialogue with foreign governments, parliaments, and international organizations. Through the Cabinet, the international community receives accurate information about the situation in Belarus and understands whom and what it is supporting.

The Cabinet operates on the principles of transparency, collegiality, and accountability to Belarusian society. Its members are appointed through a procedure agreed upon with the representative body of the democratic forces – the Coordination Council of Belarus. Decisions are made openly, after discussion, and based on consensus.

Until constitutional order is restored in Belarus and free elections are held, the United Transitional Cabinet remains the institutional framework through which the democratic forces act, speak, and unite. It is one of the key links in the broader system of democratic transformation.

t.me/CabinetBelarus



Аб'яднаны
Пераходны
Кабінет
Беларусі

PRESIDENT-ELECT, HEAD OF THE UTC



Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya

CHIEF OF STAFF



Valery Matskevich

REPRESENTATION ON TRANSITION OF POWER



Deputy Head,
Representative on Transition of power
Pavel Latushka

REPRESENTATION ON EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



Representative,
Uladzimir Astapenka

REPRESENTATION ON NATIONAL REVIVAL



Representative on National Revival
Pavel Barkouski

REPRESENTATION ON NATIONAL SECURITY



Representative on National Security
Vadzim Kabanchuk

REPRESENTATION ON SOCIAL ISSUES



Representative on Social Issues
Volha Zazulinskaya

REPRESENTATION ON YOUTH AND STUDENTS



Representative on Youth
Marharyta Vorykhava

Missions and Representations of the Democratic Forces

To strengthen the voice of Belarusians abroad and to develop systematic international work, the democratic forces have created a network of missions and representative offices in key countries and capitals. These structures are engaged in diplomacy, international advocacy, diaspora support, and coordination with foreign governments and organizations.

The Office of Belarus Democratic Forces in the Czech Republic was established on November 17, 2022, the Day of Struggle for Freedom and Democracy. Its inauguration took place on March 25, 2024, and was attended by the Czech Foreign Minister and the diplomatic corps. The Prague Office conducts a systematic dialogue with the Czech government, coordinates work with the local Belarusian diaspora, organizes educational and cultural events, supports victims of repression, is engaged in information and analytical work, and represents the interests of democratic forces at the Czech and international levels.

The Representative Office of Democratic Belarus in Tallinn acts as a link between the Belarusian democratic movement and the societies of Estonia and Latvia. It provides support to Belarusians who are in these countries, helping them resolve issues related to migration, education, and adaptation. Through constant interaction with the authorities, international organizations, and the media, the Office helps to keep the situation in Belarus in the spotlight. It plays an important role in disseminating reliable information about what is happening, strengthening solidarity and trust between Belarusian society and international partners.

The Mission of Democratic Belarus in Kyiv was established to deepen cooperation with Ukraine, as well as to support Belarusians residing in Ukraine. The Mission fulfills civic and logistical functions, acting in close cooperation with Ukrainian partners.

The Mission of Democratic Belarus in Brussels represents the interests of the democratic forces in the institutions of the European Union and international organizations. It ensures the permanent presence of the Belarusian issue in the European agenda.

Thus, the missions and representations of the democratic forces have become an integral part of foreign policy and civic engagement of the new Belarus. They form a stable network of international support, ensure communication with the diaspora, and conduct a constant dialogue with foreign governments and organizations. Through these structures, the Belarusian people, even being far away from their homeland, maintain their political presence, defend the interests of the country, and contribute to the future of democratic Belarus.



People's Embassies of Belarus

The People's Embassies of Belarus are an international initiative launched by the Belarusian diaspora in 2020 in response to the political crisis and the loss of legitimacy of the Lukashenka regime. The first embassies were opened on December 10, 2020, by the Belarusians Abroad community, with support from national leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and the National Anti-Crisis Management. Today, People's Embassies operate in over 20 countries.

They are independent, volunteer-based structures representing the interests of democratic Belarus abroad. While remaining politically neutral, they coordinate their activities with key democratic actors – the Office of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the United Transitional Cabinet, the Coordination Council, and civil society organizations.

One of the main functions of the People's Embassies is to inform international audiences about the situation in Belarus – political repression, human rights violations, and the documentation crisis affecting Belarusians who have left the country. They establish and maintain contacts with government institutions, media, research and cultural organizations, and also support Belarusians forced to flee the country.

In a situation where Belarusian consulates have stopped issuing passports and other documents abroad, the People's Embassies have become centers for consular and informational assistance. They offer legal consultations, propose alternative solutions for legalizing stay, share best practices, and engage in dialogue with local authorities – resulting in adapted solutions already being adopted in several countries.

One of their key areas of work is cultural diplomacy. The embassies organize exhibitions, film screenings, book presentations, and national holiday events; they create cultural spaces and libraries, helping preserve Belarusian identity and foster solidarity with Belarus.

Another important area is support for families of the repressed. In cooperation with charitable foundations, the embassies organize recovery camps for children and assist families with accommodation, psychological support, and cultural programs.

belarusabroad.org



Народныя амбасады
Беларусі

 Australia
 Austria
 Brazil
 Bulgaria
 Canada
 Cyprus
 Estonia
 France
 Germany
 Israel
 Italy
 Latvia

 Lithuania
 Luxembourg
 Montenegro
 Netherlands
 Poland
 Portugal
 Scotland (consulate)
 Slovenia
 South Korea
 Spain
 Sweden
 United Kingdom

A list of countries where "People's Embassies" of the Belarusian diaspora operate.

National Anti-Crisis Management

The National Anti-Crisis Management (NAM) is a team of professionals who, since 2020, have been working to help Belarus emerge from its political crisis and begin moving toward democracy. They develop a strategic vision, propose concrete steps, and seek ways to put pressure on the regime. Pavel Latushka is the Head of NAM.

One of NAM's key areas of work is sanctions policy. The team advocates for targeted sanctions against those involved in repression and in supporting the dictatorship. Thanks to their efforts, hundreds of officials and companies have been added to sanctions lists. In addition, NAM is actively promoting the issue of international legal accountability. Their lawyers file petitions with international courts, cooperate with human rights defenders, and help document the regime's crimes.

Another important focus is analysis. NAM examines political and economic processes in Belarus, draws conclusions, and offers solutions – both for Belarusian society and for international partners. This work helps identify risks and shape a strategy for the future.

At the same time, NAM runs a major information campaign. They publish materials exposing propaganda, share the truth about what's happening, and support those who continue to resist. The team operates both publicly and behind the scenes, combining the expertise of former officials, diplomats, analysts, and activists. All of this makes NAM one of the key centers of political action outside Belarus.

belarus-nau.org

**НАРОДНАЕ
АНТЫКРЫЗІСНАЕ
УПРАЎЛЕННЕ**

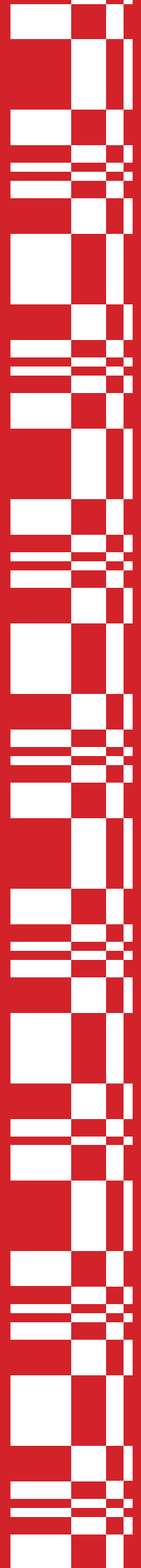
International Cooperation of the Democratic Forces of Belarus

After 2020, the democratic forces of Belarus reached a new level of international engagement. Representing the interests of millions of Belarusians opposing dictatorship, they began systematically building relationships with other countries, international organizations, and political leaders.

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, as the national leader, has become the main voice of democratic Belarus on the global stage. She has met with heads of state, foreign ministers, parliamentarians, and leaders of international organizations around the world. These meetings were not just symbolic gestures of support – they helped shape concrete policies toward the Lukashenka regime and in defense of the Belarusian people.

Thanks to this work, the international community not only condemned the violence and election fraud, but also imposed sanctions on those responsible for the repression. Another important focus has been supporting Belarusians abroad. In the European Union, the United States, Canada, and other countries, the democratic forces have secured humanitarian programs, simplified visa and residency procedures for Belarusians fleeing persecution, and initiatives to support Belarusian students, scholars, journalists, and human rights defenders.

All this demonstrates that Belarus is not an isolated country but part of the European and global community. And the Belarusian people have allies ready to support their path to freedom and democracy.



Strategic Dialogues with States and International Organizations

The democratic forces of Belarus are actively developing strategic cooperation with states and international institutions to ensure sustainable support in the struggle for freedom and democracy. These dialogues are based on shared values: human rights, the rule of law, a democratic future for Belarus, and the protection of its sovereignty.

European Union

The main platform for engagement with the EU is the Consultative Group, which meets twice a year. Participants include representatives of the European External Action Service and the European Commission, the United Transitional Cabinet, the Coordination Council, and civil society. The group addresses a wide range of topics, from human rights and the release of political prisoners to institutional dialogue and plans for democratic transition. Notably, the European Union has confirmed its readiness to implement a €3 billion Support Plan for Democratic Belarus once democratic reforms begin. Between sessions, specialized working groups ensure ongoing cooperation and coordination.

European Parliament

In May 2024, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which formally recognized the Belarusian democratic forces as legitimate partners. The agreement ensures their participation in key parliamentary events, including Euronest, and strengthens their institutional presence within the EU. It affirms Belarus's pro-European orientation and amplifies the voice of the democratic movement in shaping European policy. Moreover, Belarus' democratic forces contribute to European Parliament reports and resolutions on Belarus and regularly initiate events and hearings in Parliament. The European Parliament has repeatedly emphasized the need to include Belarusian interests in programs such as Erasmus+, EU4Culture, Horizon Europe, and initiatives in the fields of reform, environmental protection, digitalization, and education.

USA

The Strategic Dialogue with the United States began in December 2023 in Washington and continued in December 2024 in Vilnius. The key focus areas include support for political prisoners, documentation of regime crimes, strengthening sanctions, development of democratic institutions, sovereignty, and geopolitical security. The dialogue also addresses the preservation of Belarusian cultural identity, educational opportunities for youth and entrepreneurs, and the protection of independent media.

Canada

Since late 2024, Strategic Consultations have been taking place between Canada and the democratic forces of Belarus. The dialogue centers on human rights, the rule of law, support for civil society, and democratic transition. Issues discussed include cases of torture, incommunicado detention, politically motivated trials, and the release of political prisoners. Topics also include international accountability, sanctions, preparations for free elections, governance reforms, and civic participation. The dialogue further covers countering disinformation, supporting independent media, and integrating Belarusian democratic structures into international networks.

United Kingdom

Dialogue with the United Kingdom was officially launched in March 2025. Strategic Consultations between the democratic forces of Belarus and the UK cover a broad range of topics: the release of political prisoners, countering repression, participation in international forums, institutional reforms and the drafting of a new Constitution, educational exchanges and engagement with the diaspora, support for independent media and the fight against disinformation, legal accountability for regime crimes, coordination in international policy, and humanitarian and financial initiatives, including potential participation in international support foundations for victims of repression.

Council of Europe

In March 2025, representatives of the democratic forces of Belarus participated for the first time in a session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. Belarusian delegates were granted the right to speak and access to political group work. In May 2025, with the Council of Europe's support, a forum of exiled Belarusian journalists took place, providing an important space to discuss press freedom, safety, and solidarity. That same year, the position of PACE General Rapporteur for a Democratic Belarus was established to monitor the situation and support democratic institutions.

In 2024, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution 2530, recognizing the repression in Belarus as potential crimes against humanity and expressing support for international legal accountability mechanisms. The Council of Europe calls on member states to support the safe stay, preservation of cultural heritage, and legal protection of Belarusians abroad.

Euronest Parliamentary Assembly

Although the National Assembly of Belarus (official parliament) was excluded from Euronest due to the lack of free and fair elections, representatives of the democratic forces – such as the United Transitional Cabinet and the Coordination Council – participate in Euronest sessions and working groups as the Belarusian delegation. This arrangement ensures the ongoing representation of democratic Belarus in European and regional political dialogues. It helps keep Belarus a priority on the EU agenda and promotes sustained engagement with lawmakers from both the EU and Eastern Partnership countries. Euronest also provides a vital channel for Belarusian democratic forces to engage directly with parliamentarians from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

The democratic forces of Belarus are actively developing strategic cooperation with states and international institutions to ensure sustainable support in the struggle for freedom and democracy. These dialogues are based on shared values: human rights, the rule of law, a democratic future for Belarus, and the protection of its sovereignty.

Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

Belarus' democratic forces and civil society organizations actively participate in the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. They use this platform to advance democracy, defend human rights, and support European integration. The Belarusian National Platform leads key initiatives, participates in working groups, and ensures that Belarus-related issues are consistently represented in the Forum's agenda.

These international dialogues and alliances have become more than just a form of support – they are real instruments of pressure on the regime, a channel for the voice of Belarusians, and a platform for preparing a democratic future.

Alliance of Parliamentary Groups “For a Democratic Belarus”

The Alliance of Parliamentary Groups “For a Democratic Belarus” is a unique international solidarity network with the people of Belarus. It brings together parliamentary groups established in 20 countries: the United Kingdom, Georgia, Canada, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, the United States, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Sweden, France, Germany, Iceland, Estonia, Latvia, Italy, Norway, Luxembourg, Ireland, and Finland. New groups are currently being formed in Spain, Albania, Portugal, Kosovo, and Romania. These groups are united by a common goal – to support the Belarusian struggle for freedom, assist civil society, and increase international pressure on the Lukashenka regime.

The process of creating the alliance began on March 1, 2023, in the European Parliament. On November 7, 2023, it was officially established in Berlin as a coordinating platform. Today, the alliance includes not only national parliamentary groups but also the European Parliament’s delegation on Belarus. In total, more than 300 members of parliament openly stand against dictatorship and are ready to take action.

For the democratic forces of Belarus, this is more than symbolic support. The alliance helps keep the Belarusian issue on the agenda in parliaments across Europe and the world. Thanks to its members, resolutions are adopted condemning repression, demanding the release of political prisoners, and supporting independent media and human rights defenders. Over twenty such resolutions have been adopted in the past year alone.

MPs from alliance countries provide direct assistance to Belarusians. Some become “godparents” of political prisoners, taking personal patronage over a specific case, regularly raising it during parliamentary hearings, and supporting the prisoners’ families. Laws are discussed and adopted to help victims of repression, support Belarusians abroad, and fund cultural and educational initiatives.

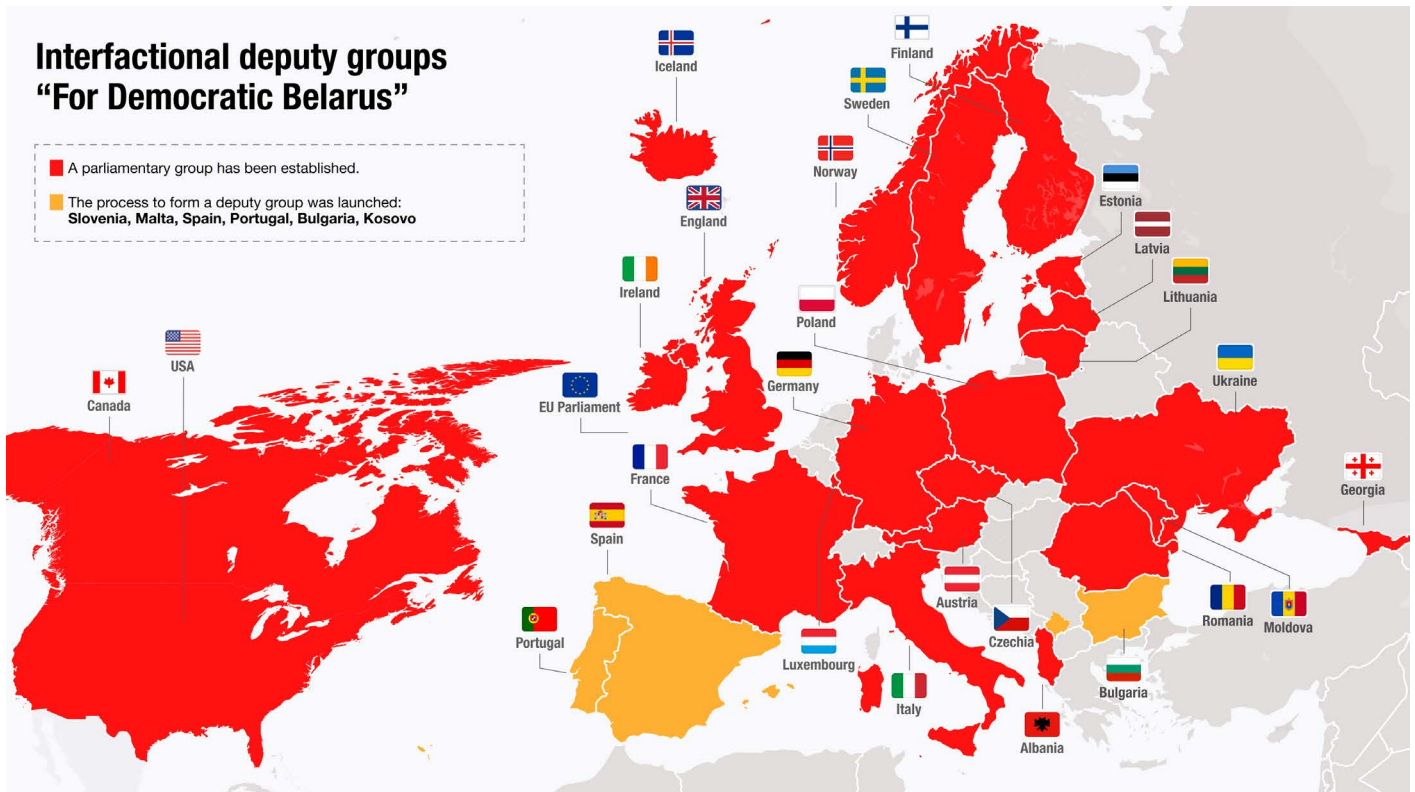
The alliance also plays a key role in preparing future leaders of democratic Belarus. Young Belarusians take part in internships in allied parliaments, learning how democratic institutions work and gaining valuable experience for the transitional period.

In addition, the alliance cooperates with international organizations such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the OSCE, the European Parliament, and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. This enables the democratic forces to voice their positions on official platforms, defend the interests of Belarus, and influence decision-making.

Importantly, members of the alliance are involved in developing the legal framework for a new Belarus. They have already supported work on a draft Constitution and accompanying legislation, providing expert legal assessments and sharing international experience.

Thus, the Alliance of Parliamentary Groups “For a Democratic Belarus” is more than a political platform. It is an effective tool of support that helps Belarusians not only with statements but with practical actions. It is a strong link in the international coalition for a free and democratic Belarus.

A map showing the countries with parliamentary groups for democratic Belarus.”



Resolutions and Legal Mechanisms

Following the 2020 election, Belarus became a focus of attention for international organizations, parliaments, and human rights bodies. Hundreds of documents – including [resolutions](#), reports, and statements – have documented the scale of repression, widespread human rights violations, and the Lukashenka regime's involvement in the aggression against Ukraine. The democratic forces of Belarus are working systematically with international partners to give these documents both political and legal weight.

Since 2020, the UN Human Rights Council has adopted at least six resolutions on the situation in Belarus, condemning mass arrests, torture, the forced landing of civilian aircraft, and the lack of investigations into crimes. In 2024, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights recognized that the regime's actions may constitute crimes against humanity. Similar conclusions were previously made in UN resolutions and reports by the Special Rapporteur.

The Council of Europe has consistently supported the democratic forces of Belarus. In Resolution 2530 (2024), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) emphasized the systematic and large-scale nature of the repression, qualifying it as crimes against humanity and calling for international accountability, including the establishment of special tribunals. Resolution 2541 (2024) also addresses political repression against Belarusians who oppose the war and calls for sanctions.

In its resolutions, the European Parliament emphasizes the need to hold perpetrators accountable through the use of universal jurisdiction, supports the initiative to launch an international tribunal for Belarus, and actively monitors the situation of political prisoners. Between 2020 and 2024, more than 15 resolutions were adopted addressing repression, political imprisonment, the regime's involvement in the war against Ukraine, and the dismantling of civil society.

The OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly invoked the Moscow Mechanism to document human rights violations and confirmed that the 2020 elections were neither free nor fair. The Baltic and Nordic countries, along with other partners, have issued dozens of statements in support of Belarusians and have imposed sanctions on those responsible for repression.

In June 2024, a key international conference was held in Luxembourg, gathering representatives of national parliaments from over twenty countries, the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, international organizations, and Belarus' democratic structures and civil society. The conference was prompted by a PACE report titled "Addressing the Specific Challenges Faced by the Belarusians in Exile." Its outcome was a detailed action plan – the [Luxembourg Solutions](#) – which offers national parliaments concrete steps to support Belarusians who fled the country due to repression.

As a result of the democratic forces' efforts and international solidarity, a substantial legal and political framework has emerged that recognizes the gravity of the Lukashenka regime's crimes. These resolutions serve as the foundation for future international proceedings aimed at accountability, support for victims, and the restoration of justice.

Belarus' Democratic Parties

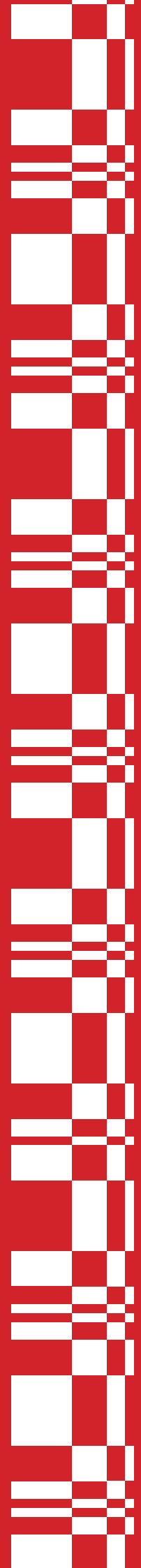
Political parties have long sought to play an important role in the life of Belarusian society. They helped people come together, discuss the country's future, participate in elections, and promote alternative ideas. The BPF Party, the United Civic Party, the Belarusian Social Democratic Party (*Hramada*), the Christian Democrats, the Greens, and others spent decades campaigning, advocating for reforms and people's rights, and cooperating with the international community.

After the events of 2020, political parties came under heavy pressure. All parties opposed to the authoritarian regime were dissolved by court decisions controlled by the authorities. New parties are no longer being registered. However, this does not mean that political life has come to a halt. Parties continue to exist as communities of like-minded people. They preserve political culture, develop policy platforms, train future leaders, and engage in civic work.

Even without official status, democratic parties continue to play an important role. They represent different perspectives and values, discuss paths for reform, prepare future candidates, and teach people the skills of political dialogue. Democratic parties will be able to take on the responsibility of representing citizens when Belarus begins its transition to democracy.

To be effective, parties are learning to work together. Several leading parties have united in the Political Party Community ("The Nine"). It serves as a platform for regular coordination, joint statements, and aligned positions. As a result, Belarus' political forces act not in isolation but collectively – strengthening one another.

Thus, despite repression, parties remain a vital part of the democratic movement. Their work is a contribution to the future of the country – a future with space for diverse voices, fair elections, and honest politics.



Belarusian Popular Front (BPF Party)

The Belarusian Popular Front is one of the first and most famous political forces of independent Belarus. It appeared as a movement in 1988, when democratic changes began in the country. Belarus then had hope that it could free itself from the Soviet Union and become free and independent.

Following the 1990 parliamentary election, a faction known as the BPF opposition was formed in the Supreme Council. It played a significant role in the process of democratization and national revival, including the adoption of the parliamentary decision on Belarus's independence. In 1993, the BPF Party was established on the basis of the Movement. The leader of both the Movement and the Party was Zianon Pazniak.

In the late 1990s, during a party congress, Vincuk Viačorka was elected as the BPF leader. After that, Zianon Pazniak and his supporters established a separate party – the Conservative Christian Party – BPF. In 2023, the authorities officially dissolved both BPF parties. Despite this, BPF supporters continue their work. Some operate from abroad, while others remain underground within the country. For many Belarusians, the BPF remains a symbol of the struggle for freedom, national culture, and independence.

Website (CCP–BPF):

narodnaja-partyja.org

**The website of the BPF Party was unavailable at the time of publication.*

United Civic Party (UCP)

The United Civic Party (UCP) is one of the oldest democratic political forces in Belarus. It traces its history back to 1990, when the United Democratic Party was established. In its current form, the party was established in 1995 through the merger of the United Democratic Party of Belarus, the Civic Party, and part of the People's Accord Party. From its earliest days, the party has consistently advocated for the establishment of the rule of law and a free-market economy in Belarus.

Today, the UCP remains a carrier of liberal-conservative values in Belarusian politics. Its activists engage in the work of democratic structures, develop reform plans, train new politicians, and maintain ties with international partners. The party consistently condemns the actions of the regime, including election fraud and violence against peaceful protesters. The UCP believes that in the future, it will be able to take part in free elections and represent the interests of Belarusians in a new system of government based on justice, freedom, and the rule of law.

ucpb.eu

Belarusian Social Democratic Party (Hramada) – BSDP(H)

The Belarusian Social Democratic Party (Hramada), or BSDP(H), is a party with a long history and deep roots in the Belarusian national movement. It traces its origins to the Belarusian Socialist Hramada of the early 20th century – the first political party of Belarus, founded in 1903. The modern BSDP(H) was officially registered in 1991 and has since gone through mergers, splits, and political repression, but has always remained true to its core principles: social justice, democracy, and Belarusian national revival.

The party's ideology remains social-democratic, but with a distinct Belarusian national component. It combines the ideas of social equality, market economy, and national identity. BSDP(H) supports Belarus's integration into Europe and promotes cultural revival, making it an important part of the country's democratic movement.

Despite bans and pressure, BSDP(H) remains a voice for social justice and democratic values – even when that voice must speak from exile.

[@Socialdemocratschannel](https://t.me/Socialdemocratschannel)

Narodnaya Hramada Party

The leader of the party is Mikalai Statkevich – a politician whose fate has become a symbol of resistance to authoritarianism. After the 2010 presidential election, he was arrested and imprisoned, and in 2020, he was detained again and sentenced to 14 years in prison. Today, he remains a political prisoner, while his associates coordinate the party's activities.

Narodnaya Hramada advocates for a democratic, social, and rule-of-law-based Belarus, grounded in the principles of social justice, popular sovereignty, and independence. At the core of its platform are the protection of workers' rights, the development of civil society, and the guarantee of free elections. The party upholds the idea of fair wealth distribution, social support for vulnerable groups, and the inadmissibility of labor exploitation. It calls for real reforms, including a return to a parliamentary form of government, the expansion of local self-governance, and a stronger role for trade unions. In addition, Narodnaya Hramada emphasizes the importance of preserving national identity, protecting the Belarusian language and culture, and pursuing a peaceful foreign policy based on neutrality and good neighborliness.

The motto of the party is *Freedom, Justice, Solidarity*. These words express its aspiration for a free, fair, and democratic Belarus.

hramada.org

Belarusian Green Party

The Belarusian Green Party was founded in the spring of 1994 amid growing public concern about environmental threats that had intensified after the Chernobyl disaster. Its creation was a logical step for those who sought to combine the fight for a clean environment with social and democratic change in the country. The people who gathered around the party believed that caring for the environment was not only the responsibility of scientists but also a vital part of the political agenda.

The story of the Greens is an example of how concern for the environment, human rights, and democratic values can be united in a single political program. Although the party is now banned in Belarus, its ideas remain relevant and are supported by many both inside the country and abroad. The Belarusian Green Party remains an important part of the country's democratic landscape – its principles, actions, and solidarity with other pro-freedom forces testify to the resilience and foresight of the green movement.

belgreens.net

Belarusian Christian Democracy (BCD)

The Belarusian Christian Democracy (BCD) is a political movement that brings together both religious and secular people who believe that politics should be based on Christian values and care for human beings. The party emerged in the early 2000s, when practicing believers – including Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox Christians – began to fight for true protection of freedom of conscience and religion.

The BCD's ideas are simple and resonate with many: protecting human dignity, supporting families, ensuring Belarusian independence, and promoting honest politics. The party opposes dictatorship and the Soviet legacy, and supports democracy and a European path. BCD believes that Belarus should have one state language – Belarusian – and that people of all faiths should be guaranteed religious freedom. It proposes to reform state policies in education, the economy, healthcare, and local governance so that these systems serve the people, not those in power.

Today, despite bans and repression, BCD remains a prominent voice in Belarusian politics. It exists as a grassroots movement, seeks peaceful change, and holds the hope that Belarus will become a free, just, and compassionate country for all its citizens.

bchd.info

Movement “For Freedom”

The Movement “For Freedom” emerged in 2006 as a response to the challenges of the time – when Belarus needed a new political force capable of uniting those who sought change. It was founded by Aliaksandr Milinkevich, a former presidential candidate representing the united opposition, who became a symbol of peaceful struggle for democracy. From the outset, the movement spoke the language of European values: freedom, human rights, fair elections, Belarusian independence, and a commitment to European integration.

Today, its activists remain engaged in educational, human rights, and socio-political activities, including cooperation with other democratic forces of Belarus.

“For Freedom” has always championed gradual change, respect for the individual, and progress through dialogue. Even under repression, its supporters continue to believe in a European future for Belarus – free, independent, and dignified.

[Рух “За Свабоду”](#)

Razam Party

The Razam (Together) Party is a civic initiative that emerged in the summer of 2020 on the wave of mass desire for change. It was announced by Viktar Babaryka, a banker who became a symbol of hope for fair elections and renewal of power.

The basic idea of the party is simple: we are together, so we are stronger. The people who have united around Razam believe in Belarus as a free, safe, and fair country. They want the state to serve the people, and not vice versa. They want the authorities to respect the opinion of citizens, to observe the laws, not to lie, and not to organize repressions.

Razam calls itself a party of a new type. It means fewer bosses, more collective decisions. The party’s team consists of IT specialists, scientists, managers, activists, and simply indifferent Belarusians. Even under pressure and in exile, they have not given up and continue to fight together.

[vmeste.party](#)

Nasha Partiya

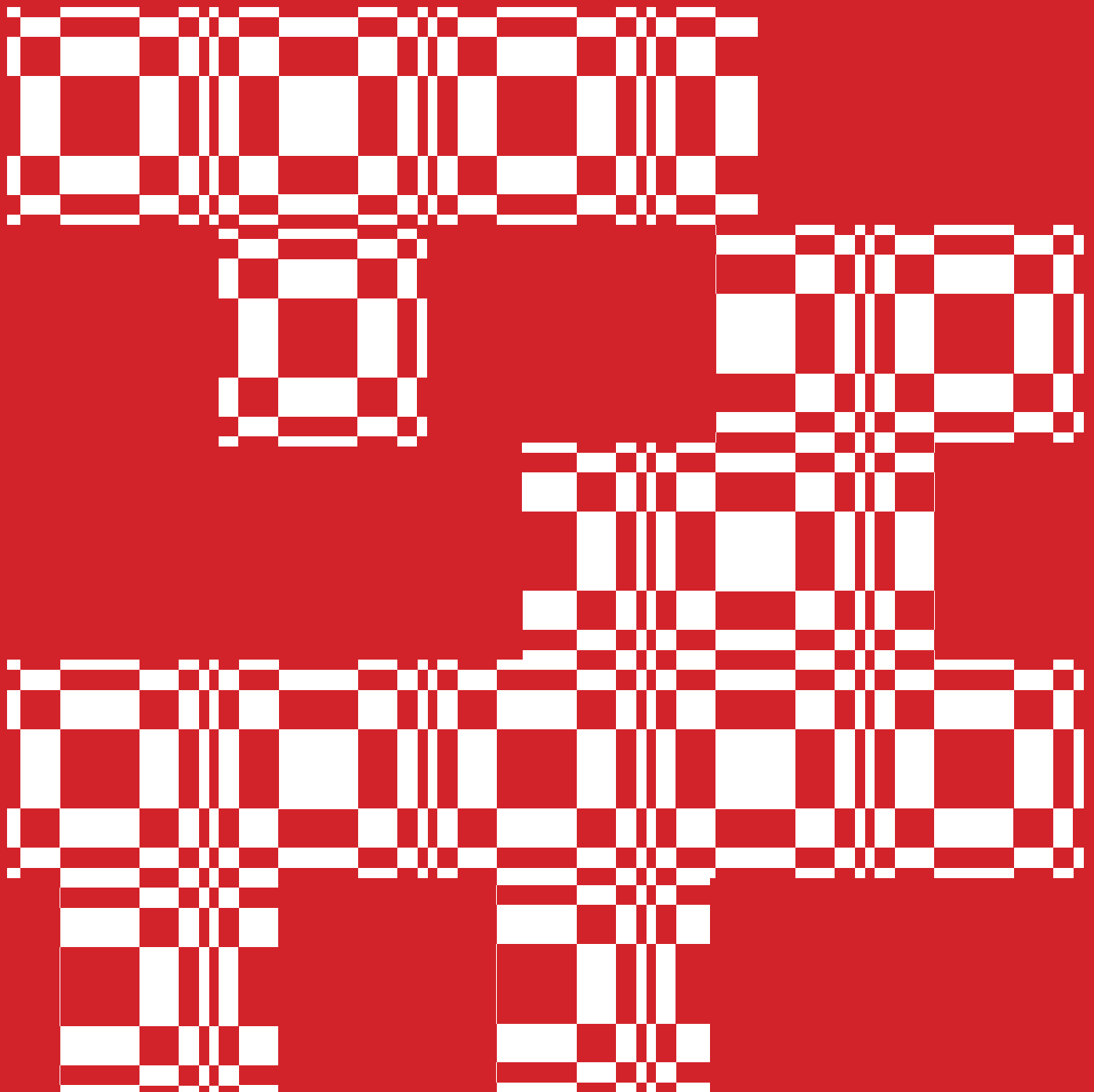
Nasha Partiya (Our Party) is one of the youngest initiatives on the Belarusian political scene. It was founded in 2020 by a group of civic activists.

At the core of the party's ideology lies a simple and clear principle: the authorities must be accountable to the people. Citizens – not officials – should decide how the country develops. Nasha Partiya advocates for local residents to elect their own mayors, for transparent budget processes, and for courts and law enforcement agencies to serve society rather than the state. Its supporters believe that Belarus should be a country people want to stay in – not leave in search of a better life, safety, or decent work.

Nasha Partiya remains a symbol of political participation and an attempt to peacefully reform the system. It represents a vision of Belarus's future without revolution, but with strong civic engagement.

nashapartiya.b24site.online

Key Campaigns and Priorities



Support for Political Prisoners and the Fight for Their Release

Since the mass repression that began in Belarus in 2020, over 65,000 people have been detained on political grounds. As of 2025, at least 1,200 remain behind bars. They were convicted for participating in protests, for their civic stance, for independent journalism, which makes them prisoners of conscience. The scale of the repression has triggered an unprecedented mobilization of Belarusian society.

Dozens of initiatives provide daily assistance to prisoners and their families. DissidentBY delivers letters, food, and money to prisons and runs a patronage program for political prisoners. BYSOL and BY_help offer financial aid, support relocation, and fund vacations for prisoners' children. Viasna and other human rights groups maintain humanitarian lists, offer legal assistance, and document torture. Special attention is paid to women in prisons: the Palitvyazynka project and women's funds support vulnerable groups. In 2024, the International Humanitarian Fund for Victims of Repression was launched with backing from Norway and Sweden.

Former prisoners have access to medical and psychological programs. BY_help organizes safe shelters and therapy and covers treatment costs. The Volnyja project helps former prisoners adapt to life after incarceration. Psychological support is provided by dozens of volunteer initiatives – from Daver to the Free Belarus Center.

The Office of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and the United Transitional Cabinet have made the release of political prisoners a top priority. They advocate for sanctions against judges and security officials and conduct negotiations with the EU, U.S., UK, and the UN. Thanks to diplomatic pressure, political prisoners were released in 2025, including RFE/RL journalist Andrei Kuznechyk, Elena Maushuk – a mother of many children from Pinsk, and U.S. citizen Mikalai Shuhayeu.

When every day of imprisonment is a trial, the efforts of the democratic forces serve as a lifeline for hundreds. *“As long as even one person remains behind bars, the fight continues,”* Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya has stressed. Freedom for all political prisoners is not just a slogan – it is a commitment and a goal around which the Belarusian democratic movement unites.

Advancing Sanctions Pressure on the Regime

Since 2020, the democratic forces of Belarus have pushed for sustained and systematic sanctions pressure on the Lukashenka regime as a key tool of international influence. The foundation of the sanctions strategy has been efforts to delegitimize the 2020 election and, by extension, the entire regime. Following statements from democratic leaders, including Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the EU, U.S., Canada, UK, and others refused to recognize Lukashenka as president and imposed personal

sanctions on dozens of officials, law enforcement officers, judges, and propagandists.

By fall 2020, the EU had sanctioned the first 55 individuals, including Aliaksandr Lukashenka, his son Viktor Lukashenka, Interior Minister Yury Karayeu, and members of the Central Election Commission. Today, more than 300 officials and around 200 entities are included in sanctions lists from the EU, US, UK, and other countries. Travel is restricted, assets are frozen, and export revenues are blocked.

Following the Ryanair plane hijacking in 2021, the orchestrated migration crisis, and Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine via Belarusian territory, sanctions expanded from personal to sectoral. Between 2020 and 2025, the EU, U.S., and allies adopted more than eight sanctions packages, reflecting a growingly tough stance on the regime.

A central element of the democratic forces' efforts has been the development of sanction dossiers. The National Anti-Crisis Management has prepared over 500 personalized files, which formed the basis for sanctions imposed by Poland and the EU against hundreds of individuals – from KGB officers to prosecutors and judges. Efforts have also focused on aligning Belarus-related sanctions with anti-Russian measures: in 2023–2024, rules were introduced to prevent sanctions circumvention via Belarus.

Although sanctions have not led to rapid regime change, they have weakened the regime's resources, narrowed its room for maneuver, and cemented its international isolation. According to democratic leaders, sanctions remain the most important tool of pressure until free elections are held. Thus, advancing sanctions pressure remains a strategic priority, as the democratic forces continue to push for new sanctions packages and for closing loopholes in enforcement.

Accountability

In response to mass falsifications and repression, the democratic forces of Belarus have made it their mission to achieve justice – to hold accountable all those involved in the crimes of the regime. Despite the closed and repressive nature of the system, over the past five years, a legal and evidentiary foundation has been built that can ensure accountability both at the international level and, in the future, in a democratic Belarus.

One of the first steps was the systematic and professional documentation of human rights violations. Since 2021, the International Accountability Platform for Belarus (IAPB) – launched by DIGNITY, REDRESS, Viasna, and the International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus – has collected nearly 30,000 documents and conducted over 2,600 interviews with victims.

Based on the principle of universal jurisdiction, criminal cases against Belarusian security officials have been initiated in Lithuania, Germany, Switzerland, and Poland. These countries accept complaints from victims, even if the crimes were committed outside their jurisdictions. A particularly high-profile case was that of Yury Harauski, a former special forces officer of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, accused of participating in the killings of opposition figures in 1999. It marked the first time a representative of the Lukashenka regime stood trial in Europe.

Once the regime falls, Belarus will need to establish transitional justice mechanisms – from amnesty for the repentant to national or hybrid tribunals. Hundreds of thousands of pieces of evidence – from victims' testimonies to the names of individual perpetrators – will form the foundation of these processes. The world has seen that even under dictatorship, it is possible to fight for justice.

Solidarity Campaigns

Since 2020, solidarity with the Belarusian democratic movement has become not only a response to repression but also a lasting social phenomenon both inside the country and abroad. Across Belarus – in cities and villages – people formed “human chains of solidarity,” especially women dressed in white and carrying flowers, showing unity in the face of violence. At the same time, workers, students, and medical professionals organized local actions of mutual support, even under threat of repression. This internal wave of solidarity was amplified by the diaspora: rallies, car rallies, exhibitions, and flash mobs were held in dozens of countries. One of the largest events was the 30-kilometer human chain from Vilnius to the Belarusian border – the Baltic Way to Freedom for Belarus.

The #WeStandBYyou campaign, launched by Libereco, has enabled hundreds of European MPs to publicly take symbolic patronage over political prisoners (become their “godparents”), while cultural initiatives like #StandWithBelarus united the global creative community. Initiatives such as Politzek.me, Volnyja Pashtouki (Freedom Postcards), and charitable collections for the children and families of prisoners have formed a civic calendar of memory and resistance.

Certain commemorative dates have taken on special significance as symbols of solidarity and reminders of the struggle.

March 25

– Freedom Day, the historical date of the Belarusian Democratic Republic’s proclamation, is the day when Belarusians worldwide demonstrate their commitment to independence and democracy.

April 26

– Chornobyl Way, commemorating the Chornobyl disaster, is a day that highlights the value of life, state responsibility, and the need for environmental and social justice.

May 21

– International Day of Solidarity with Political Prisoners in Belarus marks the anniversary of the death of political prisoner Vitold Ashurak behind bars. It is a day of actions drawing attention to the plight of political prisoners and demanding their release.

November 12

– International Day of Solidarity with Belarus. On this day in 2020, Raman Bandarenka died after being detained for taking part in a street protest. He became a symbol of the courage and sacrifice of peaceful Belarusians.

These dates bring together the concerned and create a strong emotional fabric of solidarity – from individual actions to a national movement.

All these campaigns keep Belarus on the international agenda, inspire continued resistance, and lay the groundwork for future national consolidation and renewal.

Civic Resistance

Since 2020, Belarus has experienced a unique historical moment of mass civic resistance. What began as peaceful protests has evolved into a sustained movement – both within the country and in exile. Despite unprecedented repression, tens of thousands of detentions, hundreds of political prisoners, and the forced emigration of leaders, Belarusian society has not stopped fighting for freedom. Only the forms and scale of this struggle have changed.

The peak of the protests came after the fraudulent presidential elections on August 9, 2020. Hundreds of thousands of people across the country took to the streets, demanding fair elections, an end to violence, and the release of political prisoners. Unprecedented events unfolded: women's marches, student demonstrations, factory strikes, and "chains of solidarity" in residential neighborhoods. A courtyard in Minsk on Charviakova Street, dubbed the "Square of Changes," became a symbol of grassroots organization and creativity – and the site of tragedy: it was there that Raman Bandarenka was abducted and fatally beaten. His last words, "I'm going out," became a symbol of resistance, and he himself – a national hero.

After a wave of mass arrests and brutal violence, the authorities effectively destroyed open forms of protest. But resistance did not vanish – it adapted. Dozens of local and digital initiatives emerged: from the Cyber Partisans, who hacked databases of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Belarusian Railway, to anonymous artists and volunteers who distribute symbols or support the families of prisoners.

A distinctive form of resistance became the sabotage movement. In 2022, after Russia launched its war against Ukraine from Belarusian territory, partisans began disrupting military logistics – dozens of acts of sabotage on railways hampered troop movements. These acts became part of the so-called "rail war."

Today, despite fear and repression, civic resistance continues – through information sharing, helping victims, anonymous networks, and local initiatives. Belarusians' self-awareness has changed: for the first time, millions have felt like citizens rather than subjects. This is no longer just a protest against the regime – it is the emergence of the Belarusian nation.

Strengthening Identity and National Culture

Systematic efforts to revive cultural identity, historical memory, and language have become a response to aggressive Russification and ideological pressure from the regime. The strengthening of national culture has turned into a separate front of civic resistance – both inside the country and in exile.

A key element has been the return to Belarusian national symbols – the white-red-white flag, the Pahonia coat of arms, and the *Long Live Belarus!* slogan. Used by protesters, these symbols have been declared "extremist" by the authorities, but they continue to carry moral and historical weight. They form the basis of art projects, exhibitions, festivals, books, and songs, becoming markers of national resistance to the regime.

Promoting and protecting the Belarusian language became a priority. Before being shut down, the [Mova Nanova](#) language courses attracted thousands of participants in cities across Belarus. In exile, cultural schools, language circles, and educational projects continue to operate, teaching Belarusian as a living, modern language. Online courses, podcasts, and YouTube channels have been launched for Belarusians still inside the country.

Independent publishers such as [Janushkevich](#) and Lohvinau published books in Belarusian until they were forced to cease operations inside the country. Janushkevich has continued publishing in Poland since 2022.

People independently celebrate Kupalle, Freedom Day, and other important dates, preserving their connection to tradition and history.

In exile – especially in Lithuania, Poland, and Georgia – new cultural centers have emerged: Belarusian cultural houses, hubs, museums, children's clubs, theaters, bookstores, and cafes. These have become not only spaces for adaptation, but also continuations of Belarusian cultural traditions. Belarusian musicians, visual artists, and theater groups continue their work in exile – releasing albums, going on tour, and creating installations where Belarus remains the central theme. Belarus Abroad has become a space for preserving culture and expressing a new identity.

Belarusian culture is not only a heritage – it is a weapon in the struggle for freedom. Today, its development is an act of resistance. National identity, language, history, and creativity have become the glue that unites Belarusians both inside and outside the country, forming the foundation of a future democratic Belarus.

Positive Alternative

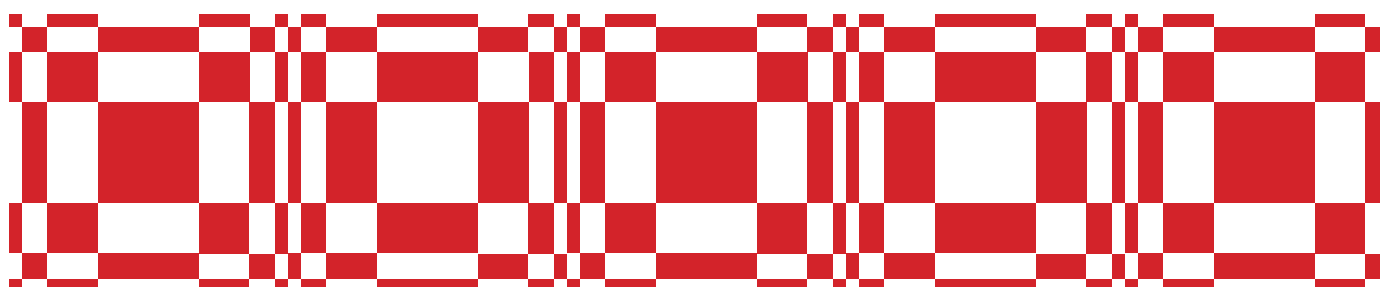
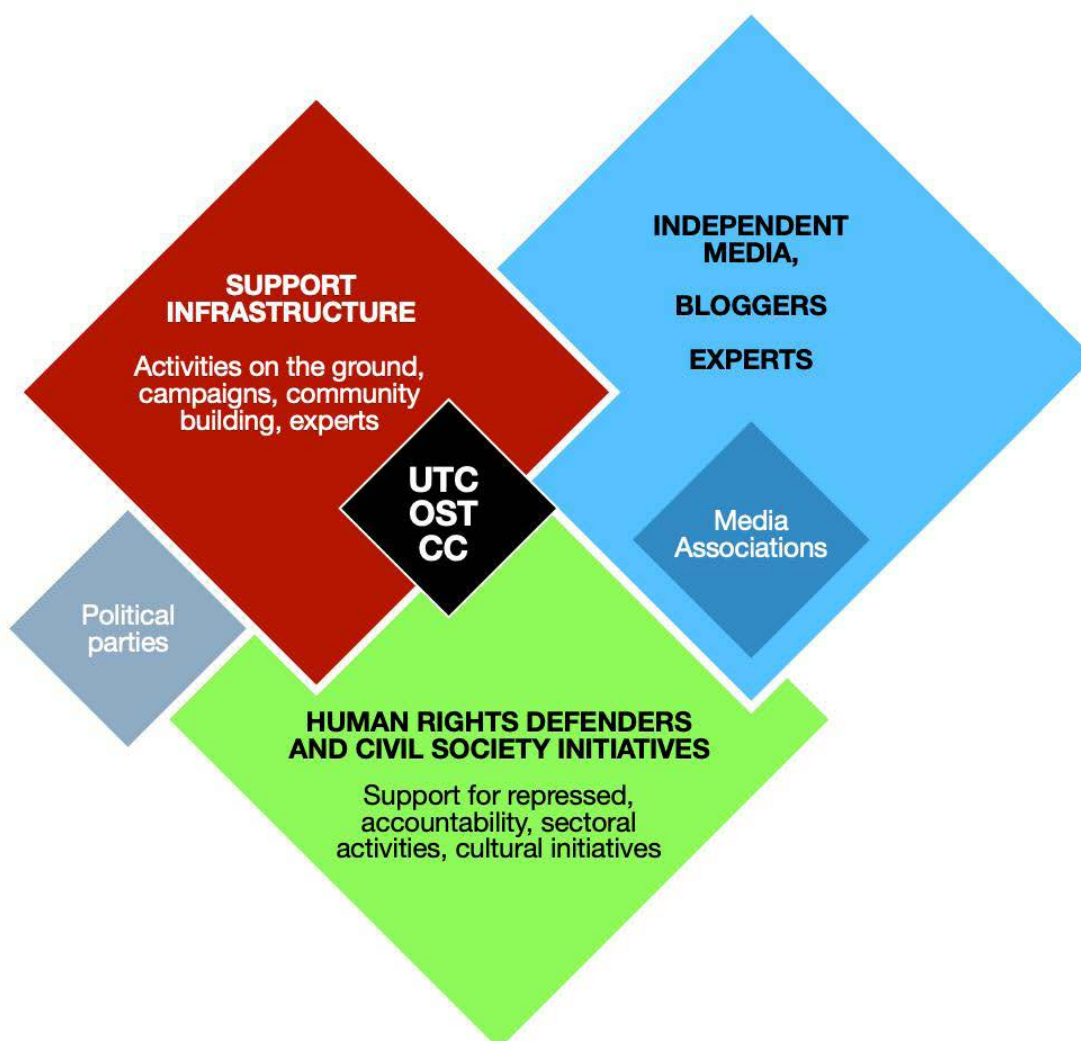
The Positive Alternative for Belarus is a strategic initiative aimed at creating a clear, realistic, and appealing vision for the country's future. Its goal is to demonstrate that Belarus has a path forward: peaceful, democratic, and based on respect for human rights, freedom, and the rule of law. In a context of repression, propaganda, and societal fatigue, such an alternative can become a source of hope, a tool of resistance, and a way to restore faith in change.

The program includes the development and public discussion of concepts for key reforms and [draft laws](#) based on the [Constitution project](#) for the New Belarus. This covers political reform, a new judicial system, principles of transitional justice, lustration mechanisms, and reforms of education, culture, and public administration. Special attention is given to issues of gender equality and inclusivity as essential elements of a democratic and sustainable future for the country.

To make these ideas accessible and understandable to a wide audience, the program uses adapted materials, infographics, videos, and open discussions on online platforms. Document discussions are held openly with the participation of experts, civil activists, diaspora representatives, and all interested parties. This process not only refines the reform content but also involves society in a collective reflection on the future. It is thanks to such engagement that a formal and moral transition to a new Belarus is possible, where every decision is based on public trust.

The Positive Alternative is not an abstract strategy. It is already an active tool, uniting more than two dozen reform concepts and over ten draft laws. Together, they form a logically structured system that will serve as the foundation for actions immediately following the democratic transition.

Given that the window of opportunity for democratic transformations may be narrow and short-term, having a pre-prepared package of solutions is a guarantee of the new state's stability. That is why the Positive Alternative is not just a set of documents, but a collective vision of the future. It is a ready-made foundation for action that will allow Belarus to confidently take the first step toward freedom and renewal.



Belarus' Civil Society

In Belarus, civil society has always played an important role, especially during times of change. It includes not only human rights defenders and journalists, but also volunteers, charitable foundations, cultural initiatives, trade unions, parent associations, and scientific clubs. These are all people who come together to help others, stand up for justice, and make life better.

After 2020, when Belarusians took to the streets en masse to protest against the rigged election, civil society came under attack. The authorities launched large-scale repressions: NGOs were shut down, activists were arrested, and people were forced to flee. By the end of May 2025, more than 1,900 independent non-profit organizations had been liquidated in Belarus – an unprecedented number. New organizations are rarely registered, while existing ones are either forced to shut down or go underground.

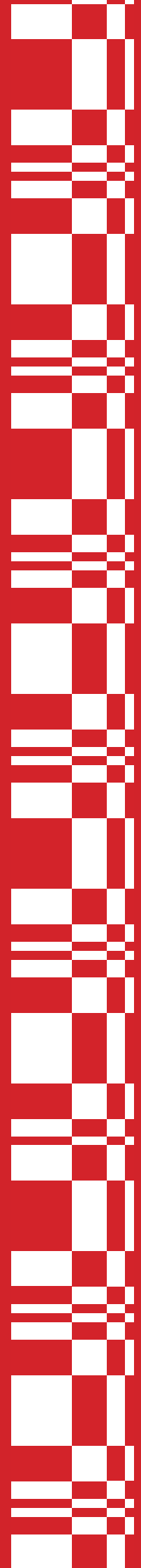
Still, civil society has not disappeared. It has simply relocated – partly abroad, partly into the shadows. Thousands of Belarusians continue their work from Vilnius, Warsaw, Tbilisi, Kyiv, and other cities. Some support those who remain in Belarus. Others run cultural projects. Some research, analyze, and tell the world what is happening back home. Others help Belarusians abroad adapt to life in new countries.

In exile, organizations continue to grow: schools, support centers, initiatives for children, medical and legal aid are being established. At the same time, advocacy work goes on. Belarusians explain to international partners why it's important to remember Belarus, why we can't turn a blind eye to repression, and why global support is needed.

Civil society in exile is also helping to build the future. Reform projects are being developed, with ideas on how a new Belarus can function – more just, safe, and open.

What's important is that civil society in Belarus has always been able to unite when it really matters. Even though its legal status, offices, and right to operate openly have been taken away, it has not been destroyed. The people remain. Those who are not afraid to help, to speak the truth, to act for the sake of others are still here.

Belarusian civil society is a quiet but powerful force. It is the force that makes change possible. And it is within this force that the future of a new Belarus is taking root. Despite massive repression, civil society in Belarus survives and continues its work – underground, in exile, and online. Its key role is to preserve solidarity, provide essential non-profit services, and help shape the future.



Belarus' Outstanding Civil Society Organizations

It is not possible to mention all civil society organizations within the scope of this brochure. It presents diverse and typical examples that give a picture of the civil society sector of the democratic forces.

Human Rights Organizations

In the context of political crisis and repression, human rights organizations in Belarus have become not only the voice of citizens whose rights have been violated, but also the basis for the sustainability of civil society. Despite liquidation, criminal prosecution, and the “extremist organization” labels, key human rights NGOs continue their work – in exile, online, and through international mechanisms. Their activities demonstrate not only the strength of resistance, but also a strategic transformation: from work on the ground to international advocacy, expert assessments, and preservation of evidence of the regime’s crimes.

These organizations have become a pillar of support for those fighting for human rights in Belarus. Their work is not just about helping victims of repression – it is also strategic work for the future. Human rights defenders document crimes, advocate for reforms, educate citizens, and build international support. Even in exile, they remain the beating heart of Belarusian civil society.



Viasna Human Rights Center

Founded in 1996 by Ales Bialiatski, future Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Viasna is one of Belarus' most influential and recognizable human rights organizations. The center provides legal and humanitarian aid to political prisoners and their families, documents mass repressions, conducts advocacy campaigns, and organizes educational events. One of Viasna's key initiatives is its campaign against the death penalty – Belarus remains the only country in Europe that still practices capital punishment.

Despite being liquidated in 2003 and labeled an “extremist formation” in 2023, Viasna continues its work in partnership with the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH). The organization remains active in analysis, international advocacy, and media outreach, including through its regional offices and online platform.

spring96.org

Belarusian Helsinki Committee (BHC)

Since 1995, the BHC has operated as an independent human rights organization and has become a symbol of legal monitoring and advocacy in Belarus. Its mission is to integrate human rights into all areas of public life. The organization publishes reports on trends in human rights policy, provides consultations to victims, helps NGOs and businesses implement human rights principles in their work, and offers educational programs. In 2022, the BHC received consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), despite being dissolved by Belarusian authorities the year before.

The BHC's flagship analytical product is the National Human Rights Index, recognized by the UN as a model of comprehensive human rights expertise. The organization continues to operate in exile and actively participates in international initiatives and mechanisms.

belhelcom.org

Human Constanta

Established in Minsk in 2016, Human Constanta specializes in protecting the rights of vulnerable groups: foreigners, stateless persons, minorities, and internet users. The organization actively promotes the principles of anti-discrimination, the right to digital freedom, and international standards of human rights protection. Human Constanta is structured on the principles of horizontality, internal democracy, and volunteer involvement.

The organization pays special attention to humanitarian crises such as the situation on the border with the EU. After the repression, the team continues its work from exile, including monitoring, education, and advocacy on international platforms.

humanconstantaby.by

Legal Initiative

Operates since 1996. It is engaged in human rights education, protection of victims of torture and political violence, and international advocacy. The peculiarity of the organization's approach is the integration of analytics, education, and human rights assistance. In 2020, it initiated the creation of the *International Committee for the Investigation of Torture in Belarus*, which became part of the International Accountability Platform for Belarus (IAPB).

The organization produces reports on torture, runs the Week Against Torture campaign, organizes training, human rights quizzes, interactive films, and develops international work through the UN, OSCE, and other bodies. After 2021, works in exile, registered in Lithuania.

legin.info

Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House (BHRH)

Established in Vilnius in 2006 as a platform to support Belarusian human rights defenders, especially in the face of threats within the country. BHRH is part of the Human Rights House Network covering Europe and the Caucasus. The Center provides shelter, resources, coordination, and training, as well as advocacy with international institutions. It is named in honor of Boris Zvozkau, one of the founders of the Belarusian human rights movement.

The organization produces reports on torture, runs the Week Against Torture campaign, organizes training, human rights quizzes, interactive films, and develops international work through the UN, OSCE, and other bodies. After 2021, works in exile, registered in Lithuania.

belhumanrights.house

Lawtrend

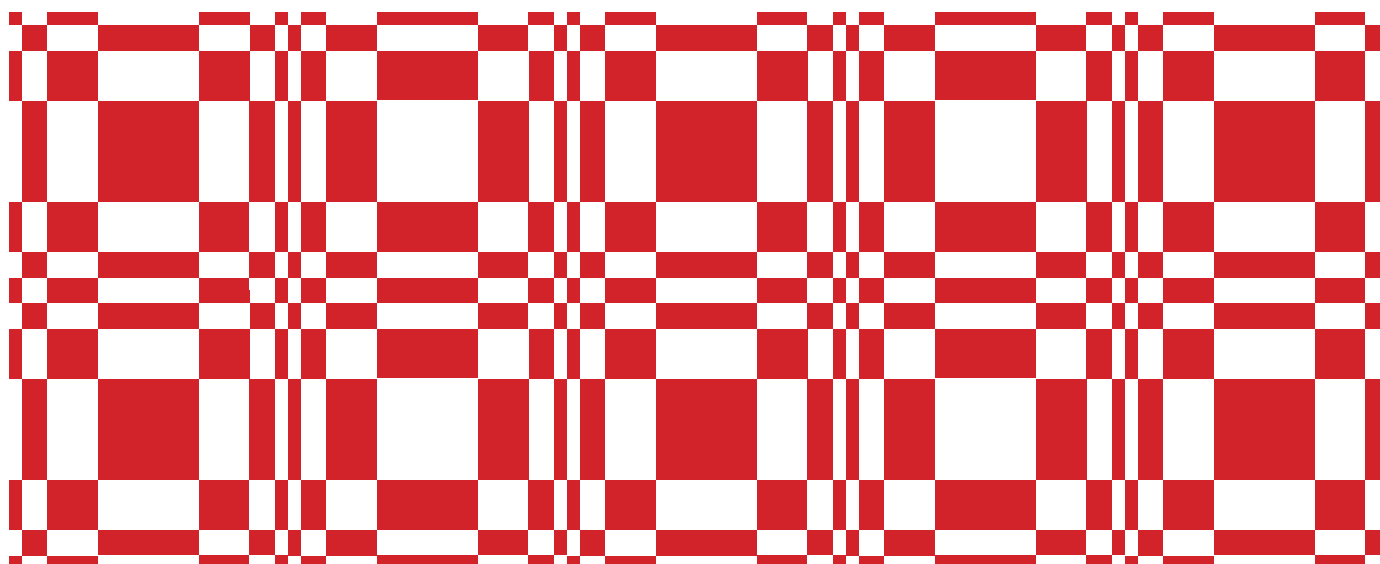
Lawtrend is an independent human rights organization specializing in legislative monitoring, legal education, and protection of freedom of association in Belarus. Founded in the early 2000s, it actively worked with non-profit organizations (NPOs), developing recommendations to improve the regulatory framework, conducting research, and creating accessible legal support tools for civil society.

After the 2021 crackdown on NGOs, Lawtrend was liquidated by decision of the Belarusian authorities. The organization's team continued its work in exile – it is currently re-registered in Georgia and operates as an international platform for data collection, legal analysis, and NGO consulting.

Lawtrend systematically monitors the situation with the liquidation and self-liquidation of civil society organizations, and produces analytical reviews that track trends in legislation, law enforcement, and the state of freedom of association. Its reports help to understand not only the scale of repression, but also to develop survival strategies for the surviving structures.

Lawtrend has become a key source of data for international advocacy and evidence of the destruction of the civil society sector in Belarus. Its expertise is particularly sought after by donors, policymakers, research centers, and human rights coalitions.

lawtrend.org



Solidarity Foundations

After the mass repressions of 2020, initiatives emerged in Belarus that brought together citizens, the diaspora, and international partners to help the victims. They became the financial rear of the Belarusian democratic movement. They help those who found themselves behind bars, were forced into exile, or lost their jobs because of their position. Each of these funds fulfills a special role in the bigger system of support and resistance.

BYSOL Foundation

The BYSOL Foundation emerged in August 2020 as a response to the crackdown. Its mission was to provide material assistance to Belarusians who have suffered for participating in protests. In its first year of operation, the foundation collected almost three million euros. These funds went to support dismissed workers, families of political prisoners, and students expelled for their civic position. In the following years, the foundation expanded its work. Now it helps former political prisoners, supports Belarusian volunteer fighters in Ukraine, organizes emergency evacuations from the country, and supports regional civic initiatives.

BYSOL's employees work in different countries. Most are activists, human rights defenders, and volunteers. Since 2020, the foundation has helped tens of thousands of people. Its activities are transparently documented, with reports published on the website and social media. Despite repression and the "extremist" status, the foundation continues its work from Lithuania and cooperates with other initiatives.

bysol.org

BY_help

BY_help appeared back in 2017 as a public campaign in response to the arrests of activists. In 2020, it became relevant again, quickly raising hundreds of thousands of dollars to pay fines, lawyers, and help victims of torture. In August 2020, more than a million dollars was raised in 24 hours. Since then, the fund has compensated more than 18,000 Belarusians.

Now, BY_help focuses on medical and psychological rehabilitation of former political prisoners. Former prisoners undergo medical checkups and receive treatment and temporary housing in a safe country. Thanks to the partnership with BYSOL, the foundation helps those who have just been released and need help. Inside Belarus, BY_help supports couriers who deliver aid in person despite the risks. This is one of the few examples of how civic mutual aid continues to work within the country.

BY.help

ByMedSol

The Belarusian Medical Solidarity Foundation was launched to protect medical professionals who have been victimized for being civic-minded. After 2020, dozens of doctors and hospital staff lost their jobs. Some signed collective letters, some joined the protest rallies, and some simply refused to distort the data on the injuries of detainees. The foundation helps those who have been fired or pressured.

In addition to financial support, ByMedSol provides legal aid and collects information on violations. An important part of the foundation's work is international advocacy. The team works in partnership with other initiatives and continues to support medical professionals inside and outside Belarus. Its work is based on the principles of professional ethics and humanity.

bymedsol.org

Belarusian Sport Solidarity Foundation

Another important initiative is the Belarusian Sport Solidarity Foundation. It emerged after the authorities started to persecute athletes for participating in protests. Many champions and coaches found themselves under pressure. Some lost their jobs, others were forced into exile. The BSSF became a space for protection, solidarity, and preservation of Belarus' sporting reputation outside the regime.

The foundation supports the affected athletes financially and helps them to continue their careers abroad. It also engages in advocacy and international representation. The foundation remains one of the symbols that sports and human rights can and should go hand in hand.

[BSSF](https://bssf.org)

Belarusian Solidarity Center

The Belarusian Solidarity Center (BSC) is a unique space of assistance, mutual support, and adaptation for Belarusians and Ukrainians who were forced to leave their homes because of war, political repression, and persecution. The center operates in Warsaw and combines legal aid, education, media support, and volunteering.

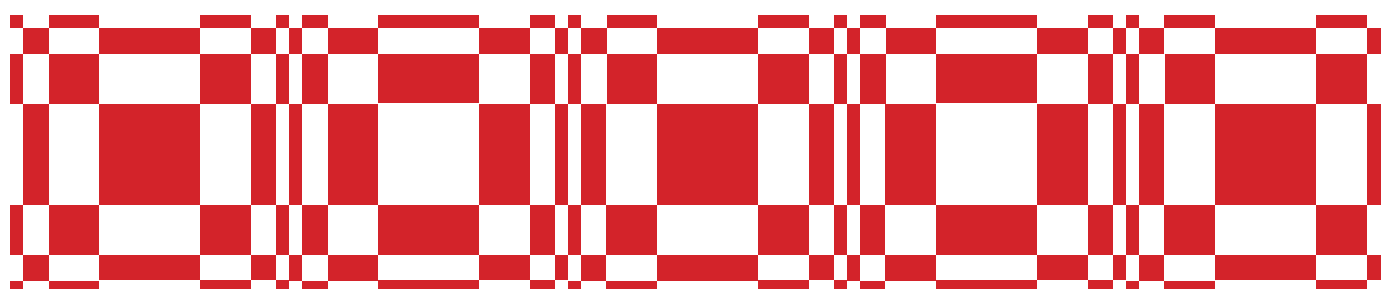
The center originated as an initiative to provide free legal aid to those facing persecution. Today, it is the legal department that remains the heart of the center. Specialists in international and migration law work here, providing advice on migration issues, obtaining international protection, document registration, and protection against discrimination. All consultations are free of charge and are conducted in an understandable language – with respect for the personal history of everyone who seeks help.

But the BSC is not just about documents and laws. It is also about children who need to be adapted to life in a new country. That is why the center has a school of additional education where children learn languages, do creative work, sculpt, sing, play chess, and simply find new friends. Classes are conducted in Polish, Belarusian, Ukrainian, and English. The school is a warm and safe place where a child can feel at home.

A special pride of the center is its network of volunteers. These people help with housing, transportation, groceries, accompany them to administrative offices, and become mentors and friends for those who are just starting their life in Poland from scratch. The volunteer network is what makes the Center a true community.

The Belarusian Solidarity Center is more than just help. It gives Belarusians the assurance that they are not alone, that they will be supported, listened to, and helped. It is a space where Belarusians and Ukrainians together go through a difficult path of adaptation, preserving their dignity and sense of community. And this is an important element of the new Belarus, which already today lives in the hearts and deeds of its citizens – even when they are far away from their homeland.

belaruscenter.eu



Diaspora Organizations

The Belarusian diaspora today is not just a community of people outside the country. It is an active part of the nation, which participates in the struggle for democratic changes, supports the repressed, preserves culture, and represents the interests of Belarusians in different parts of the world. Since 2020, political persecution has forced hundreds of thousands of Belarusians into exile. But they did not dissolve in a foreign land, uniting in dozens of organizations, initiatives, and solidarity centers instead.

The diaspora plays an important role in international advocacy, humanitarian aid, and cultural revival. It helps those who have just left the country and at the same time forms stable structures that keep in touch with Belarusians inside the country. These organizations have become not only points of support for Belarusians, but also recognizable voices of Belarus in the world.

Bačkaŭščyna World Association of Belarusians

The Bačkaŭščyna (Motherland) World Association of Belarusians is an international civic association founded in 1990. It unites Belarusians from more than 20 countries and is one of the most respected institutions of the Belarusian diaspora. Over the years, Bačkaŭščyna has become a true symbol of national unity, regardless of borders, languages, or political views.

The association's main goal is to strengthen the connection between Belarusians abroad and their historical homeland, contribute to the revival of an independent Belarus, and protect national identity. The organization promotes the preservation and development of Belarusian culture, language, and historical memory, as well as spiritual and civic unity of the nation – wherever Belarusians may live. It seeks to ensure that the diaspora plays an active role in the life of the country, shares knowledge, supports cultural and educational initiatives, and assists in Belarus's international integration.

Bačkaŭščyna actively supports the cultural life of Belarusians abroad, helps preserve the language, organizes meetings, conferences, congresses, and cultural events, and defends the rights of Belarusians as a national minority in their countries of residence. It also supports humanitarian projects, fosters Belarusian studies, and builds ties with international partners.

Today, amid the political crisis in Belarus, Bačkaŭščyna continues to play a crucial role in consolidating the global Belarusian community, standing for freedom, dignity, and national independence.

zbsb.info

Belarusian Canadian Alliance

The Belarusian Canadian Alliance (ZBK) is one of the oldest and most influential Belarusian diaspora organizations. It was founded in 1948 and has since been dedicated to preserving Belarusian identity, culture, and language, as well as representing the interests of Belarusians within Canadian society.

The organization unites communities across Canada and serves as a representative of the Belarusian-Canadian diaspora before government bodies, civil society, and international institutions. ZBK maintains strong ties with Belarusian organizations in the U.S., Europe, and other regions, and works with experts and researchers to develop well-informed positions on key issues related to Belarus.

ZBK is active in cultural and educational initiatives: it organizes traditional Belarusian holidays, supports children's clubs and schools, and fosters music and folklore groups. Projects such as Yavarovy Ljudzi and Yavarovy Dzieci help preserve Belarusian cultural uniqueness and pass it on to new generations raised in Canada.

ZBK takes a firm civic stance regarding the situation in Belarus. The organization condemns political repression, supports political prisoners, participates in international solidarity campaigns, and collaborates with democratic Belarusian structures and initiatives abroad. According to its charter, ZBK recognizes March 25 – Freedom Day – as a symbol of Belarusian statehood and liberty.

Today, the Belarusian Canadian Alliance is not only a vital support network for Belarusians in Canada but also an important part of the democratic movement, helping keep the Belarusian voice heard in international affairs.

belarusians.ca

Belarusian Community RAZAM

The Belarusian community RAZAM was founded in Germany on August 9, 2020, in response to the mass awakening of civic consciousness triggered by the events in Belarus. It became the first and largest organization of the Belarusian diaspora in Germany, bringing together people from Belarus and all friends of a democratic Belarus.

Before 2020, the Belarusian diaspora in Germany had little public visibility. However, the onset of the protest movement changed the situation dramatically: Belarusians began organizing solidarity actions, launching initiatives, and supporting victims of repression. As a result, Belarus became a visible issue in the German media and political space, while the community itself gained a strong identity and confidence in its role.

RAZAM actively engages with German and European institutions, participates in awareness and cultural campaigns, and advocates for support of democratic Belarus. The organization provides ongoing assistance to victims of repression through initiatives supporting political prisoners and their families, as well as through free legal consultations offered by the Legal Help team. Particular attention is given to the integration of Belarusians into German society, legal support, education, and employment.

Today, RAZAM plays an important role not only in supporting Belarusians abroad but also in shaping a new image of Belarus as a democratic, European country that values freedom, culture, and solidarity.

razam.de

ABA – Association of Belarusians in America

The Association of Belarusians in America (ABA) is one of the oldest diaspora organizations, founded in the mid-20th century. It unites Belarusians in the United States with the goal of preserving national identity, supporting Belarusian culture, and promoting the values of freedom and democracy.

ABA operates across the entire U.S. and works to strengthen ties among Belarusians in America. It supports educational, humanitarian, and cultural initiatives, helps integrate new immigrants, and represents the interests of the Belarusian diaspora to American institutions.

ABA actively participates in the Belarusian democratic movement, provides assistance to victims of repression, and fosters international cooperation and the development of civil society. The organization recognizes the white-red-white flag and the Pahonia coat of arms as historic symbols of Belarus and brings together people who share the ideals of freedom and independence.

aba-together.org

Belarusian Community and Culture Center in Vilnius

The Belarusian Community and Culture Center in Vilnius, also known as the Belarusian House, opened in 2021 in the very heart of the Lithuanian capital and quickly became a key gathering place for Belarusians. It is an open and vibrant space that hosts meetings, cultural events, educational activities, psychological support sessions, and civic initiatives. The center brings together several independent initiatives – from the team behind the media outlet Zubr.in and the educational platform Nastaunik.info to the Ivan Luckievič Museum, which continues the legacy of the pre-war Vilnius Belarusian Museum.

The center offers a wide range of ongoing projects: a library with thousands of Belarusian books, a weekly Belarusian school for children and teens, and numerous programs aimed at preserving Belarusian identity through language, culture, and human connection. A women's club, themed exhibitions, workshops, celebrations, concerts, literary evenings, and educational courses all contribute to a dynamic environment for Belarusians in Vilnius and Lithuania. Supported by the Vilnius City Municipality, the center has become a place where Belarusian culture is preserved and developed, where generations meet, and where a vision of a future free Belarus is being shaped.

vilnia.com

Cultural and Educational Initiatives

Until 2021, Belarus was home to dozens of cultural and educational associations, such as the Francišak Skaryna Belarusian Language Society, heritage preservation groups, and regional local history clubs. These organizations played an important role in promoting the Belarusian language and history. However, in the wake of a wave of political repression, the vast majority of them were dissolved. As a result, the cultural and educational sector within the country was almost entirely destroyed.

Despite this, Belarusian cultural space continues to actively develop. Cultural and educational initiatives have become not only a means of preserving national identity but also a powerful tool for solidarity, education, and political reflection.

These initiatives not only preserve and promote national culture but also serve as platforms for international solidarity, rethinking identity, and raising a new generation of activists. Through the support of art, education, and human rights, these organizations are paving the way toward a future free Belarus.

Belarusian Council for Culture

One of the key institutions of the Belarusian cultural diaspora is the Belarusian Council for Culture. This community of professionals, managers, and artists was established in 2020 and has since developed extensive initiatives to support independent Belarusian culture. The council runs grant programs, art management courses, publishing projects, analytical research, and advocacy campaigns. In 2024 alone, the organization supported 47 projects and 34 mobile residencies as part of ArtPower Belarus, organized in partnership with the Danish Cultural Institute.

The council is also active in research and analysis, publishing reports on decolonization and symbolic politics, conducting studies and roundtable discussions. In 2024, dozens of cultural workers – facing emigration, repression, or loss of status – received individual consultations and letters of recommendation. The council has become a platform that connects actors both inside Belarus and in exile, helping preserve the unity of the cultural space.

byculture.org

PEN Belarus

Another prominent voice of cultural resistance is PEN Belarus, founded in 1989 as part of PEN International, a worldwide association of writers. After being forcibly dissolved in Belarus in 2021, the organization continued its work from Warsaw. PEN brings together writers, translators, journalists, and intellectuals, defending freedom of expression and cultural rights. It regularly publishes chronicles of repression against cultural figures, prepares reports and advocacy materials, and organizes solidarity campaigns for imprisoned writers and musicians.

In addition to its human rights work, PEN is also active in the creative sphere: it awards literary prizes, organizes festivals and artistic residencies, and supports translation projects. One of its key focuses is promoting cultural rights as a fundamental component of democratic systems. Today, PEN Belarus stands not only as a symbol of cultural resilience, but also as a vital institution uniting the humanitarian community around the values of human rights and free expression.

penbelarus.org

Belarus Free Theatre

Belarus Free Theatre, a free theater working at the intersection of art and activism, occupies a special place among cultural initiatives. Founded in Minsk in 2005, it operated underground from the very beginning. Following intensified repression in 2021, the troupe relocated to London. The Free Theatre creates powerful performances that address violence, freedom, war, and identity. It has become an international symbol of resistance to authoritarianism, earning global recognition – from The New York Times to the Václav Havel Prize.

The theatre's educational programs focus on young artists, teachers, and activists. They teach how to use art as a tool for social change. Through its own campaigns, international collaborations, and political initiatives, the Free Theatre influences not only the cultural agenda but also global discussions on human rights.

belarusfreetheatre.com

Free Belarus Museum

The Free Belarus Museum is a new cultural center created to preserve the memory of protests, resistance, and the Belarusian people's pursuit of freedom. It was made possible through the support of Warsaw's City Authorities and in partnership with the National Anti-Crisis Management and several international institutions, such as the Polish Institute of Museology, the KARTA Center Foundation, and others.

The museum's goal is to show the world the Belarusian path to democracy through documentary evidence and artifacts related to the peaceful protests following 2020. It collects and preserves important items: personal belongings of political prisoners, flags, posters, printed materials, and digital archives. Many of these objects were taken out of Belarus – to Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine – and now have a safe space for preservation and public display.

The museum is not only a repository of historical memory but also an open space for dialogue.

It hosts exhibitions, educational lectures, cultural events, theater performances, film screenings, and children's workshops. It also organizes conferences and seminars that bring together representatives of civil society, culture, and the democratic movement from Belarus and the diaspora.

The museum's founders emphasize that the history of Belarusian protests and solidarity is a source of hope and inspiration. The Free Belarus Museum is dedicated to preserving this memory and passing it on to future generations, as well as to European and global audiences.

This museum is not just an exhibition space – it is a symbol of memory, struggle, and the future. A place where Belarus remains on Europe's agenda and where its history is preserved despite repression and exile.

mwb.center

Budźma Biełarusami! Social and Cultural Campaign

Budźma Biełarusami! ("Let's Be Belarusians!") is an independent cultural and educational initiative launched in 2008 to strengthen national identity and promote contemporary Belarusian culture. Its core idea is to make Belarusian culture visible, vibrant, and relevant. The campaign brings together artists, activists, media, civil society organizations, and all engaged communities that share a vision of a prosperous, dignified, and culturally unique Belarus.

The *Budźma!* projects show that Belarusian culture is not only about history – it's also modern, dynamic, and forward-looking. Among its best-known initiatives are the Belarusian-language advertising festival ADNAK!, the communication campaigns *Kraĭina Cmokau* ("Land of Dragons") and *Piatsisothodnasć* ("Five-Hundredness"), the animated film *Budźma Biełarusami!* (a 5-minute history of Belarus), the travel film series *KraĭBY*, and others. These projects demonstrate that Belarusian identity can be appealing and open, and that national culture can serve as a foundation for societal development.

Since 2016, *Budźma Biełarusami!* has focused on uniting local initiatives and building platforms for civic cooperation. The *Razam da spravy* ("Together for Action") project encourages collective efforts to improve quality of life at the local level. It's not only about education, but also about inspiring collaboration.

Today, *Budźma Biełarusami!* is both a cultural portal – *Budzma.org* – and a media platform for original articles, interviews, videos, and public debates. It is also a community that preserves the voice of a free Belarus. Despite repression and restrictions, the initiative continues its work – both inside the country and in exile – helping Belarusians everywhere remember who they are.

budzma.org

Journalistic Associations

Free journalism is a cornerstone of any democratic society. In a country like Belarus – where independent media have been dismantled and sharing truthful information can land one in prison – journalists and media activists continue to fight for the public's right to know the truth.

Journalistic associations play a vital role in supporting the professional community. They assist colleagues under pressure, monitor violations of press freedom, organize educational programs, and foster international cooperation. These organizations have become not only professional platforms but also symbols of resilience and solidarity within the Belarusian media community.

Today, journalists are among the key witnesses and chroniclers of the struggle for freedom. Thanks to their work, the memory of ongoing events in the country is preserved, and an alternative information space is maintained – connecting Belarusians at home and abroad.

Press Club Belarus

Press Club Belarus is a community of Belarusian media professionals united by a common goal to preserve freedom of speech, maintain journalistic standards, and develop independent media even under pressure. It has been operating since 2011 and continues to work today despite repression and bans by the authorities inside the country.

The Press Club organizes educational programs, supports journalists, helps develop digital skills, and promotes critical thinking. Its initiatives reach both professionals with experience and those who are just starting a career in media. In the Media Academy project, journalists and managers take practical courses. The Salt project offers lectures, tests, and videos for anyone who wants to better understand journalism. In TechHub, teams learn how to use modern IT solutions for sustainable development of their editorial offices.

The Press Club issues an internationally recognized card to confirm the status of journalists. It runs information campaigns, collects evidence of repression against the media, and publishes stories of journalists under pressure. The club's team cooperates with international organizations and helps the Belarusian topic to remain on the agenda of the world media.

Even after the authorities in Belarus tried to destroy the organization in 2020 – they arrested the leadership and declared liquidation – the Press Club did not disappear. Today, it works from abroad and continues its mission: to support journalism, defend its values, and unite those who believe in the power of honest information.

press-club.pro

Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ)

The Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ) is the largest professional media organization in Belarus, founded in 1995. Since its inception, it has been a leading voice in defending freedom of speech, journalists' rights, and professional standards. BAJ united over 1,300 journalists from across the country, including staff from independent outlets and freelancers alike.

The association regularly monitors violations of media rights, offers legal assistance, trains journalists, and builds international partnerships. Through its network of regional correspondents, BAJ promptly gathers information on censorship, detentions, and violence against journalists. Since 1998, it has monitored media coverage of election campaigns and published the journal *Abazhur*, a platform for professional debate.

During the 2020 protests, BAJ documented hundreds of cases of repression against media workers. Together with Reporters Without Borders, it named Belarus the most dangerous country in Europe for journalists. In 2021, the organization's office was raided, the Ministry of Justice initiated its liquidation, and in 2023, the KGB designated BAJ an "extremist formation."

Despite persecution and the loss of its official status, BAJ continues to operate in exile, having been re-registered in Vilnius. It remains active in defending journalists, issuing public statements in support of the media, collecting data on violations, and working with international organizations. The association continues to be an influential player in both media and human rights fields and has received several prestigious international awards, including the Andrei Sakharov Prize, the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize, and the Free Media Awards. Since 1997, BAJ has been an associate member of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), and since 2013, a full member of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ).

baj.media

Independent Think Tanks

In the conditions of authoritarian stagnation and destruction of public dialogue, it is independent think tanks in Belarus that play a key role in shaping the future. Their activities create the basis for thoughtful, informed, and sustainable solutions in the post-authoritarian period. These organizations provide expert assessments, engage in educational projects, and develop strategies in key areas ranging from economics and urbanism to international politics and security.

BEROC

The Belarusian Economic Research and Outreach Center (BEROC) has served as a leading platform for economic analysis since 2008. Established with the support of Swedish and other European partners, BEROC conducts applied and academic research, analyzes reforms, and offers practical recommendations for the economic transformation of Belarus. BEROC focuses on sustainable development, green economy, small business, and gender equality. It actively engages the Belarusian economic diaspora, conducts educational programs, and supports professional communities of young economists. Through cooperation with the FREE Network, BEROC provides intellectual connectivity between Belarus and Europe and the world.

beleconomy.org

Center for New Ideas

The Center for New Ideas (CNI) is a modern research and educational institute focused on developing democratic solutions for Belarus. It has grown from a student-run media outlet into a leading platform for analysis and strategic thinking. It conducts sociological surveys, analyzes political and regional processes, and studies images of Belarus in the international information environment. The Center organizes training programs for future leaders and diplomats, including the School of Young Reformers, the Academy of New Diplomacy, and the Political Science Campus. It also runs urban studies projects and produces analytical reports on repression, propaganda narratives, and social trends. CNI is active in international advocacy and forms a new intellectual layer of Belarusian society.

newbelarus.vision

Political Sphere

The Political Sphere Institute of Political Studies is one of the oldest Belarusian analytical projects, operating since 2001. It unites researchers and teachers from Belarus, Lithuania, and Poland, and publishes the *Political Sphere* journal and the English-language Belarusian *Political Science Review*. The institute analyzes political institutions, electoral culture, national identity, and regional development. It regularly organizes conferences, seminars, and round tables, develops international relations, and participates in the formation of the academic field of political science in Belarus. Despite the pressure of the authorities, Political Sphere continues its activities in exile.

palityka.org

iSANS

The International Strategic Action Network for Security (iSANS) brings together experts from Europe, the United States, and Belarus to counter hybrid threats, propaganda, and interference in the internal affairs of democracies. iSANS researches and publicizes data on networks of influence, disinformation, corruption, and the export of authoritarian practices. iSANS develops recommendations for governments and international organizations, publishes analyses and conducts investigations. Areas of work include anti-corruption monitoring, human rights protection, media, and civil society sustainability.

isans.org

Resistance Centers

After 2020, Belarusians' resistance took new forms. When street protests were suppressed with unprecedented brutality, initiatives operating underground, in exile, and in the digital space came to the fore. Thus, centers of civil, digital, and labor resistance emerged – horizontal, decentralized structures that unite Belarusians who are not ready to put up with dictatorship.

The centers of resistance are a manifestation of Belarusians' political courage and creativity. They show that it is possible to act intelligently, flexibly, responsibly even in the conditions of fear and pressure. This is an important part of the general struggle for freedom, without which changes in Belarus would be impossible.

BelPol

BelPol is an analytical and civic initiative created by former members of the security services of Belarus. The organization emerged in 2023 as a result of the separation from BYPOL and immediately stated its key goal to restore the rule of law, democracy, and independence of the country.

BelPol sees its mission in exposing the crimes of Aliaksandr Lukashenka's regime, countering propaganda, and protecting the rights of Belarusians. The organization operates in conditions of authoritarianism, but it manages to get information from inside, thanks to a wide network of participants both in Belarus and abroad.

One of the important tasks of BelPol is to document the authorities' crimes and falsifications. The organization also tracks sanctions circumvention schemes and exposes companies that support the Russian military aggression against Ukraine.

BelPol's work involves serious risks. The organization has been repeatedly attacked by the KGB and faced attempts to infiltrate agents. Despite this, the team continues its work – it publishes analytical materials and results of investigations, holds briefings, and shares data through its website and social networks.

Today, BelPol remains one of the few sources of reliable information about what is going on in the security apparatus of Belarus. Their analytics are in demand in Europe, their investigations are heard in the international press, and the participation of former law enforcers strengthens their credibility among citizens who were previously not involved in politics.

belpol.pro

Belarusian Cyber Partisans

The Cyber Partisans are a community of Belarusian IT specialists and activists that emerged in 2020 amid mass protests against election fraud and brutal repression. They have become

not only a symbol of digital resistance but also a unique phenomenon of Belarusian civil society – combining technological expertise with a drive for justice.

The group operates under complete anonymity to protect its members and their families. The only publicly known representative is Yulyiana Shemetavets, who handles international communications and analytics. The Cyber Partisans emphasize that their goals are strictly political and social: they are not driven by profit but by the desire to end the dictatorship, stop repressions, and establish democratic rule of law in Belarus.

Among their well-known operations are: hijacking state TV broadcasts; breaching databases of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, traffic police, social security funds, surveillance systems, phone and prison recordings; and targeting regime-linked enterprises involved in persecution or sanctions evasion. Their actions are carefully directed only at entities that serve the repressive apparatus. They deliberately avoid disrupting critical infrastructure if it could endanger human life or health.

Since 2022, the Cyber Partisans have also cooperated with the Kastus Kalinouski Regiment and supported Ukraine's defense forces – particularly in cyber intelligence and disrupting the logistics of Russian troops. This reflects their stance: to resist not only the domestic dictatorship but also its allies.

The Cyber Partisans have become more than just a resistance group – they represent a new form of Belarusian self-organization. Their example proves that even under conditions of terror and censorship, effective and precise resistance is possible in the digital space, grounded in solidarity, technology, and a deep sense of responsibility for the country.

by.cpartisans.org

Rabochy Rukh

Rabochy Rukh (Workers' Movement) is an independent association of Belarusian workers that emerged in response to the unprecedented crackdown on the trade union movement. On July 18, 2022, the Supreme Court of Belarus dissolved the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP) and four of its key member organizations: the Belarusian Independent Trade Union (BNP), the Radio and Electronics Industry Workers' Union (REP), the Free Trade Union of Belarus (SPB), and the Free Metalworkers' Union (SPM). In these conditions, Rabochy Rukh became a new form of workers' self-organization, preserving the spirit of resistance and the fight for rights.

From the very beginning, the movement has defended the civil and labor rights of Belarusians – uniting people at their workplaces: in workshops, factories, offices, and across various employment sectors. Its members stand against dictatorship and for a free Belarus, where the voice of workers is heard and labor is respected.

The organization prioritizes nonviolent resistance, particularly strikes and walkouts, as a means of applying pressure on the regime. At the same time, Rabochy Rukh is developing a secure digital platform to unite potential strikers, share campaign goals, and provide mutual support.

A crucial part of its work is information outreach – educating workers about their rights, the real situation in the country, and how to prepare for protests without risking their safety. The idea is simple: only through unity and solidarity can Belarusians stop repression and achieve change. The movement has no bosses – just people ready to act together, with mutual respect and a shared commitment to their beliefs.

stachka.org

Umbrella Organizations and Support Networks

In authoritarian Belarus, where civil society has faced massive pressure, structures capable of uniting, supporting, and protecting diverse initiatives have gained particular value. Umbrella organizations have become platforms of solidarity and coordination, preserving the coherence of the community even in exile and under repression. Among them, two stand out in particular – the Green Network and the RADA Belarusian National Youth Council – as vivid examples of resilience, self-organization, and belief in the future.

Green Network

The Green Network is an alliance of environmental organizations, activists, and initiatives united by the goal of making Belarus a green, democratic, and sustainable country. It is more than just an environmental movement – it is a platform where environmental protection is closely tied to human rights, sustainable development, and democratic governance. The organization implements environmental protection projects, supports activists, promotes education, introduces innovations, and builds the capacity of civil society.

A key part of its work is its information platform – the Green Portal – which covers environmental topics, the human right to a healthy environment, and eco-friendly lifestyles. Through its award for media coverage of environmental issues, the Green Network encourages journalists and bloggers who contribute to public awareness. Although the Lukashenka regime has labeled the structure an “extremist formation,” it continues its work, having an impact both inside the country and in exile.

greenbelarus.info

RADA Belarusian National Youth Council

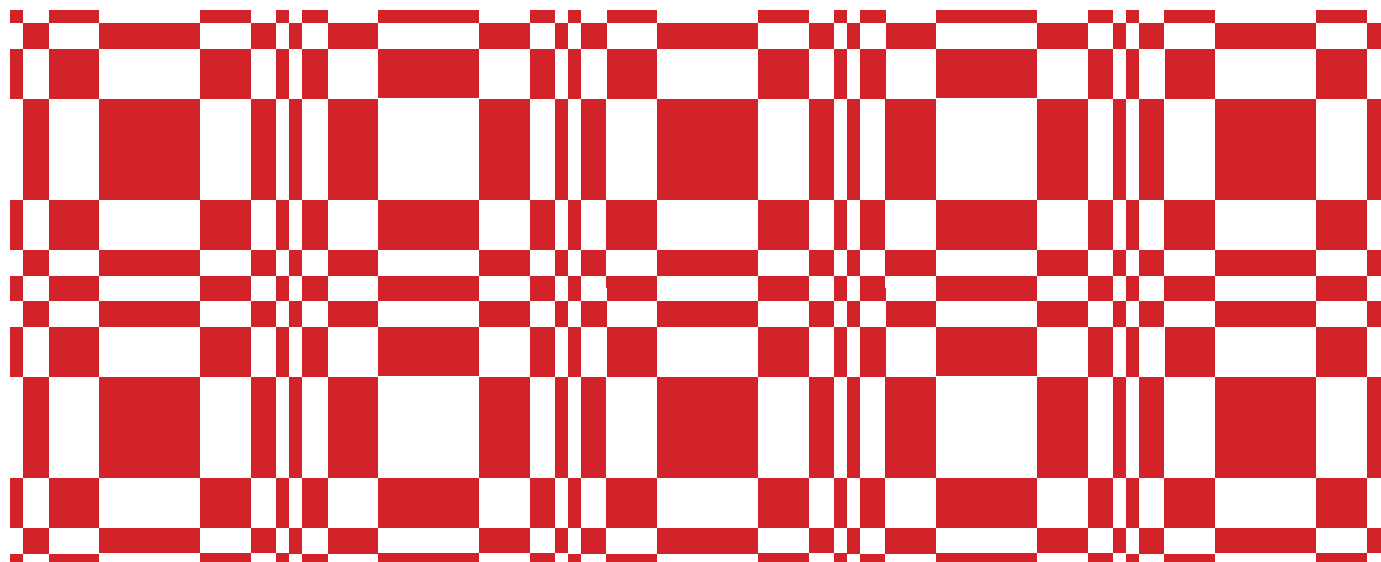
The RADA Belarusian National Youth Council is a voluntary association of youth organizations and initiatives that has been active since 1992. Its mission is to defend the rights and interests of young people and to promote democracy, equality, and non-discrimination. After being stripped of its legal registration by the authorities – first in 2006 and again in 2021 – RADA shifted to operating in exile. Nevertheless, it has not ceased its activities and has even expanded its scope.

Today, RADA brings together 44 youth organizations working in various areas – from LGBTQ+ rights and student advocacy to inclusive initiatives. It remains active internationally as a member of the European Youth Forum, the largest platform representing the interests of millions of young people in Europe. In 2020, it awarded RADA the Youth Rights Award for its

contribution to defending youth rights in Belarus.

RADA provides its members and partners with infrastructure for cooperation, defends freedom of association, and serves as one of the voices of the new Belarus.

rada.fm



Belarusian Independent Media

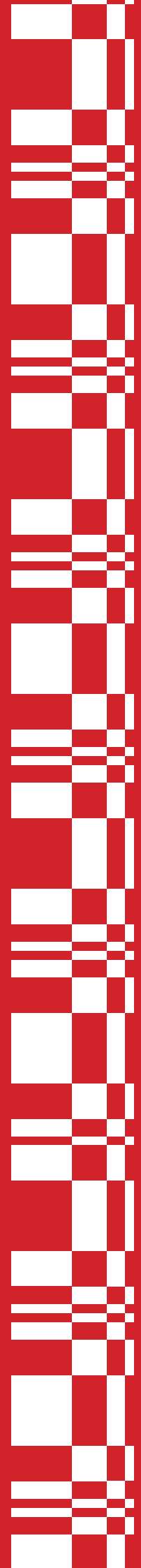
Since 2020, the Belarusian media landscape has undergone massive destruction. Independent press was one of the regime's first targets: it was systematically forced out of the country, stripped of platforms, and its journalists were stripped of their freedom. What was once called "independent media" now mostly operates in exile – and continues the fight for Belarusians' right to information.

According to the Freedom House 2024 report, between 2020 and 2023, over 4,000 web resources were restricted in Belarus, including 491 independent media websites, more than 1,300 Telegram channels, and dozens of human rights platforms. Human Constanta noted that by the end of 2022, the total number of blocked resources exceeded 10,000. By early 2025, the figures became unprecedented: more than 18,000 resources were labeled as "contrary to the interests of the state."

Free media in Belarus is being destroyed by a variety of means. Authorities block websites, Telegram channels, and even VPN services. Alongside this, legal pressure is used: independent media domains in the .by zone are annulled, and anti-extremism legislation is applied to shut down any resource critical of the authorities.

Journalists and editors are also targeted personally – their homes are raided, criminal cases are opened, and many are forced to flee the country. All of this is accompanied by economic pressure: media organizations' bank accounts are frozen, hefty fines are imposed, and outlets lose access to their offices and equipment. In this way, the regime is systematically shutting down all channels of free information.

By 2025, nearly all prominent Belarusian independent media outlets had been forced to move their operations abroad. But even in exile, they face



threats and restrictions: in Belarus, subscribing to “extremist channels” is punishable under criminal law, and sharing their content is equated with “hostile activity.”

Nonetheless, the Belarusian media diaspora continues to operate. Independent journalists and editorial teams have become transnational media groups, maintaining contact with their audiences inside the country through mirror sites, VPNs, messengers, and email newsletters. These outlets remain the primary source of truthful information for millions of Belarusians. They keep telling the truth, even when doing so comes at a high personal cost. Despite bans, blockades, and pressure, they deliver reliable information every day.

Each media outlet has its own unique format – some produce video reports, others specialize in investigations or write analytical articles. Some focus on regional issues, others on international audiences. What unites them all is a commitment to facts, professionalism, and the determination to uphold Belarusians’ right to information.

Independent journalists document repression, conduct investigations, monitor politics, economics, and culture, and publish expert and activist opinions. They continue their work under their real names – and sometimes anonymously, to protect themselves and their loved ones.

Independent media are not just websites and channels. They are people who believe in their profession and their right to speak. Thanks to them, Belarusians gain access to alternative perspectives, can compare viewpoints, and draw their own conclusions. Their work is not only an act of information resistance but also an essential part of the future democratic infrastructure of Belarus – especially in a context where state media serve as instruments of propaganda.

Belarusian independent media continue to hold the information front and remain one of the key pillars of the democratic movement. Their work helps preserve memory, expose lies, and prepare the country for future change.

This brochure does not aim to list all Belarusian independent media. Below are diverse and representative examples that offer insight into the landscape of Belarusian independent journalism.

Belsat TV

– a television channel and news website launched in 2007 with support from Poland. Belsat has become an important alternative to state-controlled channels. Its reports, films, and analytical programs target a Belarusian audience and provide in-depth coverage of national and international affairs.

belsat.eu

Euroradio

– European Radio for Belarus, broadcasting from Warsaw. It combines music, news, interviews, and reports. Euroradio regularly covers events in Belarus and beyond, with a strong focus on youth audiences.

euroradio.fm

Zerkalo.io

– the successor of Belarus's most popular news portal, TUT.BY, which was shut down by the authorities in 2021. Zerkalo.io carries on its journalistic tradition, publishing news, investigations, and commentary.

zerkalo.io

Radyio Svaboda

(Belarusian Service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty) – part of the international RFE/RL media network. It delivers news in Belarusian and produces podcasts, analysis, and interviews. Its Minsk office was shut down and website blocked in 2021, but it continues broadcasting from abroad.

svaboda.org

Nasha Niva

– the oldest Belarusian publication, originally founded in the 19th century and relaunched in the 1990s as an independent newspaper. Today, it is a multimedia platform with its own website, Telegram channel, and social media presence. Nasha Niva publishes news, reports, analysis, and cultural content.

nashaniva.com

Pozirk

– a digital media outlet publishing investigations, opinions, and reviews, often with a focus on visual content. It aims to offer a fresh perspective on current affairs through modern design and digital storytelling formats.

pozirk.online

Malanka Media

– an independent Belarusian multimedia outlet founded after the 2020 protests. Its goal is to report on events in Belarus in a clear, modern, and honest way, especially for young and digital audiences. Malanka not only informs but also inspires – sharing stories of those fighting for change, showing how Belarusians resist repression, and promoting democratic values.

malanka.media

Reform

– an independent news portal originally based in Minsk, now operating from abroad. It offers news updates, interviews, expert opinions, and translations of foreign media. The site was blocked in Belarus in 2022.

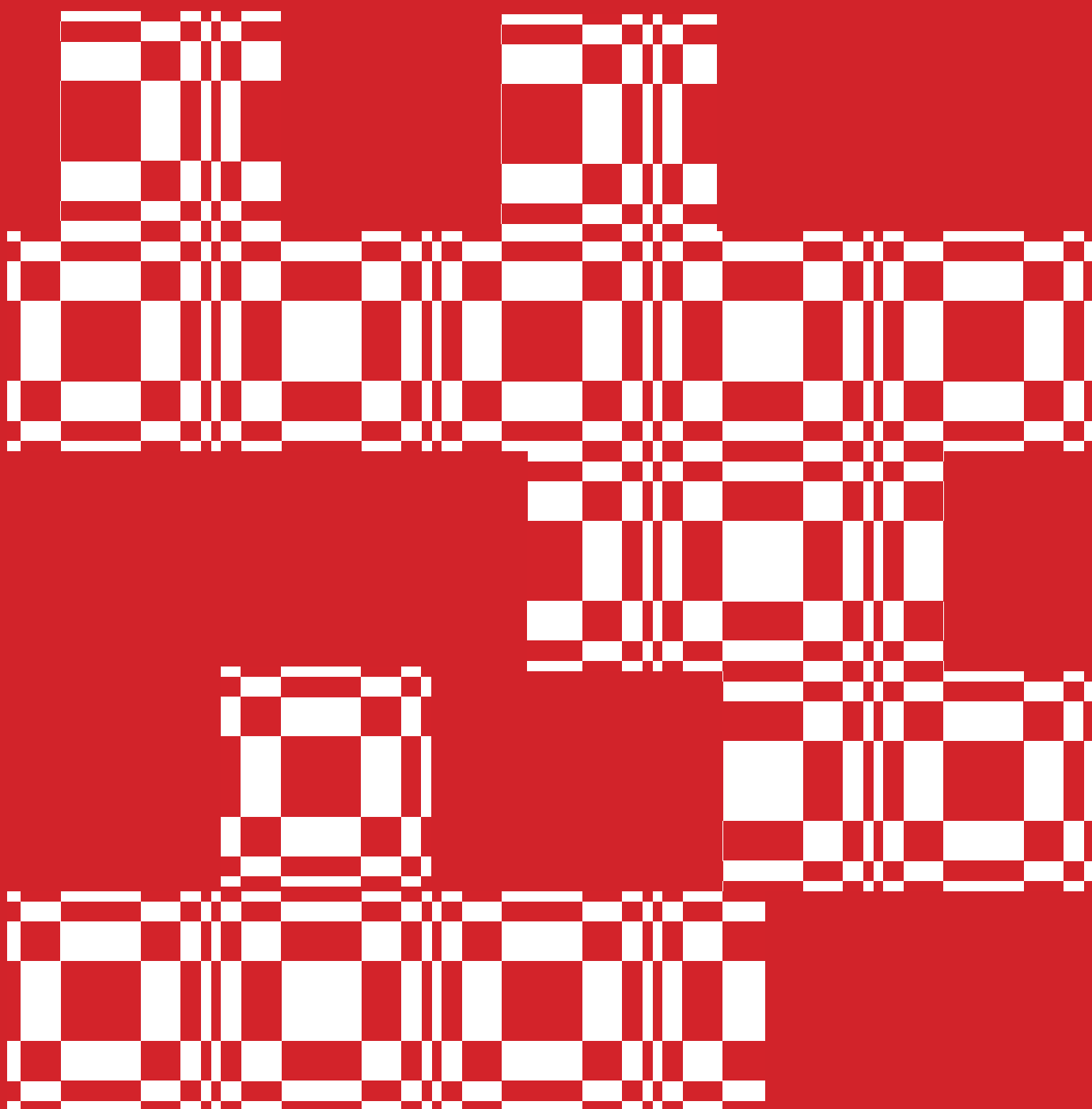
reform.news

Flagshtok

– a media outlet focused on events in southern Belarus. Its team relocated to Ukraine after facing persecution. The outlet covers protests, repression, and regional public sentiment.

flagshtok.info

Myths about the Democratic Forces of Belarus



Myth 1:

“The democratic forces are foreign agents and Western puppets”

Reality:

The democratic forces of Belarus act in the interests of the Belarusian people and strive for independence, freedom, and the restoration of the rule of law. Accusations of “foreign control” are a propaganda tool designed to discredit the opposition and isolate it from Belarusian society.

Repression inside the country prevents democratic organizations from operating and gathering resources legally, so support from abroad becomes a necessary measure. However, the goals of the democratic forces are consistently formulated as internal and sovereign: ending repression, releasing political prisoners, holding fair elections, and ending dependence on the Kremlin. Resources from any sources are directed toward protecting human rights, supporting independent media and Belarusian culture, aiding political prisoners and other vulnerable groups, as well as meeting other needs of Belarusians inside the country and in the diaspora.

Myth 2:

“The 2020 protests were a conspiracy by foreign states and a ‘color revolution’ imposed from outside”

Reality:

Official Belarus propaganda and pro-Kremlin media from the very first days of the 2020 protests promoted the thesis of “foreign control” over popular discontent. The authorities claimed that the mass demonstrations were allegedly provoked by foreign states, Western intelligence agencies, or neighboring countries – Poland, Lithuania, the USA. Aliaksandr Lukashenka spoke of “puppet masters” abroad, and propaganda channels accused foreign actors of attempting a “color revolution” and a coup d’état. However, this version does not withstand scrutiny and is disproved both by facts and independent investigations.

The protests erupted spontaneously across the country immediately after the announcement of the falsified presidential election results on August 9, 2020. People took to the streets in dozens of cities – from Minsk to regional centers – without prior organization or external coordination. It was a massive and sincere citizen reaction to the sense of a stolen choice and years of injustice. The European Union and other international bodies publicly stated that the elections did not meet freedom and fairness standards and refused to recognize the results.

The countries accused of interference repeatedly emphasized their non-involvement and limited themselves to calls to stop violence and pursue dialogue. The myth of an “external conspiracy” serves as a convenient propaganda tool: it allows the regime to portray protesters as Western puppets, avoid responsibility for its actions, and justify repression as “protecting sovereignty.” In reality, it was the Belarusian people who were the source of the protest movement, not any external forces.

Myth 3:

“The democratic forces are divided and ineffective”

Reality:

Pluralism of opinions is natural in a democracy. Having different viewpoints on strategy and tactics is not a sign of crisis but a reflection of the democratic nature of the movement. Criticism, debates, and discussions are part of a healthy political process.

Never before have the different opposition forces in Belarus been as united as in 2020 and afterward. Despite repression and operating in exile, Belarusian democratic forces demonstrate resilience and coordination. Key political structures have been created and are functioning, having signed cooperation protocols and developing collective decision-making mechanisms. Leading democratic organizations coordinate efforts: they jointly advocate for sanctions, assist political prisoners, and prepare reforms for the future – despite differing views, they work as a networked coalition.

The regime's success in suppressing visible dissent should not be equated with opposition ineffectiveness but rather with the effectiveness of state terror. This myth of division aims to demoralize society and undermine trust in democratic forces, whereas the reality lies in their ability to maintain unity in diversity.

Myth 4: **“Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya’s legitimacy has expired”**

Reality:

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya was unable to assume the office of President of the Republic of Belarus due to the violent and unlawful power grab by Aliaksandr Lukashenka. Her legitimacy, therefore, does not stem from formal procedures or calendar deadlines but from the clear and massive expression of the will of the Belarusian people in 2020, when millions stood up against falsified elections and demanded change.

This legitimacy is recognized by international partners: the European Union, the United States, the Council of Europe, and the parliaments of Lithuania, Poland, and other countries have formalized cooperation with the democratic forces and acknowledged Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya as the national leader representing the Belarusian people.

Sviatlana herself emphasizes that her mission is not over as long as political repression continues in Belarus, innocent people remain behind bars, and the people are denied the right to free and fair elections. Her legitimacy is the legitimacy of a goal shared by millions: freedom, justice, and a democratic future. The support of Belarusians both inside the country and abroad, along with the work of a united team, sustains the political strength and moral authority of her mandate as an alternative to authoritarian rule.

Myth 5: **“The democratic forces have no support inside Belarus”**

Reality:

The claim that the democratic forces have lost public support inside the country is based not on actual public sentiment, but on the lack of its visible expression – which is, in turn, a direct result of the scale of repression. Belarus has been turned into a climate of fear, where any form of dissent can lead to criminal prosecution, arrest, or dismissal from work. The repression has become so severe that people are punished for simply liking a post on social media or subscribing to independent Telegram channels. This is not a sign of stability – it is a sign of brutal suppression.

However, independent sources and sociological surveys paint a very different picture. As early as spring 2021, a Chatham House study found that more than half of Belarusians wanted Lukashenka to step down immediately or leave office by the end of the year. A later study by the same organization in 2024 showed that around 13% of the population are active supporters of change, and 62% are politically neutral but would support reforms if fear subsided. Only about a quarter of the population remains loyal to the regime.

The myth of “lost support” is part of the regime's information strategy: it first destroys the public opposition and then uses its forced absence as “proof” of its own irreplaceability. But real support has not disappeared – it has simply gone underground.

Myth 6: **“The democratic forces are extremists and terrorists”**

Reality:

After the 2020 protests, the Lukashenka regime systematically equated any dissent with “extremism” or “terrorism.” State media, officials, and law enforcement promote the narrative that the opposition is a network of “terrorist cells,” allegedly directed from abroad and preparing a violent seizure of power. Propaganda statements about a supposed “day X,” “self-defense units,” and “coordination with Ukrainian and U.S. intelligence services” are widespread. The rhetoric of “fighting fascism” is used especially actively to incite fear and rejection.

However, no evidence has ever been provided to support these claims. Instead of combating actual terrorism, the regime uses vague legal definitions to suppress dissent: independent media, Telegram channels, cultural initiatives, messenger chats, and volunteer groups are added to the “extremist formation” list without trial.

Peaceful forms of resistance – strikes, marches, solidarity campaigns, and digital initiatives – are labeled terrorist acts. For instance, subscribing to a popular Telegram channel can lead to criminal prosecution, and donating to support human rights defenders is treated as “financing terrorism.” Thousands of such cases exist. By early 2022, over 8,500 criminal cases had been recorded under “extremism” articles. Even minors and parents of young children have been targeted by the authorities.

Meanwhile, the leaders of the democratic forces consistently emphasize their commitment to peaceful protest and nonviolence. They have never called for armed action, instead relying on diplomatic pressure, human rights work, and institutional reform.

Accusations of extremism against the democratic forces are a political tool to silence dissent – not legally justified actions. In reality, it is the regime that uses mass violence against peaceful citizens: torture, abductions, and executions – all documented by the UN, Amnesty International, and other human rights organizations. The real extremists are those who deprive people of political rights and freedoms, not those who demand adherence to the Constitution and human rights.

Myth 7: **“The Belarusian opposition are nationalists and neo-Nazis using fascist symbols”**

Reality:

Belarus state propaganda, echoing Russian disinformation, systematically brands participants in the 2020 protests as “nationalists” and “fascists.” Special focus is placed on the white-red-white flag – Belarus’s historic symbol – which state officials and media attempt to portray as a “Nazi banner.”

Propagandists point out that this flag was used by some formations during the Nazi occupation, deliberately omitting the fact that it originated long before that and later became a symbol of the struggle for independence and democracy. The white and red colors have been part of the heraldry of the lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania since the 13th century. The white-red-white flag was adopted as the state symbol of the Belarusian Democratic Republic in 1918. It was under this flag that Belarus lived as an independent country from 1991 to 1995, before Lukashenka replaced it through a disputed referendum.

In modern Belarus, the white-red-white flag is a symbol of peaceful resistance and a desire for change – not of radical ideology. It is used by people of all political views – left-wing, right-wing, and centrist. Independent historians and international organizations point out that

the vilification of the white-red-white flag is part of an information war aimed at demonizing the opposition and distracting attention from human rights violations and the suppression of dissent.

The democratic forces of Belarus consistently distance themselves from any xenophobia and build their activities on principles of equality, nonviolence, and civic participation – not ethnic or nationalist supremacy.

Myth 8:

“The democratic forces are calling on the West to impose sanctions in order to destroy Belarus’s economy and make life harder for ordinary people”

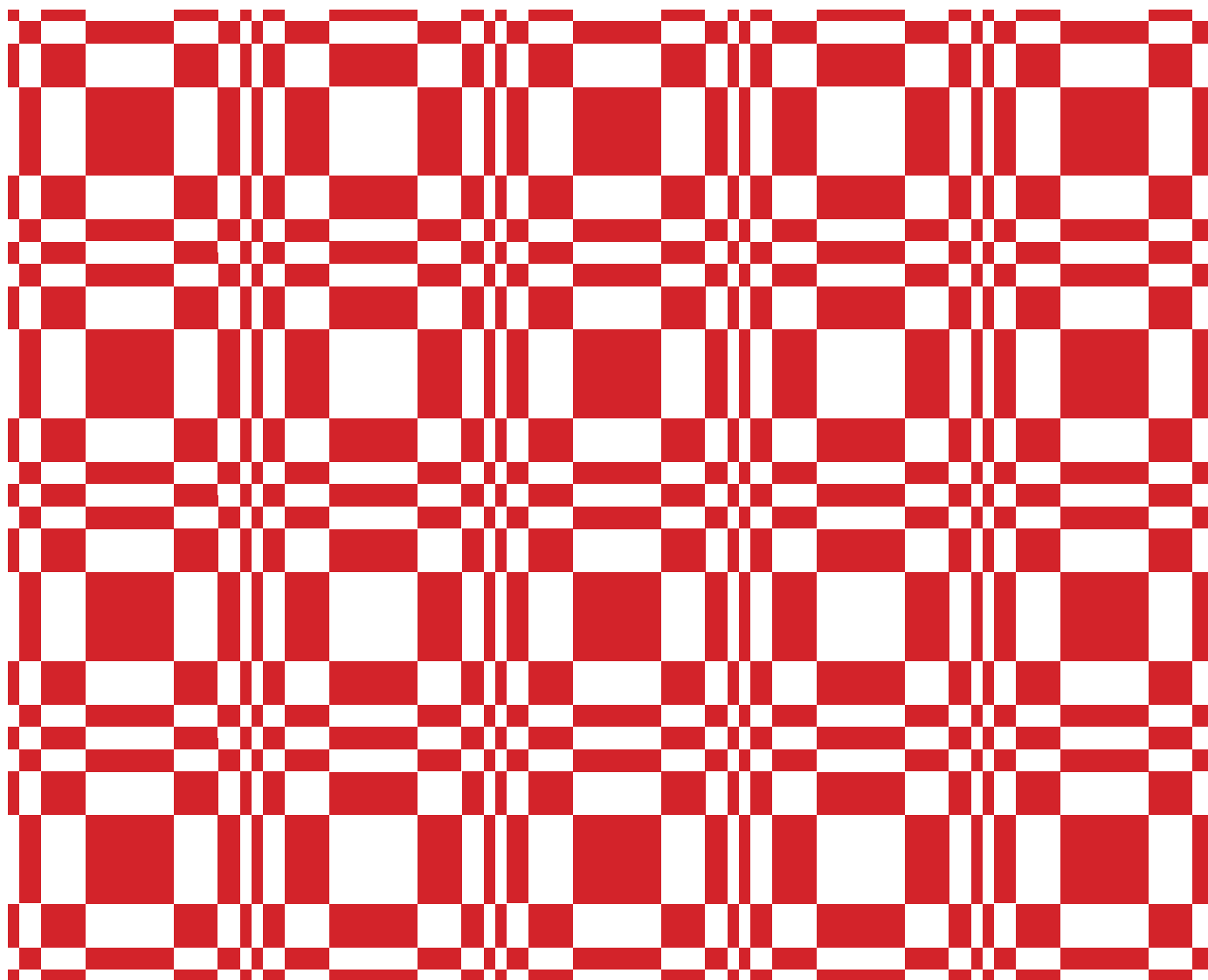
Reality:

This is one of the most actively promoted narratives of the regime’s propaganda. The authorities claim that the democratic forces are working against the interests of the people, trying to “strike the country” with sanctions. Lukashenka and pro-government media insist that opposition leaders “live in luxury abroad” and are deliberately seeking to worsen life in Belarus. However, this is a gross distortion of reality.

In fact, the democratic forces advocate not for blanket sanctions, but for targeted restrictions aimed solely at the repressive apparatus: officials, security forces, and state-owned companies involved in violence, human rights violations, and supporting Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and her team emphasize that the goal of sanctions is to drain the dictatorship’s financial resources – not to harm ordinary citizens. Sanctions are viewed as a tool of pressure, not punishment. At the same time, the democratic forces call for humanitarian exemptions – for the import of medicines, technologies, and other critical goods – to avoid harming the population.

Moreover, democratic leaders clearly name the conditions under which they call for the lifting of sanctions: an end to repression, the release of political prisoners, and free and fair elections. Meanwhile, the regime deliberately continues the repressions, provoking new sanctions – and then shifts the blame for the consequences onto the opposition.

Thus, sanctions are not a whim or a “betrayal,” but a necessary tool of international pressure on the dictatorship, applied in response to its crimes. It is not the opposition, but those who deliberately isolate Belarus, suppress their own people, and violate international law who bear responsibility for the worsening situation.



**BELARUSIAN
DEMOCRATIC
MOVEMENT**