

(Translated from Russian)

Information from Belarus for the special procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council

The Belarusian presidential election of 9 August was the most competitive and emotionally charged in the history of Belarus.

Since the voting, Belarus has been going through a difficult and unusual period. Unfortunately, political emotions spilled over into street protests, resulting in violence and producing victims among both the protesters and members of law enforcement agencies.

At present, almost all persons detained during the unauthorized protest actions have been released.

Local internal affairs bodies detained 132 foreign citizens for participation in the mass events of 9 to 12 August. As at 26 August, all the foreigners who had been detained had been released. No complaints were received from foreigners about their detention by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

From 9 to 26 August the Ministry of Internal Affairs received four complaints from citizens about illegal detention and two from legal persons about the detention of journalists (██████████).

These complaints were registered in accordance with the established procedure and were reviewed by the Ministry's structural units and local internal affairs bodies, in accordance with the Citizens' and Legal Entities' Appeals Act of 18 July 2011.

The Belarusian Government is fully aware of its responsibility as a State party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and reaffirms its intention to consider all such acts in strict compliance with the national legislation. **All the injured have been provided with the necessary medical assistance. All cases of violence and excessive use of force on both sides will be thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators will be punished.**

At the same time, it should be noted that during the protests of 9 to 12 August, the internal affairs bodies **took measures to suppress group violations of public order and mass riots**, in accordance with **the Public Events Act of 30 December 1997 and the Internal Affairs Agencies Act of 17 July 2007**.

During this period, the most active confrontations with law enforcement agencies took place in the protests in Minsk. In order to contain the illegal protests, in the interests of national security and public order, internal affairs officers and militarized units were forced to repeatedly use physical force, special means and materials.

The Investigative Committee, within its competence, is also taking urgent action in response **to criminal acts of rioting**, deliberate destruction and damage to property, resistance, violence and threats of violence **against persons defending public order**.

From 9 to 16 August, **123 criminal cases were initiated** (15 in Brest Province, 3 in Vitebsk Province, 15 in Gomel Province, 18 in Grodno Province, 17 in Minsk Province, 5 in Mogilev Province and 50 in Minsk).

Also, according to information from medical facilities, as a result of the illegal acts of certain destructive citizens, **131 staff members of the internal affairs bodies and 1 soldier from the Ministry of Internal Affairs militarized units received medical assistance**.

So far, according to information from the investigating authorities, 912 reports have been registered from medical facilities, along with complaints from citizens initiating criminal proceedings or the prosecution of police officers or members of special units or militarized units for what the complainants consider to be illegal detention, the use of physical force or special means or infliction of bodily harm of varying degrees of severity.



In total, as of 17 August, **at least 927 citizens of Belarus** had filed such complaints.

The Investigative Committee and its local branches received no allegations of illegal detention or the use of physical force by law enforcement officials against journalists or foreign nationals.

Investigations are organized and conducted in response to all reports. The investigations include the examination of video footage, the appointment of expert assessments to determine how, when and how seriously people were injured and requests for explanations from internal affairs officers and heads of internal affairs agencies, including those of the special units and the militarized units directly involved and those who were in charge of riot control and public order during the events that took place from 9 to 12 August in Minsk, the provincial capitals and other towns and cities. In addition, an investigation is currently being carried out into the death of [REDACTED], the first victim of the street demonstrations.

The purpose of these investigations is to objectively, fully and comprehensively understand the situation and to establish whether there is any evidence of crimes in the actions of law enforcement officers when they detained or transported citizens or held them at temporary holding facilities or the Criminal Detention Centre after their participation in mass events. Every such investigation is subject to supervision by the Office of the Procurator General.

To coordinate this work, an interdepartmental commission has been established under the auspices of the Office of the Procurator General, as Minister of Internal Affairs Yuri Karaev reported at a meeting with [REDACTED]. The commission includes representatives of the Office of the Procurator General, the Investigative Committee, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Committee on Forensic Examinations and members of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly.

These investigations have **so far not found information sufficient to determine whether there are grounds for instituting criminal proceedings against police officers and members of the militarized units.**

Since 17 August there have been no cases of violence against either demonstrators or persons protecting public order in the country, which is evidence of the ability of Belarus to solve its internal problems independently, including in the political sphere.
