

Human rights violations in Belarus 12/08-18/08

12th of August

► **Liudmila Atakulava**, a Young Front activist, has been sentenced to 10 days of administrative arrest for participation in a rally near the Russian Embassy on 11 August. The verdict has been passed by the court of Tsentralny district in Minsk.

Atakulava was charged with violation of rules of holding mass events (Article 23.34 of the Administrative Code).

As said by a Young Front activist Tatsiana Shaputska, ‘the trial was in fact held behind the closed doors’. ‘We weren’t told when the trial started. Our witnesses were not present in the court; the lawyer hadn’t managed to arrive yet. We saw Liudmila only when she was taken out of the court building. She could just shout to us that she had been sentenced to 10 days of arrest,’ Shaputska said.

► At 9.15 am the administration of Chyhunachny district police department of Vitsebsk familiarized **Andrei Levinau** with the conclusion of the head of the police department of Vitsebsk oblast executive committee, colonel Farmahei, according to which Levinau was to be fired from police.

The reason is that Mr. Levinau does not give up his intention to run at Chyhunachny electoral district #19 in Vitsebsk, where he would be a rival to the pro-governmental candidate Siarhei Siamashka, who is also a deputy in the present Chamber of Representatives.

Andrei Levinau is also threatened with a criminal case. If such case is brought against him (even without any results) his candidacy may not be registered by the appropriate electoral commission.

13th of August

► An enquiry has been made by a prosecutor in the case of a member of Salihorsk branch of the Young Front **Illia Shyla**.

The enquiry is made relating to the alleged fact of beating up a policeman during a protest rally in support of Georgia in front of the Russian Embassy on 11 August.

The documents have been sent to the prosecutor’s office. But it is difficult to imagine how handcuffed Illia Shyla could resist to policemen (the photos show how he was detained).

Illia Shyla was one of the detainees on Monday rally in support of Georgia. A report for unsanctioned picketing was drawn up against him. The report is to be studied by the commission on juvenile affairs in Salihorsk.

► Applicant for MP candidate on Paudneva-Zahodnij election district Yuras Karetnikau informed that the pressure raised on members of his team, who were proposed as a candidates to election polls commissions.

One student was notified by the administration of his university – either commission, either study.

Worker of ball bearing factory was deprived the bonus (350 000 BYR) because he was nominated to election poll commission. He was told by administration of the factory about the real motivation of this decision.

Uras Karetnikau forwarded the claim to election district commission, were he named these facts.

14th of August

► In Homel the democratic activist **Ales Sivakou**, the head of the initiative group of Kanstantsin Zhukouski, is fired from Homelkhlebpram enterprise. According to the activist, the marketing director of the enterprise told him to write an application for dismissal on his own free will, because otherwise he would be dismissed under an article of the Labor Code and the information would be put in his service record.

Sivakou asked for a week's delay in order to find another job. He is sure that the dismissal is connected to his participation in the elections and support to the oppositional candidate Zhukouski.

15th of August

► A student of the technical college, member of the initiative group of a candidate from the Belarusian Social Democratic Party (Hramada) Anatol Yurevich **Iryna Maksimenka** was pressurized by the deputy head of Slutsk district executive committee Piatro Dauhuchyts. He received a rebuke and was threatened with expulsion from the college. Dauhuchyts demanded that he stopped collecting signatures for Yurevich.

► A businessman from Zhdanovichy market **Ales Taustyka** has been fined 140,000 rubles for... speaking Belarusian.

“I was said, a woman filed a complaint against me to a regional tax inspection for my speaking in incomprehensible language with clients,” told the businessman to “Narodnaya Volya”. “As far as I can figure out, “incomprehensible language” is Belarusian, and I always speak Belarusian. The complaint was forwarded to the district tax inspection, but I wasn't allowed to read it. I was fined 140,000 rubles. Under some rules they have a right to adopt such decisions. The explanation was as following: for an inappropriate talking to a client. But that woman was not buying anything from me at all. It was just a person who came and started to swear and insult me. If it was a man, my conversation and actions would be completely different, I must say...”

Ales Taustyka is one of the leaders of small businessmen; several times was arrested for his political activities.

► Pressure on applicant for MP candidate **Iryna Veshtart** isn't calming down.

Iryna Veshtart registered her initiative group in Smarhon district commission 59. At first, her door to the apartment was painted, then door lock was damaged and window broken with a stone.

Practically every day Iryna received the anonymous letters, where she was offered not to participate in parliament elections. Also Veshtart's cell phone was attacked by calls from men, who found her phone number at an internet page in intimate section. The last used quite often as a pressure on women-activists.

► **Aliaksandar Kazulin** has been released from Vitsba-3 prison.

He was serving the 5.5-year prison term, allegedly for hooliganism, after challenging Aliaksandar Lukashenka during the presidential election.

Kazulin was granted pardon by special edict, signed by Lukashenka on Friday.

Kazulin's brother Uladzimir explains, yesterday Aliaksandar's father-in-law died. This morning Kazulin was called to the prison's administration, where he was informed about the death of his father-in-law and read the pardon order. However, Kazulin did not sign the agreement for pardon. He is not going to do that because he would admit his guilt by doing that. The prison administration released him without his signature – to participate in the funeral. It is still possible that after the funeral Aliaksandar will insist on returning to prison, Uladzimir Kazulin says.

The family of Kazulin hope that in any way the case will end up with complete release of Aliaksandar. The hopes for release were based on the talks on the corridors between the German Embassy and Lukashenka's Office which continued last week. It is rumored that in their trade with the West the authorities were ready to release a group of political prisoners in exchange for some benefits.

The release of political prisoners, including Kazulin, is one of the main demands of the United Democratic Forces, the European Union and the United States. In winter, during the previous release of political prisoners, the authorities released almost everyone, with the exception of Kazulin.

17th of August

Kanstantsin Zhukouski plans to run in district # 38. On August 15th he was fined by Vetka rayon court. Judge Yu. Mazheika decided Zhukouski had committed an administrative infringement "which was revealed in entering the radiation polluted area" (Article 16.3 part 2 of the Administrative Code).

- On July 30th I was collecting signatures as usual. I decided to visit Biasiedz village of Vetka rayon. My potential voters live there. On my way I was stopped by patrol who asked if I had a permission to be there. I had not. However, there were no street signs which prohibit entering the area. There was only some self-made post, which said "entry prohibited" but it looked more like something made by a child.

In the court K. Zhukouski explained, the road signs are to look differently, as it is prescribed by the Road Regulations.

The candidate does not agree with the court verdict and plans to appeal against it to Homel oblast court.

18th of August

► **Mikita Krasnou**, a candidate for deputy of the European list, was summoned for interrogation in half an hour after he brought his documents for registration as a candidate.

“I have submitted by documents to be registered as a deputy at precinct No.92 of Autazavodski district today. In half an hour I received a phone call to my mobile phone and invited for a “conversation” to the police department of Zavodzki district of Minsk. I was told they want to ask a few questions about the blast in Minsk July 4. But I had been summoned to the KGB in relation to this case 4 times already! I refused to go to police department without an official writ,” Mikita Krasnou said.

It is worth mentioning that Mikita Krasnou was summoned to the police department at 7 p.m. Today the politician plans to go to Lithuania. In connection with the recent events, Krasnou supposes he could be banned leaving the country.

► In the night crossing the border in Grodno two activists were detained Arina Liseckaya (Movement for Freedom) and Kristina Manchuk (Young Front).

Customs examination was held with huge violations. Finally stickers and polish newspaper “Gazeta Wyborcza” were confiscated.

After two hours of detention the activists were released.