



Belarus

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10 May 2011

Bitter Winter in Belarus

The FIDH film Bitter Winter in Belarus denounces the violent repression exercised by the Belarus authorities against all the dissident voices that have protested against the circumstances surrounding the December 19, 2010 presidential elections.

[Bitter winter in Belarus - FIDH](#) par [fidhdailymotion](#)

Following the announcement of the election results, about 700 people who were peacefully demonstrating in the centre of Minsk, to denounce electoral fraud, were arrested, beaten and sent to prison. Among them were seven opposition candidates, young pro-democracy activists, independent journalists and human rights defenders. Some of the activists received disproportionate prison sentences, while others had their offices repeatedly raided and ravaged by security forces. Very few had access to a fair means of defence, and all were subjected to threats on the part of the regime. President Lukashenko himself declared, the day after the election results were announced: "Let's finish the job! There shall be no more idiotic democracy in the country! [...] They shall all go to prison, in accordance with the law".

Today the repression continues. Two former presidential candidates, Andrei Sannikov et Vladzimir Niaklayev are still, respectively, in detention and under house arrest. The lawyers of the journalist Irina Khalip, wife of the candidate Sannikov, have had their licences withdrawn. The two independent newspapers "Nasha Niva" and "Narodnaya Volia" have been banned. Six journalists have been accused of having participated in "massive disturbances of the peace", and one of their colleagues has been sentenced to four years in prison. Human rights defenders are more than ever targeted by the regime, and are subjected to smear campaigns broadcast all day long on all the public channels [\[1\]](#) .

This short film shows damning testimonies of a society stifled by a regime that is trying at all costs to suppress its democratic demands.

FIDH will issue a detailed report on the repression in the coming weeks.

[\[1\]](#) See the press release of May 4, 2011 and the Urgent appeal BLR 001/0111/OBS 004 published by the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights defenders (a joint programme of FIDH and OMCT)