

National Human Rights Index
<http://index.belhelcom.org>
2023
The right to work:

Expert Commentary

| | | |
|--|------------|-------------|
| The score: | 3,4 | -0,1 |
| <i>Including scores by component:</i> | | |
| • Freely chosen work without any kind of compulsion | 3,1 | -0,2 |
| • Equal access to work for all | 3,5 | -0,2 |
| • Just and favorable conditions of work | 4,0 | -0,1 |
| • Fair remuneration | 4,9 | |
| • Employment promotion and protection against unemployment | 3,0 | -0,1 |
| • Protection mechanisms | 1.7 | |

In assessing the state of the right to work in 2023, the Index experts gave lower scores than in 2022.

Among the main reasons:

- forced labor in boarding homes for people with disabilities, compulsory rehabilitation centres, correctional institutions persists; prisoners were massively engaged to perform work at state-owned industrial enterprises and the work rate for them actually increased; the intention to increase the period of compulsory work for students is actively discussed (this has already been done for medical students);
- a record low unemployment rate for Belarus has been recorded; the shortage of qualified specialists has increased significantly; unjustified dismissals for political reasons continue (with the practice spreading to the private sector);
- the practice of substituting labor relations with contractual ones (as a way to avoid numerous inspections in state organizations) has emerged;
- increased use of the concept of "non-working disability group": in the absence of public control mechanisms, the MREC abuses this concept, using it as a lever of pressure on people with disabilities;
- expansion of restrictions for the unemployed in the economy: increase of payment for public utilities for the so-called "deadbeats" and introduction of a tax on transfers from relatives;
- in accordance with Article 33 of the ILO Constitution, a resolution was adopted which calls the world community to reconsider relations with the Belarusian authorities (the decision was taken also because of the persecution of independent trade unions);
- positive changes: application of legislation on personal data protection led to the prohibition of video


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surveillance of workers in places of recreation and socializing, eating and changing clothes; completion of automation of the process of appointing sick leave; consolidation of the obligation to pay wages at least twice a month;

- the average wage in the country has increased, compared to 2022, the size of real wages has exceeded the level of 2021.

● **Freely chosen work without any kind of compulsion**

The experts noted a worsening situation with the provision of free choice of labor activity, including at the legislative level. In 2023, manifestations of this trend were noted in the field of medicine. Thus, the authorities made changes¹ to the conditions of residency training for doctors, increasing the period of mandatory work - at least 5 years². In case of refusal to work out, young doctors (including part-time students) are obliged to reimburse the costs of training in 2.5 times the amount. The upper limit of the "working time" is not fixed by law. Commenting on the introduction of this provision, Lukashenko said that such measures are necessary for graduates of higher education institutions regardless of the field³.

In addition, in 2023, the number of places for targeted training in health care increased to 80%. It should be taken into account that targeted training by definition implies the obligation to work in the organization for which the specialist is trained for at least 5 years.

Forced labor still remains in Belarus in boarding homes for people with disabilities, compulsory rehabilitation centers⁴, correctional institutions⁵. At the same time, the experts noted the deterioration of the situation compared to 2022, as well as the change in the state rhetoric in this aspect. The authorities proudly announced the involvement of prisoners in labor, even broadcasting the success of goods made by prisoners at the opening of the "online store showroom" of the Department of Corrections in April 2023.⁶

In addition, the authorities actively discussed the intention to increase the period of compulsory work for students, which has already been implemented for medical students, as well as reported on the

¹ <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=H12300308>

² The new provisions will [apply](#) to those who started residency training after February 1, 2024. Residency training for citizens of the Republic of Belarus, foreign citizens and stateless persons permanently residing in the Republic of Belarus, refugees is financed from the republican budget, which entails the obligation to work at least five years in a state health care organization, a state medical research organization or an educational institution that provides training, advanced training and (or) retraining. Since only foreign citizens can study in clinical residency for a fee, it also means that discrimination is [created](#) against citizens of the Republic of Belarus, permanently residing foreign citizens and refugees: they are the ones who are obliged to work for at least 5 years.

³ <https://president.gov.by/ru/events/soveshchanie-po-voprosam-sovershenstvovaniya-obrazovatelnoy-sfery>

⁴ <https://spring96.org/ru/news/113235>

⁵ <https://news.zerkalo.io/economics/37349.html>

⁶ <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/shourum-predpriyatij-departamenta-ispolnenija-nakazaniy-otkrylsja-v-dzerzhinskom-rajone-562473-2023/>, <https://news.zerkalo.io/economics/37273.html>



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involvement of persons not employed in the economy in public works (snow clearing, cleaning of territories, etc.). In 2023, prisoners were massively involved in work at state-owned industrial enterprises (e.g. Minsk Tractor Plant, JSC "Belshina"). In 2023, the work rate for prisoners was also actually increased.⁷

In the context of the prohibition of forced labor, it is also worth noting the continuing situation with staff shortages in the medical field and the accompanying exploitation of the labor of medical professionals.⁸

Experts also noted the worsening situation of forced labor of children and youth. As justification, the experts cited the situation with the increase in the length of service time for young medics, as well as the involvement of children from military-patriotic classes and young people⁹ in the cleaning of courtyards. Forced labor also remained in children's correctional institutions¹⁰. As before, students of agrarian-technical specialties were involved in agricultural work during school hours. The authorities stated the need to solve personnel issues with the help of young people¹¹.

In 2023, the outflow of personnel abroad continued and the shortage of qualified specialists increased significantly¹². According to the study, up to half of them leave jobs for "ideological" reasons¹³.

⁷ According to experts, such a situation was clearly seen in the sphere of woodworking: due to the withdrawal in 2022 of Western companies from Belarus (for example, IKEA), to which the products made by prisoners were sold, such goods began to be sold on the domestic market at a lower cost. At the same time, the profit margins in the penitentiary institutions remained the same. Thus, prisoners had to work harder to fulfill the norm. The prison administrations also used physical violence against those who refused to work as a method of coercion.

⁸ For example, according to the 2023 study, every health worker is exposed to at least one labor exploitation practice (e.g., 97% experience increased workload), and most are exposed on a regular basis (76%). In practice, health professionals work an average of 55 hours per week, with the hours of work corresponding to a rate of about 43 hours. Researchers have identified three ways in which additional work is coerced: 1) low salaries that encourage medics to "take" multiple rates, 2) group pressure that normalizes forced work, and 3) the direct threat of punishment. P. 3-4, Exploitation of labor of medical workers in Belarus. Report on the results of sociological research. June 2023 (hereinafter - [Report](#) "Exploitation of labor of medical workers in Belarus")

⁹ <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mezhdu-subbotnikom-i-prazdnikom-znak-ravno-molodezh-sovetskogo-rajona-minska-vyshla-na-uborku-ulits-557412-2023/>

¹⁰ <https://www.belta.by/society/view/kak-zhivut-v-kolonii-i-o-chem-mechtajut-podrostki-osuzhdennye-po-narkostatje-600242-2023/>

¹¹ <https://pravo.by/novosti/obshchestvenno-politicheskie-i-v-oblasti-prava/2023/october/75758/>, <http://www.belta.by/society/view/sergeenko-zadacha-rabotodatelja-vernut-otsluzhivshogo-molodogo-spetsialista-na-prezhnee-rabochee-mesto-594605-2023/>

¹² <https://news.zerkalo.io/economics/52352.html>

¹³ <https://news.zerkalo.io/economics/49923.html>



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| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Number of dismissed persons ¹⁴ | 736 077 | 713 664 | 739 314 | 709 526 | 692 950 |
| Number of persons hired ¹⁵ | 689 781 | 667 844 | 666 842 | 637 756 | 630 151 |
| Difference between indicators | 46 296 | 45 820 | 72 472 | 71 770 | 62 799 |
| Number of employed persons on average for the period ¹⁶ | 4 334 200 | 4 319 600 | 4 284 500 | 4 214 300 | 4 152 200 |
| Number of vacancies applied to labor, employment and social protection authorities at the end of the period ¹⁷ | 83 571 | 71 995 | 92 003 | 95 342 | 134 836 |

The practice of unjustified dismissals for political reasons continued in 2023¹⁸. The practice of "mop-ups" at enterprises continued¹⁹. The deterioration of the situation recorded by experts is associated with the widespread spread of this practice to the private sector²⁰. The situation on the labor market is as follows. On the one hand, due to the situation of economic crisis and shortage of personnel in some sectors of the economy (mainly labor specialties), layoffs were avoided. On the other hand, as part of the practice of intimidation and deterrence, employers, if necessary, found any, even the most insignificant reasons to dismiss "undesirable" workers. The ideological component of human resources management at enterprises intensified in 2023.²¹

The experts also noted the practice of replacing labor relations with contractual relations that emerged in 2023. Since hiring in state organizations (with a share of state participation) is preceded by numerous

¹⁴ <http://dataportal.belstat.gov.by/Indicators/Preview?key=153148>

¹⁵ <http://dataportal.belstat.gov.by/Indicators/Preview?key=153145>

¹⁶ <http://dataportal.belstat.gov.by/Indicators/Preview?key=153171>

¹⁷ <http://dataportal.belstat.gov.by/Indicators/Preview?key=153142>

¹⁸ For example, after the hospitalization of former presidential candidate Viktor Babaryka, it was [reported](#) about the detention of 5 medical personnel who worked in the medical institution where Babaryka was treated and their subsequent dismissal "for being absent". This happened after information leaked from the hospital about Babaryka's stay there

¹⁹ <https://euroradio.fm/ru/oblavny-na-zavodakh-kak-siloviki-ustrayayut-zachistki-na-predpriyatiyakh>, <https://euroradio.fm/ru/v-grodnoenergo-prodolzhayutsya-massovye-uvolneniya-po-politicheskim-motivam>, <https://news.zerkalo.io/life/36305.html>, <https://news.zerkalo.io/life/39516.html> The [practice](#) of deprivation of the right to practice as a lawyer has also continued. Thus, in the period from 2020 to December 2023, 128 lawyers were denied the right to practice the profession. In 2023, 6 lawyers were sentenced in criminal cases: [Vitaliy Brahinets](#), [Alexander Danilevich](#), [Anastasia Lazarenko](#), [Aleksei Borodko](#), [Yulia Yurgilevich](#), [Mikhail Makarov](#).

²⁰ The experts also cited the practice where, after sending lists of workers to be dismissed, the authorities came to the organization to verify that the dismissal had actually taken place.

²¹ According to experts, the workers were shown Soviet-style propaganda videos, the authorities organized demonstration raids on enterprises, and organized so-called "mobile court sessions" at the enterprises.



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checks and the need to collect a large number of documents, such organizations began to resort to the execution of a contractual (service) agreement with the candidate in order to accelerate the closing of the vacancy. It was assumed that an employment contract would be concluded in the future, but in practice the contractual relationship, which lacked labor guarantees (including dismissal) and opportunities for promotion, was retained.

In the context of freedom from physical and psychological harassment, including sexual harassment, the experts noted a slight deterioration. Work pressure continued to be experienced by health professionals. The experts also noted the misogynistic rhetoric of the authorities that accompanied the introduction of gender quotas for surgical specialties in 2023. In addition, experts questioned the freedom from pressure in state-owned enterprises where employees work alongside prisoners, who are escorted to the workplace and have guards assigned to them.

As positive developments aimed at ensuring freedom from physical and psychological harassment, experts noted the practice of enforcement of the legislation on personal data protection in labor relations, such as the implementation of the prohibition of video surveillance of workers in places of rest and communication, eating and changing clothes.

- **Equal access to work for all**

Belarusians continue to face discrimination in labor relations, in particular on the basis of age²² and gender. At the same time, in 2023, there was a tendency to move away from formal equality, i.e. to enshrine discriminatory approaches at the legislative level. In this regard, the experts noted:

- new rules of allocation in surgical subordination, directly discriminating against women²³;
- the introduction of a ban on holding the position of diplomat or serving in the prosecutor's office²⁴ in connection with the possession of documents from foreign countries granting privileges and advantages in connection with political, religious views or nationality (residence permit)²⁵.

The experts also noted the expansion in 2023 of the use of the concept of "non-working disability group" by medical and rehabilitation expert commissions (MREC). In the absence of public control mechanisms, MRECs misuse this notion, using it as a lever of pressure on people with disabilities. At the same time, the concept of "non-working group" is absent in the legislation.

The previously noted negative trend towards formalization of discrimination in the labor sphere,

²² According to the [study](#), 53% of the surveyed employers refuse to hire candidates because of their age, the majority of the surveyed job seekers (64%) believe that there is age discrimination in Belarus.

²³ In June 2023, the Ministry of Health [issued](#) an order stating that the number of places for allocation to surgical sub-residency "shall be determined separately for male and female students". According to the order, the number of places for women, as opposed to male students, is disproportionately smaller (accordingly, men are accepted despite lower scores), which directly discriminates against

²⁴ <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=P32300271>

²⁵ [Human Rights in Belarus: Main Trends of State Policy. July-December 2023](#), Belarusian Helsinki Committee (hereinafter - Public Policy Trends, BHC review) P. 12-13



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legislative segmentation of people for the purpose of hiring was observed in 2023 at the level of national policy, which directly contradicts the standard that the state pursues a policy of promoting equality and non-discrimination in employment relations. In lowering the score, the experts also pointed to the closure of private kindergartens²⁶ by the authorities in 2023, which reduced access to work for women raising children.

However, the experts noted some increase in the number of jobs for persons with disabilities in specialized enterprises due to the redistribution of the market to the Russian Federation.

- **Just and favorable conditions of work**

In the context of the national policy on the prevention of accidents at work, the experts noted no significant changes in 2023. In practice, as before, violations of occupational safety rules leading to fatalities were encountered²⁷. Statistics from government agencies vary: according to the Department of Labor Inspection, the number of victims increased from 1781 in 2022 to 1858 in 2023²⁸. According to Belstat, the number of victims in absolute terms decreased compared to 2022, while the relative value - the number of victims per 1000 workers - increased.

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| Number of victims of accidents at work ²⁹ | 1793 | 1754 | 1743 | 1671 | 1659 |
| Number of victims of occupational accidents per 1,000 employees ³⁰ | 0,54 | 0,53 | 0,54 | 0,53 | 0,54 |

As a positive moment the experts noted the situation with injuries in the transport industry. Despite the reorientation of transportation to the eastern direction due to the introduction of sanctions, the number of accidents in this industry has not increased, which may indicate the practical implementation of international labor protection standards in this area.

²⁶ https://tochka.by/articles/life/v_minske_ne_ostalos_ni_odnogo_chastnogo_detskogo_sada/

²⁷ The experts noted an [incident](#) at Belkalyi OJSC, which resulted in a criminal case under the article on violation of labor safety rules. Mine workers were being lowered in a cage down the shaft to a horizon of minus 445 meters. As a result of the fall of the cage below the established mark, five persons - workers of the underground section - received injuries of varying severity

In the afternoon of August 3, a teenager working there on summer vacation died at the grain drying complex of an agricultural enterprise in Mstislavsky district. There was no authorization to work at the grain drying complex, the work was carried out in violation of labor protection and safety rules.

At the beginning of August a worker died at the construction of the housing complex "Minsk Mir". The prosecutor's office [revealed](#) gross violations of labor protection legislation.

See also. <https://news.zerkalo.io/accidents/54633.html>, <https://news.zerkalo.io/life/53648.html>, <https://news.zerkalo.io/accidents/41605.html>

²⁸ <https://www.mintrud.gov.by/printv/ru/vsemirnii-den-ot-2024-ru>

²⁹ <http://dataportal.belstat.gov.by/Indicators/Preview?key=153161>

³⁰ <http://dataportal.belstat.gov.by/Indicators/Preview?key=153165>



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In 2023, new labor protection rules came into force for the production of rubber and plastic products³¹, working with hazardous chemicals³², and working at radio communication facilities³³.

With regard to the mechanism of compensation in case of injury at work, experts noted a negative trend. Thus, in the situation of 2023, when several major industrial accidents occurred³⁴, prompt assistance to victims was not provided. According to experts, this exposed more problems of the current mechanism, showed the unwillingness of local officials to make prompt independent decisions on the settlement of individual cases. The increase in budgetary constraints in 2023 led to an increase in the number of cases of denial of compensation, and the practice of "manual" management led to artificial underestimation of the amount of compensation (MREC experts increasingly began to underestimate the degree of damage in case of injury).

In the context of ensuring a safe and healthy working environment, it should be noted that in 2023 the Ministry of Health updated the sanitary and epidemiological requirements for working conditions for industrial workers³⁵, as well as the program for the installation of water deferrization stations³⁶. At the same time, it is known that when sending convicts to work in state-owned industrial enterprises, the allocation of positions took place without taking into account the physiological and medical characteristics of prisoners.

Opportunities for promotion, as before, are predetermined by political considerations. At the same time, in 2023, experts noted a worsening of the situation due to the fact that not only the "trustworthiness" of the employee himself, but also that of his relatives³⁷ is taken into account. Being "neutral" is no longer sufficient for promotion; in 2023, there was a shift towards the need to demonstrate a clearly "pro-government" position³⁸.

The situation with respect to compliance with the limits of working hours and week has worsened. The experts noted the situation in the medical field: almost half of the medics in hospitals regularly work shifts of more than 24 hours in a row, 62% - more than 12 hours in a row without a double rest³⁹.

As positive changes the experts noted the following:

³¹ <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=W22340196p>

³² <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=W22339464p>

³³ <https://pravo.by/novosti/obshchestvenno-politicheskie-i-v-oblasti-prava/2023/maj/74070/>

³⁴ <https://realt.onliner.by/2023/06/07/ishhut-dvux-rabotnikov-predpriyatiya-chp-na-svetlogorskoy-ckk>

³⁵ <https://pravo.by/novosti/novosti-pravo-by/2023/november/75887/>

³⁶ <https://www.belta.by/society/view/ministr-zhkh-rasskazal-o-stroitelstve-v-belarusi-stantsij-obezzhelezivaniya-vody-587605-2023/>

³⁷ For example, there were reports of enterprises tracking cases where children of employees applied for apostille for documents, information on children traveling abroad for education, etc.

³⁸ In connection with the establishment of a new "pro-governmental" party "Belaya Rus" in 2023, employees are [forced](#) to join this party, being threatened with dismissal and obstacles to promotion. In relation to "neutral" workers in state organizations, it is practiced to conclude a contract for 1 year and no more, the same applies to first-time employees

³⁹ P. 21, Report "Exploitation of the Labour of Medical Workers in Belarus"



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- completion of automation of the process of assigning sick pay, development of a program ("Personal Cabinet of Contribution Payer") administered by the Social Security Fund⁴⁰, with the help of which employees will have independent access to information on sick pay and will be able to control the process of its assignment;
- changes to the procedure for calculating sick pay, which, among other things, are aimed at reducing the number of errors made by accountants (effective from January 1, 2024)⁴¹;
- the obligation to pay wages at least twice a month (previously, the contract could provide for a lump-sum payment).⁴²

In the situation with measures to combine work with family responsibilities in 2023, the trend for deterioration continued. In this regard, experts noted the closure of private kindergartens, the increasing number of cases of refusal of employers in the regions to provide a day off work with pay for parents raising children with disabilities and from large families (citing a shortage of labor). Refusals to allocate (redistribute) after graduation from a higher or professional school to localities where the spouse is serving/working have become more frequent.

- **Fair remuneration**

When considering this component, the experts noted a contradictory situation: on the one hand, in 2023, the Belarusian economy saw an increase in median (by 20%) and real wages, while on the other hand, political problems persisted. According to experts, the latter offset the effect of economic growth; as a result, taking into account the human rights-based approach, the score for the "Fair Remuneration" component remained at the level of 2022.

The situation of providing equal remuneration for work of equal value without any distinction has not changed in 2023. The gender wage gap remained the same. In addition, the gender wage gap (36%) was also confirmed in the medical field in the 2023 survey⁴³.

There was an improvement in the context of wage security⁴⁴. In 2023, the national average wage increased, compared to 2022, the real wage exceeded the 2021 level⁴⁵. The ratio of wages to the cost of goods/services recorded in 2023 is one of the best in the history of the Republic of Belarus. This situation is explained by demographic processes, shortage of qualified personnel, market redistribution to Russia⁴⁶. Nevertheless, problems with the affordability of some groups of goods, such as medicines,

⁴⁰ <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=Z22300348>, <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-fszn-rasskazali-kto-mozhet-rabotat-v-lichnom-kabinete-platelschika-vznosov-bez-elektronnoj-tsifrovoj-611465-2024/>

⁴¹ <https://pravo.by/novosti/novosti-pravo-by/2023/january/72706/>

⁴² <https://neg.by/novosti/otkrytj/luchshie-dni-mesyatsa-dlya-vyplaty-zarplaty/>

⁴³ P. 53, Report "Exploitation of the Labour of Medical Workers in Belarus"

⁴⁴ <https://beroc.org/upload/medialibrary/3d0/3d004c12a6589d5aff009116c9d7c124.pdf>

⁴⁵ P.3, <https://beroc.org/upload/medialibrary/c71/c71f338b6c131a1686db8364519e7246.pdf>

⁴⁶ <https://www.dw.com/ru/ekonomika-vosstanavlivaetsa-eksperty-o-pricinah-rosta-zarplat-v-belarusi/a-66481634>, p. 5-6, <https://beroc.org/upload/medialibrary/647/647e862d5e874fa209ce7bf372ec1dd0.pdf>



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have intensified.

In the context of determining the periodically revised minimum wage, it is worth noting that during 2023 the authorities did not index the minimum wage: its amount was 554 rubles⁴⁷. The minimum wage did not keep pace with the purchasing power and accrued wages.

From the economic point of view, the situation with ensuring regular, timely and full payment of wages has improved. Nevertheless, experts noted the impact of sanctions and counter-sanctions on the private sector, which, in turn, experienced problems in ensuring payments. It should be noted that the authorities made decisions to impose counter-sanctions without taking into account the opinions of a wide range of stakeholders.

On the issue of ensuring regular, timely and full payment of wages, presidential decree No. 3 "On Measures to Ensure Timely Payment of Wages" was adopted in January 2023. The Department of the State Labor Inspection of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection has been granted the right to issue a demand to employers to liquidate wage arrears. It is issued without the need for an inspection, provided that the facts of violations are confirmed as a result of the examination of documents requested from the employer⁴⁸.

- **Employment promotion and protection against unemployment**

In 2023, a record low unemployment rate for Belarus was recorded. However, it should be noted that this situation is primarily due to the natural movement of the population, the outflow of the able-bodied population from the country, which was caused by the continuation of repressions and ineffective demographic policy of the state. In other words, the situation with unemployment was influenced by the economic conjuncture, not by the state: the authorities did not make effective civilized efforts that would have been directly aimed at promoting employment.

On the labor market in 2023 there was a noticeable shortage of personnel⁴⁹, as before, especially in the medical field⁵⁰. July 2023 marked an anti-record at least since the beginning of 2010: the country as a whole was short of nearly 130,000 employees in all sectors as of July 17.⁵¹

National policies aimed at eliminating unemployment and underemployment and meeting labor needs are developed by government agencies without the participation of interest groups; there is no inclusiveness or transparency in such a process. All independent trade unions have been eliminated. According to the experts' observation, the quality of state statistics has deteriorated in 2023 and the informativeness of state materials on unemployment has decreased.

In the context of provision and sufficiency of compensation in case of job loss, the situation has

⁴⁷ <https://www.picodi.com/by/mozna-tanniej/minimum-wages-2023>

⁴⁸ <https://president.gov.by/ru/documents/ukaz-no-3-ot-9-yanvarya-2023-g>

⁴⁹ <https://neg.by/novosti/otkrytiy/rabochie-vmesto-aytishnikov-i-migratsiya-v-oblastyakh-realii-rynka-truda-v-2023-godu/>

⁵⁰ <https://news.zerkalo.io/economics/39760.html>

⁵¹ <https://news.zerkalo.io/economics/43966.html>



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worsened. Thus, in 2023, the authorities put into practice the provision of decree No. 3 "On Promotion of Employment", according to which persons not employed in the economy should pay for gas, heating and hot water at prices (tariffs) that ensure "full compensation of economically justified costs of their provision". As noted by experts, the amount of unemployment benefits is very low, moreover, the unemployed have an additional burden to pay for utilities at increased rates.

In general, a situation has developed in which a vulnerable group of people without work is under attack by the state. From 2023, people who have been continuously listed in the "social parasites" database for more than five years are subject to special checks on the consistency of expenditure with income in order to identify the taxable base of the new tax⁵². For such persons, there are limits on the amount of money received from relatives that is not subject to tax (not more than 100 basic units per year; approximately 1,170 euros). For amounts in excess of this, income tax of 10% of the excess amount must be paid to the budget.⁵³

Experts also noted that the status of employed in the economy has become actively used in politically motivated cases to determine the type of punishment. If the defendant is employed, there is an increased likelihood of punishment in the form of "chemistry" (restriction of freedom), if not - in the form of imprisonment.

In 2023, state policy was largely inconsistent with the standard that the state must implement mechanisms to promote new jobs. Changes to the Tax Code, the development of legislation limiting the possibility of creating sole proprietorships depending on the type of activity, and the introduction of a state price control system - all of this hindered the normal development of business, worsened the productivity of enterprises and did not contribute to the creation of new jobs. In addition, the authorities forced private businesses to voice their salaries, as they introduced a limit on the ratio of employee and manager salaries⁵⁴. At the same time, the government continued to support the creation of new jobs through innovative projects.

- **Protection mechanisms**

Mechanisms to address violations of the right to work remain ineffective. Independent trade unions were abolished in 2022, and in 2023 the authorities finally suppressed the "remnants" of independent civil society in the labor sphere⁵⁵. The state not only fails to ensure the right to form a trade union, but also punishes the attempt to exercise it.

Within the framework of the procedure under Article 33 of the Statute of the International Labor Organization (ILO), on June 12, 2023, the ILO resolution was adopted, which calls the world community

⁵² This [tax](https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=H12200230&p1=1&p5=0) sought to be introduced back in 2015, but was canceled after protests in 2017 and replaced with the obligation to pay the full cost of utility bills <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=H12200230&p1=1&p5=0>

⁵³ <https://news.zerkalo.io/economics/34093.html>

⁵⁴ <https://www.belta.by/society/view/tsifry-shokirujut-kak-otlichajutsja-v-belarusi-zarplaty-rukovoditelej-torgovyh-setej-i-ih-rabotnikov-549608-2023/>

⁵⁵ <https://spring96.org/ru/news/113363>, <https://www.industrialunion.org/ru/v-belarusi-prodolzhayutsya-repressii-protiv-profsoyuznyh-aktivistov>



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to reconsider relations with the Belarusian authorities⁵⁶. Such a decision was made, among other things, because of the persecution of independent trade unions and their leaders in Belarus.

According to the Global Index of the International Trade Union Confederation on the observance of labor rights in 2023, Belarus is included in the list of the ten worst countries for workers⁵⁷.

According to experts, in 2023 the situation in the context of legal remedies has worsened compared to 2022. According to experts, in a general atmosphere of fear people, fearing unlawful retaliation, do not talk about their rights at all. Mentioning the possibility of protecting rights is seen as an attack on the authorities, and a potential accusation of "extremism" is used by employers as a lever of pressure on the employee.

It should be noted that experts, assessing protection mechanisms in previous years, concluded that there is no effective judicial and other appropriate remedies as of August 2020. At the same time, there is judicial practice of collecting wage arrears and reinstatement with a positive outcome. The Labor Inspectorate under the Ministry of Labor is quite effective in pre-trial proceedings to address complaints about wage delays. In 2023, 321 lawsuits of reinstatement were considered in court, of which 134 were satisfied. Also, 951 lawsuits on payment of wages were considered in courts, of which 849 were satisfied.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_867817.pdf

⁵⁷ <https://www.globalrightsindex.org/en/2023>. The following indicators were assessed: civil liberties, the right to form and join trade unions, trade union activity, the right to collective bargaining, and the right to strike.

⁵⁸ https://www.court.gov.by/ru/justice_rb/statistics/69694c4d3e774d6e.html



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