

## National Human Rights Index

<https://index.belhelcom.org>

2025

### Right to Education

Expert Commentary

<b>The score:</b>	<b>3,8</b>	<b>-0,1</b>
<i>Including scores by component:</i>		
• Preschool and primary education	4,5	-0,1
• Secondary education	3,5	-0,1
• Technical and vocational education	4,8	-0,1
• Higher education	4,2	-0,1
• Educational opportunities and academic freedom	1,9	-0,1

In assessing the situation with the right to education in 2025, the Index experts recorded the continuation of declining scores across all components. 2025 is distinguished by several features compared with previous years.

On the one hand, in the field of inclusive education, genuine institutional shifts were documented – shifts that civil society had been pursuing for two decades: methodological guidance on working with children with ASD and ADHD was developed, the first sign language manuals for special schools were created, and a long-term education concept was adopted.

On the other hand, 2025 saw the deepening of several negative trends:

- Completion of the liquidation of non-state education at all levels;
- Legislative entrenchment of the ideological function of the school through Directive No. 12;
- Further militarization of the educational process – with the extension of field training camps to 10 days and the introduction of a drone (UAV) operator elective;
- "Extremist" status imposed on a number of professional pedagogical initiatives and resources;
- Expansion of the grounds for politically motivated abuse of the "socially dangerous situation" (SDS) mechanism.



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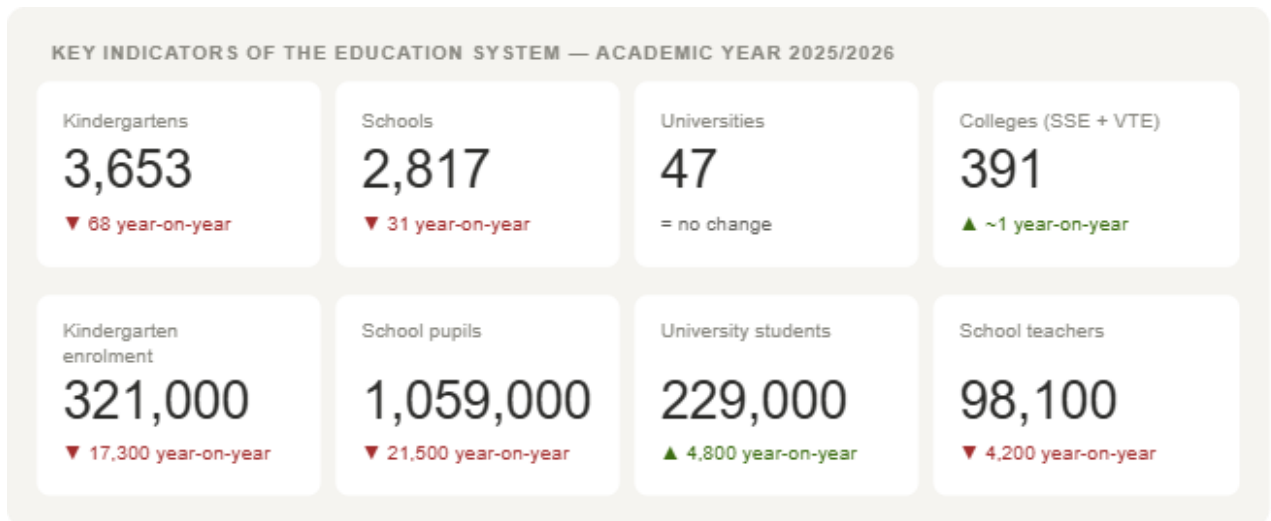
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The key legislative event of 2025 in the field of education was the entry into force, as of 1 September 2025, of amendments introduced by the Law of 5 December 2024 No. 46-Z "On Amendments to the Codes on Issues of Education."<sup>1</sup> The amendments affected virtually all participants in educational relationships: from educational institutions to learners and their legal representatives (see the commentary on the right to education for 2024<sup>2</sup>).

In general, the instability of the principal normative act governing education may be noted: the new version of the Education Code,<sup>3</sup> adopted in 2022, was amended in 2023, three times in 2024, and once in 2025 (in connection with amendments to notarial legislation<sup>4</sup>). The authorities describe such amendments as "fine-tuning" of the Education Code, of a "technical, practical, and operational character."<sup>5</sup>

The ideologization of all spheres of public life received additional comprehensive normative elaboration through Directive No. 12,<sup>6</sup> which approved the "Fundamentals of the Ideology of the Belarusian State." It declares education, culture, science, sport, ethno-confessional relations, and family, youth, information, and historical policy to be priority spheres in which ideological work is subject to special state oversight. Educational institutions are explicitly included among the "subjects of the implementation of the ideology of the Belarusian state." The instructional and methodological letter of the Ministry of Education for the 2025/2026 academic year explicitly prescribes that

<sup>1</sup> [Закон Республики Беларусь от 05.12.2024 г. № 46-З «Об изменении кодексов по вопросам образования» – Pravo.by](#)

<sup>2</sup> [https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/14\\_right\\_to\\_education\\_2024.pdf](https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/14_right_to_education_2024.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [«Кодекс Республики Беларусь об образовании» – тематические подборки НПА на Pravo.by](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Закон Республики Беларусь от 09.12.2025 г. № 110-З «Об изменении законов по вопросам нотариальной деятельности» – Pravo.by](#)

<sup>5</sup> [В Кодекс об образовании внесены коррективы. Что изменится с 1 сентября?](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Директива Президента Республики Беларусь от 09.04.2025 г. № 12 «О реализации основ идеологии белорусского государства» – Pravo.by](#)



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educational work in educational institutions must be conducted in full conformity with the Education Code and Directive No. 12 – both at the level of secondary school<sup>7</sup> and at the level of vocational, technical, and specialized secondary education.<sup>8</sup>

Experts from the iSANS analytical center, in their report,<sup>9</sup> note a systemic transformation of Belarusian education in the direction of militarization: "by 2025, a comprehensive state model of military-patriotic education had been formed, encompassing virtually all levels of education."<sup>10</sup> As of October 2025, up to 550 military-patriotic clubs were operating in the country. As of 1 September 2025, the duration of field training camps for tenth-grade students was extended from 5 to 10 days; the camps are conducted at the facilities of law enforcement units with round-the-clock residence in barracks. Since 2023, programs for training in unmanned aerial vehicle (drone/UAV) operation have been introduced; as of September 2025, a special UAV operator training elective was introduced in schools. In 2025, the MIA training center outside Minsk was converted into an MIA College. The Ministry of Education set the goal of establishing a military-patriotic club in every college in the country. The Prosecutor's Office of Belarus serves as the principal supervisory body over military-patriotic education in schools. Prosecutorial inspections result in the punishment of teachers who fail to comply with ideological requirements.

The use of the "socially dangerous situation" (SDS) mechanism to pressure parents was intensified: as of 2025, the number of grounds on which parents or the family may be placed in SDS status doubled<sup>11</sup> – from 6 to 12. Among the new grounds are four that are used by the authorities for political persecution.<sup>12</sup> This mechanism creates a threat of removal of children from the families of those subjected to political persecution, directly affecting children's rights to education, to being raised in the family, and to development.

The legislative entrenchment of politically motivated repression continues. By the Law of 12 July 2025 No. 86-Z "On Amendments to Laws on Issues of Securing the Rights of Children,"<sup>13</sup> a ban on working with children for "extremists" is introduced: they are prohibited from engaging in teaching activities, teaching activities in the field of physical culture and sport, from holding staff positions involving the performance of educational functions, and from other staff positions and occupations involving regular work with children. This prohibition extends to persons "with an unexpunged or unremoved criminal

<sup>7</sup> [https://edu.gov.by/urovni-obrazovaniya/srenee-obr/srenee-obr/informatsiya/2025-2026-uchebnyy-god/%D0%98%D0%9C%D0%9F\\_2025\\_2026\\_%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%89%D0%B0%D1%8F\\_%D1%87%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%82%D1%8C.docx](https://edu.gov.by/urovni-obrazovaniya/srenee-obr/srenee-obr/informatsiya/2025-2026-uchebnyy-god/%D0%98%D0%9C%D0%9F_2025_2026_%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%89%D0%B0%D1%8F_%D1%87%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%82%D1%8C.docx)

<sup>8</sup> [Инструктивно-методическое письмо+.pdf](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Militarization of Belarus's education system – iSANS](#)

<sup>10</sup> [https://isans.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/militarization-of-belaruss-education-system\\_2021\\_2025.pdf](https://isans.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/militarization-of-belaruss-education-system_2021_2025.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> [Постановление Совета Министров Республики Беларусь от 30.12.2024 г. № 1055 «О признании детей находящимися в социально опасном положении и нуждающимися в государственной защите» – Pravo.by](#)

<sup>12</sup> <https://trends.belhelcom.org/storage/reviews/June2025/Clq6C5o1M23dmNqxCufy.pdf>, p.13

<sup>13</sup> [Закон Республики Беларусь от 12.07.2025 г. № 86-З «Об изменении законов по вопросам обеспечения прав детей» – Pravo.by](#)



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record, as well as those who have committed extremism-related crimes regardless of the expungement or removal of the criminal record or the termination of criminal prosecution in respect of such crimes." In 2025, in connection with the expiry of the statute of limitations under Article 342 of the Criminal Code (under which participants in the 2020 protests were charged), the first cases of exemption from criminal liability were documented; however, even such persons continue to be included on the "extremist list," which maintains the prohibition on their engaging in teaching activities.

Also, amendments to the Law on the Rights of the Child<sup>14</sup> expanded the list of information "harmful to the health and development of a child" – adding thereto information "aimed at propaganda of homosexual relations, gender reassignment, paedophilia, and childlessness" – thereby making it impossible to explain to children, in an age-appropriate manner, the diversity of family models and reproductive choices.

In the framework of the official policy "to raise the prestige of the teaching profession," Resolution of the Ministry of Education of 3 November 2025 No. 191<sup>15</sup> adjusted the tariff grades and established incentive payments for teaching staff.

- **Pre-School and Primary Education**

With the entry into force of the 2024 Education Code amendments as of 1 September 2025, individual entrepreneurs lost the right to deliver pre-school and special education programs. This provision, in combination with the licensing barrier previously introduced (see the commentary for 2024), has in practice completely displaced non-state actors from the field of pre-school education. The private sector – which encompassed a variety of formats (mini-nurseries, early development centers, classes for children with disabilities) – has been liquidated by administrative means without any compensating alternative.

At the start of the 2025/2026 academic year, the number of kindergartens fell to 3,653 (68 fewer than the preceding year); the number of children enrolled fell from 338,300 to 321,000.<sup>16</sup>

In October 2025, a Council of Ministers resolution<sup>17</sup> addressed the issue of pre-school education in rural areas in the event of a kindergarten's closure or reorganization. It provides for the possibility of creating small multi-age groups, for which the requirements for educators and for the premises in which they are housed are eased. Experts assessed this development with ambivalence: on the one hand, it is an attempt to maintain territorial accessibility in the context of demographic contraction; on the other hand, the effective relaxation of sanitary and hygiene requirements for premises and of qualification requirements for educators may be interpreted as an acknowledgment of the state's inability to

<sup>14</sup> [Закон Республики Беларусь от 12.07.2025 г. № 86-З «Об изменении законов по вопросам обеспечения прав детей» – Pravo.by](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Постановление Министерства образования Республики Беларусь от 03.11.2025 г. № 191 «Об изменении постановления Министерства образования Республики Беларусь от 3 июня 2019 г. № 71» – Pravo.by](#)

<sup>16</sup> <https://telegraf.news/obshhestvo/v-belarusi-stalo-menshe-sadikov-shkol-i-uchenikov-v-chem-obrazovanie-pokazalo-rost/>

<sup>17</sup> [Постановление Совета Министров Республики Беларусь от 31.10.2025 г. № 600 «О создании групп для детей раннего и дошкольного возраста в сельской местности» – Pravo.by](#)



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maintain adequate infrastructure, while simultaneously compelling families either to change their place of residence or to accept reduced standards.

UNICEF,<sup>18</sup> with financial support from Russia, conducted a survey in 2025 of 1,116 educational institutions based on a specially developed inclusion index. The final materials of the study were not made publicly available; however, the very fact of conducting such an assessment was noted by experts as a positive development, particularly in relation to the pre-school and primary levels, which were included in the sample.

- **Secondary Education**

At the start of the 2025/2026 academic year, 2,817 schools were operating in the country – 31 fewer than the preceding year; the number of schoolchildren fell from 1,080,400 to 1,058,900, and the number of teachers from 102,300 to 98,100.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, from January to April 2025, the rabota.by index for the professional role of "Teacher, lecturer, pedagogue" was higher than the overall market index (9.1–10.6). In the summer, competition for teaching positions decreased in connection with an increase in the number of vacancies. The rabota.by index for this professional role during this period fell to 6.2, but in the first month of autumn again exceeded the overall market – 10.0 (average: 8.8).<sup>20</sup>

By Resolution of the Ministry of Education of 1 August 2025 No. 136,<sup>21</sup> a ban was introduced on the use of mobile devices in the buildings of general secondary education institutions during the school day, applicable to both learners and teachers. As of 1 September 2025, pupils surrender their smartphones upon entering the school building, which are returned to them at the end of the school day; all schools have organized dedicated storage spaces for devices. An exception is made for those who require the use of mobile devices for medical reasons (e.g., blood glucose monitoring for diabetes). Such a prohibition, in the view of experts, simultaneously serves as an instrument of control over the information environment of pupils and restricts teachers' ability to use digital tools in the educational process.

In 2025, the rules for the assessment of learners were amended,<sup>22</sup> entering into force on 1 September 2025. Among other provisions, the grounds for exemption from final examinations and the centralized examination were expanded, in particular on medical grounds for a portion of eleventh-grade pupils (previously this applied only to the second level of general secondary education, meaning the authorities thereby recognize the possibility of children with disabilities studying at the third level).

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<sup>18</sup> [Техническое задание \(1\).pdf.pdf](#)

<sup>19</sup> <https://telegraf.news/obshchestvo/v-belarusi-stalo-menshe-sadikov-shkol-i-uchenikov-v-chem-obrazovanie-pokazalo-rost/>

<sup>20</sup> [Педагоги в центре внимания: анализ рынка труда ко Дню учителя 2025 | Вечерний Брест](#)

<sup>21</sup> [Постановление Министерства образования Республики Беларусь от 01.08.2025 г. № 136 «Об изменении постановления Министерства образования Республики Беларусь от 3 августа 2022 г. № 227» – Pravo.by](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Постановление Министерства образования Республики Беларусь от 21.02.2025 г. № 43 «Об изменении постановления Министерства образования Республики Беларусь от 11 июля 2022 г. № 184» – Pravo.by](#)



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The assessment rules were also modified for minors studying within the penal correction system and in corrective labor and therapeutic centers: previously they were permitted to sit either the graduation examination or the centralized examination; following the entry into force of the resolution, they are limited to the graduation examination only – meaning they are effectively denied the opportunity to sit the examination that enables entry to a university.

From the standpoint of infrastructural accessibility, the Ministry of Education<sup>23</sup> reported in 2025 on the development of the pupil transportation system and the renewal of school transport, including transport for "children with special psychophysical development needs": by the start of the academic year, free transportation was organized for more than 55,000 learners, and the purchase of 237 school buses was planned for 2025, including 14 buses equipped with lifts.

Elements of inclusion are also present in the updated resolution<sup>24</sup> on extended-day groups, which establishes a unified procedure and replaces a number of documents that had been in force since 2011. The resolution grants greater discretion to the heads of institutions, as it provides for flexibility in the formation of groups (from pupils of one class, from pupils of different classes, or even from different levels). Furthermore, if there are insufficient children in a special class (for pupils with "special psychophysical development needs," SPDN) to open a separate group, it is permitted to form such groups from pupils of different classes, taking into account their individual characteristics and combining them with pupils without such characteristics.

A number of professional pedagogical communities and internet resources through which teachers exchanged methodological materials (including networks of Belarusian language and literature teachers, and media education networks) were in 2025 recognized as "extremist formations."<sup>25</sup> This means that teachers who previously used these resources are exposed to professional and legal risk, and that progressive teaching methodologies have in effect been placed outside the bounds of lawful application.

Private tutors were, in 2025, placed in conditions making lawful work effectively impossible: natural persons are prohibited from providing educational services (a legal entity status is required); the prohibition on distance learning, combined with the requirement to follow prescribed curricula under which the tutor is obligated to work, in practice blocks flexible formats of private instruction.

The mandatory character references for graduates as a selection instrument for admission to universities and colleges received detailed elaboration in 2025: among the key criteria that schools are required to indicate are membership in the BRSM (Belarusian Republican Youth Union) and participation in civic events. According to expert testimony, universities received instructions on

<sup>23</sup> [Минобразования: школы готовы к приему учащихся 1 сентября](#)

<sup>24</sup> [Постановление Министерства образования Республики Беларусь от 19.06.2025 г. № 107 «О группах продленного дня» – Pravo.by](#)

<sup>25</sup> [Образовательный проект "Nastaunik.info" признали "экстремистским формированием": хроника преследования 5 марта](#)



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ranking applicants taking into account the content of character references, which turns political loyalty into a formal barrier to access to higher education.

- **Specialized Secondary and Vocational Education**

Unlike pre-school and general education, the vocational and technical education (VTE) and specialized secondary education (SSE) sectors show growth: the number of learners in the VTE sector increased from 67,500 to 71,400; in SSE – from 116,600 to 119,900.<sup>26</sup> Growth in these sectors is partly driven by state policy directed at redirecting a portion of ninth-grade graduates toward working-class occupations. The Minister of Education publicly stated that enrollment in colleges in 2025 is almost 1.5 times higher than university enrollment, presenting this as confirmation of the "balanced" structure of personnel training.<sup>27</sup> Experts noted that the expansion of class sizes in existing institutions without an adequate increase in teaching staff and infrastructure means a deterioration in the quality of training alongside a formal increase in enrollment.

At the same time, experts consider that the growth in the VTE and SSE contingent is to a significant degree not the result of learners' free choice but a consequence of administrative pressure: schools are given target indicators for "directed admissions," homeroom teachers are obligated to steer pupils with scores below a certain threshold toward VTE. This should be characterized as the transformation of access to education into compulsion toward a particular educational trajectory – which, in combination with mandatory job placement, creates a path in which the individual has no real choice of either specialty or employer.

iSANS records in 2025 record enrollment of "targeted admission students" in vocational and higher education institutions.<sup>28</sup> The Belarusian education system is increasingly being adapted to the economic needs of the state: the number of state-funded places with mandatory work placement at enterprises is growing, and additional obstacles are being created to obtaining education abroad.

Practices of intimidation and political mobilization of learners in the context of elections continue. In January 2025, visits by police officers to colleges and lyceums were documented, where learners were warned of liability for participation in "unauthorized mass events" and for actions "of an extremist nature."<sup>29</sup>

- **Higher Education**

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<sup>26</sup> <https://telegraf.news/obshhestvo/v-belarusi-stalo-menshe-sadikov-shkol-i-uchenikov-v-chem-obrazovanie-pokazalo-rost/>

<sup>27</sup> [Иванец: набор в колледжи в этом году практически в 1,5 раза превышает набор в вузы](#)

<sup>28</sup> [Рекордный набор «целевиков» в вузы и пожизненный запрет на профессию для учителей. Система образования Беларуси в июле 2025 – iSANS](#)

<sup>29</sup> [В Могилёве перед выборами\\* милиция пугает студентов "ответственностью" за участие в "массовых мероприятиях" | Правозащитники за свободные выборы 2025](#)



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According to data from the Ministry of Education, universities were prepared to admit 48,300 applicants in 2025, and the state-funded enrollment plan was increased compared with 2024.<sup>30</sup> A shortage of teaching staff was noted at the same time.<sup>31</sup> Experts noted that the salary of a senior lecturer at BSU (Belarusian State University) is approximately 300 US dollars – lower than that of a secondary school teacher. Attracting staff to teaching positions at this level of remuneration becomes possible only by drawing on those who have no alternative on the labor market, which directly affects the quality of the teaching staff.

In 2025, the state continued to develop the model of selective support for "needed" directions and contingents – pursuant to a directive from A.Lukashenko (to create "a world-class educational hub no worse than Harvard"<sup>32</sup>), the establishment at BSU of a Higher School of Natural Sciences and Technologies was announced.<sup>33</sup> The cluster will include teaching buildings, scientific laboratories, dormitories, and a cultural and sports center.

In 2025, the active formation of a "unified scientific and educational space" with Russia continued.<sup>34</sup> Isolation from international scholarly exchange intensified: Belarusian universities in practice recognize only Russian citation indices, and faculty members are cut off from professional contacts with colleagues from "unfriendly" countries. Experts point out that these trends have a cumulative effect, which by 2025 is already clearly manifest in the declining positions of Belarusian universities in international rankings.

On 20 August 2025, the Central District Court of Minsk recognized the social media accounts of the European Humanities University (EHU) in Vilnius as "extremist materials."<sup>35</sup> On 15 September 2025, Prosecutor General of Belarus A. Shved submitted to the Supreme Court an application to recognize the EHU as an "extremist organization," with a ban on its activities, symbols, and attributes on the territory of Belarus.<sup>36</sup> Approximately 80% of current EHU students are Belarusian citizens. Should this application be granted, Belarusian citizens risk criminal prosecution for "participation in" or "financing" of the university's activities.

<sup>30</sup> <https://edu.gov.by/news/v-ministerstve-obrazovaniya-belarusi-opredelili-plan-priyema-v-uchrezhdeniya-vysshego-obrazovaniya-n/>

<sup>31</sup> [Как в вузах пытаются бороться с дефицитом преподавателей - Салідарнасць](#)

<sup>32</sup> [Андрей Иванец – о создании образовательного хаба, внедрении электронного дневника и новом учебном эксперименте](#)

<sup>33</sup> [Высшую школу естественных наук и технологий создадут в БГУ](#)

<sup>34</sup> [«Единое научное-образовательное пространство Союзного государства»: итоги визита министра науки и высшего образования России в Беларусь – iSANS](#)

<sup>35</sup> <http://mininform.gov.by/documents/respublikanskiy-spisok-ekstremistskikh-materialov/>

<sup>36</sup> <https://prokuratura.gov.by/ru/media/novosti/zashchita-sotsialnykh-prav-grazhdan/v-inykh-sferakh/generalnyy-prokuror-15092025/>



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The introduction of an AI course in higher education is planned only for the following year,<sup>37</sup> which raises questions as to how adequately higher education is currently addressing the ethical and methodological dimensions of AI use in the educational process.

- **Educational Opportunities and Academic Freedom**

The decline in the autonomy of higher education institutions combines with demographic contraction: universities are unable to adapt their programs of study, reduce irrelevant courses, or manage their human resources flexibly, owing to directive-style governance. The result is the accumulation of structural imbalances while institutions are formally preserved.

In November 2025, one of the most instructive cases directly pertaining to academic freedom, freedom of research, and the free dissemination of knowledge became known.<sup>38</sup> A 37-year-old lecturer at a Belarusian university was sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment and a fine of 300 base amounts for publishing articles about Belarus on Wikipedia. According to the Prosecutor General's Office, since 2020 he had posted materials characterized as containing "deliberately false information" about Belarus. The sentence was handed down under Article 369-1 of the Criminal Code ("Discrediting the Republic of Belarus").

As of 2025, the political prisoner database contains at least 19 individuals from the category of "university lecturers," including I.Andros,<sup>39</sup> F.Kandiranda,<sup>40</sup> Y.Chobot,<sup>41</sup> and others.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> [Иванец: в университетах появится дисциплина об основах использования технологии ИИ](#)

<sup>38</sup> [Автора белорусской Википедии осудили к двум годам колонии за "дискредитацию Беларуси"](#)

<sup>39</sup> [Iryna Andras – Political prisoners and repressed in Belarus](#)

<sup>40</sup> [Fiodar Kandyranda – Political prisoners and repressed in Belarus](#)

<sup>41</sup> [Yana Chobot – Political prisoners and repressed in Belarus](#)

<sup>42</sup> [Political prisoners and repressed in Belarus](#)



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