

Belarus Human Rights Index

<http://index.belhelcom.org>

2025

The right to peaceful assembly:

Expert commentary¹

The score:	1.1
<i>including scores by component:</i>	
● General principles	1.0
● Procedural issues regarding the organisation and conduct of assemblies	1.4
● Holding of assemblies	1.1

A description of the baseline situation regarding the exercise of the right to peaceful assembly can be found in the 2019 [review](#).

In 2025, experts did not record any fundamental changes in the situation concerning the right to peaceful assembly. The situation remained the same as in 2024, both at the level of legislation and in practice. The score for the right to peaceful assembly in 2025 is identical to that of 2024, including across all its components.

- **General principles**

Legislation still does not incorporate a presumption in favour of freedom of assembly and continues to impose excessive restrictions and requirements, including the obligation on organisers to cover related costs. In practice, the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality and non-discrimination are not respected, and attempts to obtain authorisation for peaceful assemblies remain unsafe due to the risk of political persecution.

- **Procedural issues regarding the organisation and conduct of assemblies**

In 2025, the regulation of assemblies remained unchanged: notification procedure continues to be burdensome and unsafe, and the right to challenge prohibitions is not ensured. The increasing ideological orientation of State bodies, the lack of independence of the judiciary, and the arbitrary

¹ 'Expert' and other nouns of the masculine grammatical gender are used in a gender-neutral sense and refer to all genders.



#human rights

#business and human rights

#discrimination

#human rights based approach

#international human rights enforcement mechanisms



office@belhelcom.org



www.belhelcom.org

application of legislation continue to exacerbate the situation. Spontaneous, simultaneous assemblies and counter-demonstrations remain prohibited.

- **Holding of assemblies**

In 2025, no peaceful assemblies were held on independent initiative; nevertheless, following the expiry of the statute of limitations, the authorities stepped up prosecutions under Article 342 of the Criminal Code (“organisation and preparation of actions grossly violating public order, or active participation therein”) for participation in the 2020 protests. At least 643 persons are known to have been convicted.² After the expiry of the limitation period for liability under this provision, it remained possible to prosecute those who had gone into hiding and been placed on wanted lists.³ In 2025, the practice of re-prosecuting those convicted on political grounds continued. Trials were frequently conducted against groups of individuals or even entire families, foreign nationals, persons returning from abroad, and individuals who had merely called for participation, which is interpreted by the authorities as the “organisation of group actions that grossly violate public order”.⁴

Courts began to impose sentences of restricted liberty more frequently, both with and without placement in an open-type correctional institution.⁵

The authorities continued to actively prosecute Belarusians *in absentia* for holding peaceful protests and symbolic events abroad, using anti-extremism legislation for this purpose. Investigative authorities publicly announced the mass identification of protest participants, the initiation of criminal cases under a number of politically motivated articles, as well as measures of financial pressure, including inspections and the confiscation of property in Belarus. In addition, the practice of issuing preventive threats of criminal liability in the run-up to commemorative dates was employed, indicating the ongoing criminalisation of peaceful protest and the transnational nature of repression against civic activism.⁶

Independent coverage and in-person monitoring of peaceful assemblies, where such assemblies occur, remain impossible in the context of widespread repression.

Human rights organisations that monitored peaceful assemblies have been dissolved; their members are in detention or are forced to carry out their activities in exile due to political persecution (or the risk of such persecution) within the country.⁷

² [Human rights situation in Belarus in 2025](#)

³ [Human rights situation in Belarus in 2025](#)

⁴ [Guarantees for the future ex-president and no leniency for ‘extremists’: an overview of the fight against ‘extremism’ in Belarus for January–March 2025 – Human Constanta](#)

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ [Human rights situation in Belarus in 2025](#)

Furthermore, in 2025, Belarus remains the most dangerous country in Europe for journalists, ranking 166th in the RSF Press Freedom Index.⁸ As of December 2025, 28 media workers remained deprived of liberty. Repression continues: searches, detentions, the designation of media outlets as extremist organisations or materials, criminal prosecution and the blocking of websites are tightening control over the information space.⁹

⁸ [Figures of the Year, 2025](#)

⁹ [Figures of the Year, 2025](#)



#human rights

#business and human rights

#discrimination

#human rights based approach

#international human rights enforcement
mechanisms



office@belhelcom.org



www.belhelcom.org