

## National Human Rights Index

<https://index.belhelcom.org>

### Methodology

The Index reflects the human rights situation in Belarus. It is calculated on the basis of expert evaluations. The list of rights subject to evaluation is compiled in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 16, 1966. The Index also assesses the general measures taken by the state to comply with its human rights obligations (see Appendix 3).

The evaluation of particular rights determines the Human Rights Index for the entire country.

The evaluation is based on a comparison with the previous year's situation (unless otherwise noted).

#### **Rights, their elements, ideal states.**

The list of rights for the Index has been compiled on the basis of the 1966 International Covenants. The Index does not include rights whose violation is not characteristic of Belarus due to economic, cultural, historical or other circumstances. The absence of serious problems connected with the enjoyment of these rights is acknowledged at the national level and is not challenged by either official authorities or civil society organizations.

Thus, the Index consists of the evaluation of 10 civil and political rights and 8 social, economic, and cultural rights (see Appendix 1-2).

Each of the 18 rights is decomposed into elements (based on the text of the 1966 International Covenants). In such a way, 17 elements of civil and political rights and 31 elements of social, economic, and cultural rights are identified.

For each element of the right a set of indicators (ideal states) is determined, the achievement of which would mean the full realization of the right element in legislation and law-enforcement practices. The set of indicators (ideal states) for each right is worked out by the Index compiler in line with the main provisions of international human rights treaties, as well as the general recommendations (general comments) of the UN human rights treaty bodies.

In total, 93 and 154 indicators of the realization of civil and political rights are singled out, as well as 154 indicators for social, economic, and cultural rights.



#human rights

#business and human rights

#discrimination

#human rights based approach

#international human rights enforcement  
mechanisms



office@belhelcom.org



www.belhelcom.org

On the basis of their findings, the experts determine the degree of deviation of the actual state of affairs from the ideal state of the realization of rights on a scale from 1 to 10 (see below).

### **The Index depends on previous evaluations.**

Index evaluations take place regularly, aiming at tracking the changes, so the expert assessment is based on the rates of the previous period. The experts do not re-evaluate the situation but take the previous year's index as a basis for their work.

Based on last year's rates, the experts assess whether the events of the current year have affected the realization of rights positively or negatively. In other words, they only assess to what extent the situation connected with a specific right has improved or deteriorated in 2021 as compared to 2020, in 2022 as compared to 2021, etc.

### **The rating scale.**

The evaluation employs a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means a total mismatch between the ideal state of the realization of rights and the current legislation and law enforcement practice (the right is absolutely unfulfilled). 10 indicates that the current legislation and law enforcement practice are fully aligned with the ideal state of realization of the right elements, that is, the right is fully realized.

The implementation of general human rights measures is evaluated in a similar way.

A score of "1" denotes the situation when the right under evaluation is not observed in any way. That is, compliance with the right is at its minimum both at the legislative and law enforcement levels. Accordingly, the score cannot be lower than this minimum. If the right is not respected in any way, it is impossible to worsen its observance, at least within the framework of the National Human Rights Index methodology. This is why minimal scores should be assigned only in extreme cases.

A score of "10", on the contrary, indicates an ideal situation in a particular sphere. That is, the right is fully realized. This is the maximum and the score cannot be higher.

### **Methodology update.**

In order to improve the Index and increase the accuracy of the evaluation in 2022, we have clarified the methodology. Starting in 2023 (for 2022 and beyond), each expert will be able to assign a score rounded to the nearest tenth. That is, it will be possible to put not only an integral number ("one", "four" or "seven") but also to add fractions, like "4.3", "7.1", "8.3", etc. This change will not affect the correlation of data with the previous periods, because the final score for each element of the right, calculated as the arithmetic mean of the experts' scores, was rounded to tenths.

### **Experts' work.**

The Index value is determined by expert evaluation. Several dozens of specialists from various fields are involved in the assessments. Each human right has a separate expert panel of five to six members. An expert with relevant expertise may be a member of multiple panels.



#human rights

#business and human rights

#discrimination

#human rights based approach

#international human rights enforcement  
mechanisms



office@belhelcom.org



www.belhelcom.org

Expert panels include recognized experts who represent human rights organizations, professional associations, research and analytical centers, non-governmental organizations, and independent experts. Experts from state bodies and businesses are not included in the panel to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

Index compilers select experts on the principles of openness and maximum involvement from representatives of the expert community and non-governmental organizations specializing in a particular area.

### **Evaluation procedure.**

The evaluation procedure consists of drafting a preliminary analysis of the realization of a particular human right, experts' familiarizing with it, expert discussion, summing up and preparation of a final report on each human right.

### **Preliminary Analysis.**

The preliminary analysis is conducted by an advisor to the expert panel and includes a general description of the situation with the realization of a particular human right, as well as relevant facts and events. The analysis is presented in the form of a substantive, brief (two to three pages) report, without recommendations, assessments or conclusions.

The analysis is solely informative in nature and only aims to highlight for the experts the key facts and events of the year, to make the experts' discussion more effective and informative, without directly influencing its outcome.

The preliminary analysis is sent to the experts at least three to five days before the expert discussion. The experts are in no way bound in their evaluations by the information presented in the preliminary analysis.

### **Expert discussion.**

Experts work in the format of joint discussion, within which they take turns to express their opinion on the human rights situation in a particular sphere, on the implementation of a particular human right, comment on the preliminary analysis, and provide their scores. If needed, a discussion or clarification of facts and positions on certain aspects of the right takes place.

The discussion is followed by the announcement of expert scores which is open to other experts. Each expert provides their own assessment of the changes as to the right realization (for more details see the description of the methodology above and Appendix 4). In their evaluations, experts proceed from their own factual and reasoned understanding of the situation in the respective sphere.

An arithmetic average is calculated from the expert scores provided for each indicator, from which, in turn, an arithmetic mean score is derived for the elements of the right. The resulting scores are then used to derive an index for individual rights, for a group of rights (civil and political; social, economic and cultural; general measures taken by the government to comply with its human rights obligations), and to obtain the Index as a whole. Arithmetic averages are rounded to decimal places.



[#human rights](#)

[#business and human rights](#)

[#discrimination](#)

[#human rights based approach](#)

[#international human rights enforcement mechanisms](#)



[office@belhelcom.org](mailto:office@belhelcom.org)



[www.belhelcom.org](http://www.belhelcom.org)

### Preparation of the final report.

On the basis of the experts' evaluations, Index compilers prepare a final report describing the context and situation in a particular sphere, the main facts and events, as well as the final Index scores for the right elements, particular human rights and the country as a whole. The authors of the final report can provide their evaluations and interpretations, draw conclusions and recommendations, but cannot modify, criticize, or question the final scores of the Index.

### Appendix 1. Civil and Political Rights

1. Right to Life.
2. Right not to be subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
3. Right to liberty and security of person.
4. Right of persons deprived of their liberty to humane treatment.
5. Right to a fair trial.
6. Right not to be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with private and family life.
7. Freedom of conscience.
8. Right to freedom of opinion and expression.
9. Right of peaceful assembly.
10. Right to freedom of association.
11. The right to participate in public affairs.

### Appendix 2: Economic and Social Rights

1. Right to work.
2. Right to health.
3. Right to education.
4. Right to social security.
5. Right to an adequate standard of living.
6. Right to participate in cultural life.
7. Right to benefit from scientific progress and its practical applications.



#human rights

#business and human rights

#discrimination

#human rights based approach

#international human rights enforcement  
mechanisms



office@belhelcom.org



www.belhelcom.org

### Appendix 3: General measures taken by the government to comply with its human rights obligations

1. General human rights policy.
2. Interaction with civil society.
3. Interaction with international mechanisms.
4. Equality and non-discrimination.

### Appendix 4: Rating scale

1 – The ideal state of human rights associated with the element of right does not align in any way with the current legislation and law enforcement practice.

The match is 0%.

2-3 – Current legislation and actual law enforcement practice do not align significantly with the ideal state of human rights.

The match is 20-30%.

4-5 – Current legislation and actual law enforcement practice only partially align with the ideal state of human rights.

The match is 40-50%.

6-7 – Current legislation and actual law enforcement practice largely align with the ideal state of human rights.

The match is 60-70%.

8-9 – Current legislation and actual law enforcement practice almost completely align with the ideal situation.

The match is 80-90%.

10 – The ideal state of human rights and reality fully align.

The match is 100%.



#human rights

#business and human rights

#discrimination

#human rights based approach

#international human rights enforcement  
mechanisms



office@belhelcom.org



www.belhelcom.org