

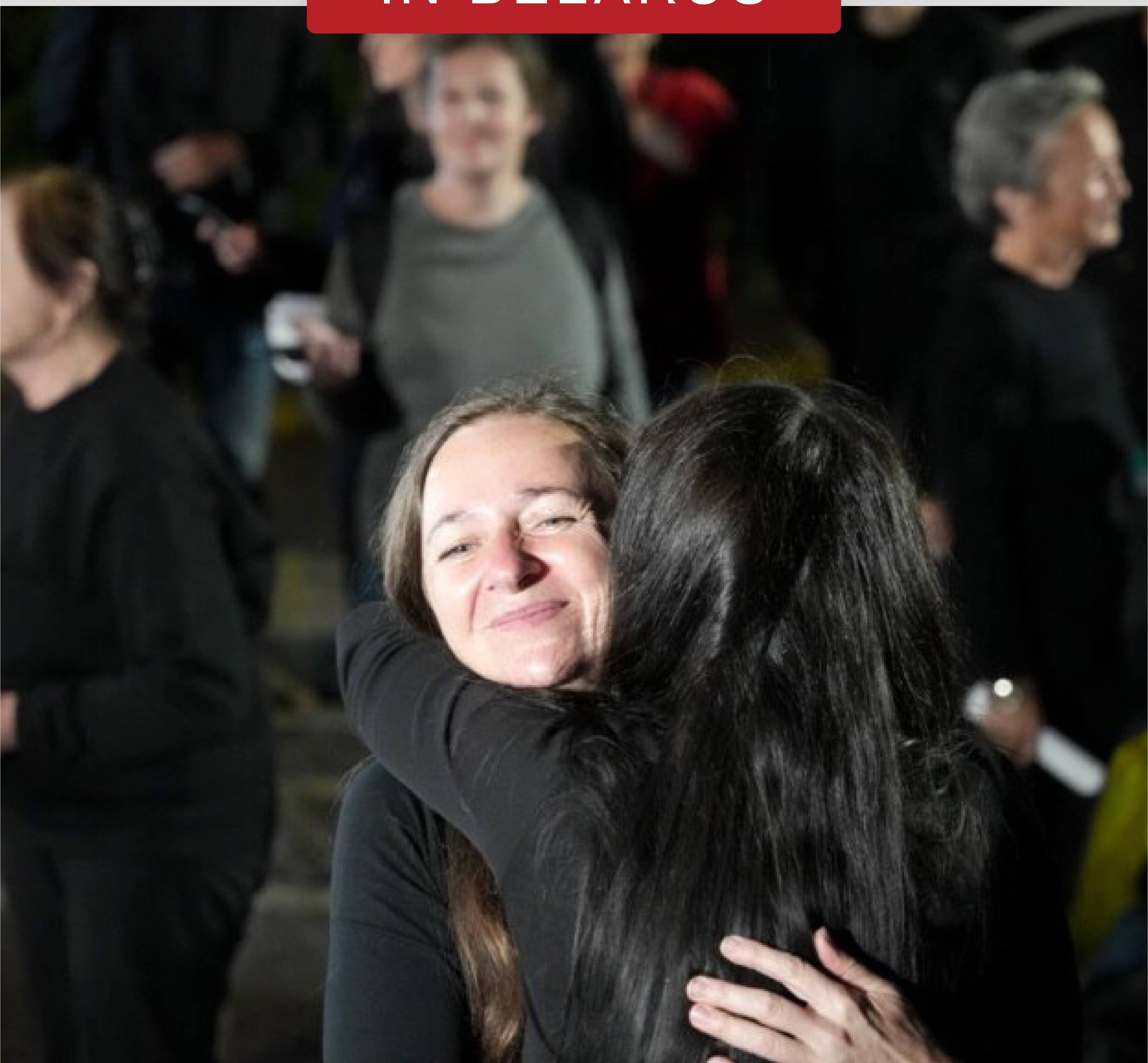


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E-NEWSLETTER

MASS MEDIA IN BELARUS

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SITUATION IN BELARUS MASS MEDIA FIELD: JULY – SEPTEMBER 2025. REVIEW

The Belarusian Association of Journalists observed the continuation of repression against journalists in Belarus and further restrictions of access to information in July – September 2025. It included the following trends:

- continuation of criminal prosecution of media workers, detention, and other forms of pressure on journalists,
- the ban on a number of unofficial sources of information (including foreign ones) under the guise of combating extremism,
- expansion of censorship, including the direct involvement of people in compiling a list of books banned for distribution.

At the same time, **due to the diplomatic efforts of the United States, a mass release of political prisoners, including journalists and bloggers**, occurred during the period under review. 52 political prisoners were transferred to Lithuania by the US delegation led by John Cole on September 11, 2025. **The list included twelve media workers and bloggers:** Iryna Slaunikava, Mikola Dziadok, Pavel Mazheika, Aliaksandr Mantsevich, Larysa Shchyrakova, Yauhen Merkis, Alena Tsimaschuk, Viachaslau Lazarau, Pavel Padabied, Ihar Losik, Zmitser Kazlou, and Pavel Vinahradau.

It is worth mentioning that the majority of former political prisoners were deprived of their documents and the possibility to choose their country

of residence. The 'liberation' itself was deportation in fact, since the former political prisoners were expelled from the Republic of Belarus.

Nothing is known about the fate of Belarusian politician Mikola Statkevich, who refused to leave Belarus under such conditions.

The Belarusian Association of Journalists approved its Strategy of Activities for 2025–2027 on September 15, 2025. The strategy indicates the need for the organization and the entire independent media sector to return to Belarus and restore their legal activity in the country. Also, it emphasizes the importance of national content and the content in the Belarusian language for preserving the national identity of audiences.

Criminal prosecution. Cases of detention in Belarus

The criminal prosecution of journalists continued inside the country and 'in absentia'.

Three journalists and a blogger were convicted on criminal charges in July – September 2025, and **12 new criminal cases were filed** during the period under review. (9 of the criminal cases were filed against journalists in exile).



Daniil Palianski

A freelance journalist from Brest **Daniil Palianski** was found guilty of 'high treason' (Article 356 of the Belarus Criminal Code) in a closed trial and sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment and a fine of about USD 7,135 on July 25, 2025.

Due to the 'confidentiality' of the trial, the actual essence of the charges remains unknown.

Another journalist from Brest **Aleh Suprunyuk** was sentenced to 3 years in prison for the alleged 'participation in an extremist grouping' on August 8, 2025. He previously collaborated with a number of independent media. Despite the fact that the journalist has a disability, he was held in custody for more than six months before trial.

Ihar Ilyash, a journalist from Minsk and husband of political prisoner and journalist Katsiaryna Andreyeva was sentenced to 4 years in prison in a maximum-security colony and a fine of 4,200 rubles for the alleged 'discreditation of Belarus' (article 369–1 of Belarus Criminal Code) and 'facilitation of extremist activities' (article 361–4 of Belarus Criminal Code) on September 16, 2025.



Ihar Ilyash. Photo: Sergey Vaganau (Facebook)

Palina Zyl, a blogger from Mazyr (Homiel region) was sentenced to one year in a penal colony for the alleged 'gross violation of public order' (article 342 of Belarus Criminal Code) on July 7, 2025. The media worker remained in Belarus despite the fact that she had been included in the list of wanted individuals by the Belarusian authorities.

At least three journalists were charged in criminal cases and taken into custody in Belarus in the period of July – September 2025. (It was only the name of **Kiryl Pazniak** that was disclosed.)

Nine exiled Belarusian journalists were charged 'in absentia' in criminal cases during the period under review. Among other exiled media workers, the list of charged journalists included the Belsat anchors Volha Starastsina (2nd criminal case) and Yaraslau Stseshyk as well as the former

Belsat employees **Siarhei Skulavets** and [Andrei Mialeshka](#). The names of five other charged journalists were not disclosed.

Blogger **Maksim Shabutski** [was charged](#) 'in absentia' under eighteen articles of the Belarus Criminal Code.

According to the BAJ Press Service, **three independent journalists were detained** in Belarus within the period under review.



Kiryl Pazniak. Video screenshot

The 'Platform 375' YouTube channel was labeled as an ['extremist grouping'](#) on September 4, 2025. The journalist **Kiryl Pazniak** [was detained](#) on the same day and declared to be connected to this channel.

Eleven searches were carried out at the houses of journalists or their relatives, allegedly, in relation to criminal prosecution, in July – September 2025.

Thus, the exiled freelance journalist **Aliaksandr Hoishyk** [reported](#) that police officers had visited his mother's house in Salihorsk, Minsk region, looking for him as a 'vicious extremist.'

Political analysts **Aliaksandr Klaskouski**, **Piotr Rudkouski** and **Aliaksandr Fridman** as well as [journalists](#) **Tatsiana Karaviankova** and **Glaflira Zhuk** [were put](#) on the Belarus–Russia interstate wanted list within the period under review. The media workers were classified by the Belarus Ministry of Internal Affairs as members of 'Pozirk' News Agency, labeled as an 'extremist grouping.'

The application of anti-extremist legislation to prosecute independent journalists and media for freedom of expression

‘The struggle with extremism’ was further used by the Belarusian authorities to restrict access to independent sources of information and harass journalists in July – September 2025.

Four more media projects were labeled by the Belarusian authorities as ‘extremist groupings’, including [‘The News of Hrodna and Hrodna Region’](#), [‘Green Network’](#) that includes civil initiatives and projects ‘Belarus Beehive’, ‘Green Portal’, and ‘EcoHome’, the [‘Belarus Tomorrow’](#) streaming platform that unites leading Belarusian media, bloggers, and experts, as well as the [‘Platform 375’](#) YouTube channel.

The Ministry of Information of Belarus continued to expand the National List of Extremist Materials. The following informal information sources [were added](#) to the broad list of materials within the period under review: ‘Delfi Lithuania’ YouTube channel (DELFI.lt News Website has been blocked for access in Belarus since 2023), the Russian journalist and videoblogger Ilya Varlamov’s social media accounts, and the BAJ Deputy Chairperson Barys Haretski’s Instagram account.

The Mahilou Regional Public Prosecutor’s Office [banned](#) access to the popular [‘Glavkom’](#) news website from Ukraine as well as the websites of such human rights projects as the Belarusian ‘Human Rights Defenders against Torture’ and the Russian ‘Memorial PZK’.

The KGB included the head of 'Belsat' TV channel Alina Koushyk in the 'List of Organizations and Individuals, Related to Terrorist Activities.' It is connected to the fact that she used to be affiliated with the United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus, which was labeled by the Public Prosecutor General's office as 'a terrorist organization' on July 9, 2025.



Alina Koushyk. Photo: Belsat

The criminally charged bloggers Ruslan Linnik (repeatedly sentenced to 4 years in prison) and Anton Matolka (sentenced 'in absentia' to 20 years in prison) were included in the 'List of Citizens of the Republic of Belarus, Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons Involved in Extremist Activities' by the Ministry of Interior of Belarus.

Ideologization and censorship in the media and publishing fields

New provisions 'On the Ministry of Information' were adopted on September 19, 2025. The Ministerial list of primary objectives was supplemented by '*information support for ideological work in the Republic of Belarus, provision of information and support for the implementation of governmental policies in the field of mass media and publishing.*'

The Ministry of Information of Belarus.
Photo: Reform.by

The Ministry of Information of Belarus accelerated its efforts to identify and ban the ‘unwanted’ books.

On September 8, 2025, Deputy Minister of Information Dzianis Yazierski [noted](#) during the live TV broadcast that he hoped for the help of the public, who would be active and report on publications which should be included in the ‘List of printed publications containing information messages and (or) materials, which distribution can harm the national interests of the Republic of Belarus.’ At that time, according to Yazierski, the current list of banned publications includes ‘143–145 books.’

The list [was supplemented](#) by 32 titles of books by the end of September 2025.



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