



## **Monitoring of the situation with freedom of association and the status of civil society organizations in the Republic of Belarus**

**February 2026**

In February 2026, the Republic of Belarus continued the systematic narrowing of the space for the activities of civil society organizations (CSOs), including registered public associations, foundations, and institutions. The legal and actual situation of CSOs continues to be characterized by high administrative pressure, the risk of being held liable for failure to comply with formal legal requirements, and limited access to financial and other resources.

Inspections of non-profit organizations (NPOs) continue, mainly by financial authorities. There have also been detentions of activists, searches, questioning at the border, pressure on the relatives of Belarusians who have been forced to leave the country, and attempts by security services to coerce individuals into cooperation. Mass detentions have widely affected publishers and distributors of books; repression has also targeted representatives of the cultural sphere and cultural initiatives. More than one hundred CSO representatives are currently being held in places of detention.

The practice of designating organizations and initiatives as “extremist formations,” and their information resources as “extremist materials,” has continued.

The total number of liquidated NPOs in Belarus has exceeded 2,000. During the reporting period, it became known that at least 10 non-governmental institutions and 2 public associations were forcibly liquidated.

As of the end of February 2026, according to [monitoring conducted by Lawtrend](#), the overall losses in the civil society sector since the post-election period of 2020 amount to **at least 2,012 institutionalized NPOs** (public associations, trade unions, political parties, foundations, non-governmental institutions, associations).

### **Statistics on the registration of non-profit organizations**

The Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Belarus has published [official statistics on registered public associations](#). According to data from the Ministry of Justice as of January 1, 2026, the following are registered in the Republic of Belarus:

- 4 political parties and 844 of their organizational structures;
- 19 trade unions (15 republican, 1 territorial, and 3 within organizations) and 27,466 of their organizational structures;
- 1,337 public associations (121 international, 290 republican, and 926 local) and 47,812 of their organizational structures;
- 43 unions (associations) of public associations;
- 7 national state-public associations.

Unlike in previous years, the published statistics do not include a breakdown of registered public associations by fields of activity. The Ministry of Justice has not published the number of registered foundations for several years. Statistics on the number of registered non-governmental institutions and associations (unions) of legal entities are also absent.

According to Lawtrend data, by the end of 2025, the Unified State Register of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs (the USR) contained information on 1,357 active public associations. The difference from the Ministry of Justice's official statistics is due to insufficient quality of register maintenance, duplication of information, and delays in record updates.

The statistics of the Ministry of Justice also indicate a change over the past year in the previously applied approach to accounting for public associations, under which their total number increased due to the retention in the USR of information about inactive organizations, including those that had not undergone mandatory state re-registration or were in the process of liquidation but had not yet been formally removed from the register.

### **Liquidation of non-profit organizations.**

During the monitoring period, decisions on forced liquidation were adopted regarding at least 10 non-governmental institutions. Of these, at least 6 decisions were taken between the end of December 2025 and mid-January 2026.

Unlike public associations and foundations, non-governmental institutions may be liquidated by the registering authority through a simplified procedure, without the need for court proceedings. This is the first case of mass liquidation of non-governmental institutions since the campaign targeting them in 2021.

During the monitoring period, it also became known that at least two public associations were forced into liquidation.

According to [Lawtrend monitoring](#), from early 2021 through the end of February 2026, at least 1,235 NPOs of various legal forms were forcibly liquidated.

During the monitoring period, at least 5 public associations decided to voluntarily liquidate. As before, these are primarily organizations that in previous years submitted the mandatory annual reports to registering authorities in accordance with legal requirements. Four out of the five associations fall into this category. The main reasons for voluntary dissolution remain the large-scale repression in the country, the unfavorable legal environment, and pressure on civil society, including specific organizations, their leaders, members, and staff.

As of February 28, 2026, according to [Lawtrend's monitoring](#) since 2021, at least 777 NPOs (public associations, associations, foundations, institutions, and a political party) have had their participants/founders independently decide to undergo liquidation.

### **Administrative and criminal prosecution of the leadership and members of civil society organizations, as well as other forms of pressure on civil society organizations.**

During the monitoring period, cases of inspections of financial and economic activities were recorded at several registered public associations.

In connection with the performance of their professional activities, participation in CSOs, and civic activism, at least three representatives of human rights organizations, dozens of representatives of CSOs and religious organizations, and no less than 20 representatives of trade unions and the labor movement continue to serve prison sentences.

During the reporting period, mass detentions of publishers and book distributors took place.

Cultural manager Andrei Kim, the creator of the project Кінаконг (Kinakong), was detained. Kinakong is one of the most well-known initiatives promoting Belarusian dubbing of international films. Detentions also occurred in the cultural space Парасон (Parason), where events dedicated to Belarusian culture had been held.

Legislation on combating extremism continues to be actively applied against representatives of CSOs.

The Minsk City Court [issued prison sentences](#) ranging from two to three years against four alleged participants of the “extremist formation” BY SOL who, according to law enforcement authorities, acted as couriers for the organization. The court also imposed an additional penalty on each defendant: a fine of 500 base units. In addition, mobile phones and cash were confiscated, and more than 10,000 Belarusian rubles were recovered as the alleged proceeds of crime. In response to the verdict, the BY SOL Solidarity Fund [issued a statement](#) declaring that it has never had a “courier network” in Belarus, does not create underground structures, does not form “groups” within the country, and does not organize cash transfers through individuals.

By the end of February, 331 entities had been included in the [List of Organizations, Formations, and Individual Entrepreneurs Involved in Extremist Activities](#). During the monitoring period, the following were recognized as “extremist formations,” among others:

- Gutenberg Publisher, a Belarusian publishing house;
- Ліхтар (Likhtar), a youth organization;
- Будзьма беларусамі! (Let’s be Belarusians), a public cultural campaign aimed at strengthening Belarusians’ national identity.

During the monitoring period, [the Republican List of Extremist Materials](#) was expanded to include, among others:

- the YouTube channel Нацыя Лідэраў Онлайн-хаб ( “Nation of Leaders Online Hub”);
- the website and social media pages of "Press Club Belarus" and "Беларускі ПЭН / PEN Belarus";
- the Instagram page “FreeViasna”;
- the Facebook and Threads pages of "Этнацэнтр Світанак" (Ethnocenter Svitanak);
- Facebook pages of diaspora initiatives: "Народная амбасада Беларусі ў Ізраілі" (People’s Embassy of Belarus in Israel) and "Valgevene Maja // Беларускі дом ў Эстоніі" (Belarusian House in Estonia);
- the Telegram channel "Израиль и Беларусь. RAZAM" (“Israel and Belarus. RAZAM”).

### **Funding**

By Resolution No. 2 of January 22, 2026, [“On establishing document forms within the framework of international technical assistance.”](#) adopted by the Ministry of Economy, new document templates have been introduced for recipients of international technical assistance.

The Investigative Committee [announced the initiation of a criminal case](#) related to the activities of the charitable foundation «Помощь тяжелобольным детям» (Help for Seriously Ill Children Foundation), which collected funds for the treatment of seriously ill children. According to the investigation, the foundation's director exercised sole control over the organization's activities, managed its property, and made all legally significant decisions.

His actions were classified under Part 4 of Article 210 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus (embezzlement through abuse of official authority on an especially large scale), which provides for a penalty of 5 to 12 years of imprisonment, along with a fine and deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or engage in certain activities. With the prosecutor's authorization, a preventive measure of detention was imposed.

State television also [aired a report](#) about alleged violations in the collection of charitable donations under the label "under the President's control." Against this backdrop, [reports indicate](#) that a new regulatory act is being prepared to regulate charitable activities, including the establishment of mechanisms for fundraising, reporting, and oversight of fund use, as well as rules governing the use of donation collection boxes.