

Belarus: Free the detained workers and union activists!

Via [Liga Internacional Socialista](#)

This morning many activists, mainly from the Independent Trade Union of Belarus (BNP), were arrested. The forces of order searched the apartment of one of the leaders of the Independent Union of Employees of OJSC "Naftan". At the same time, other Union activists were arrested in the cities of Navapolatsk, Hrodna and Zhlobin.

Olga Britikova was arrested and her computer equipment seized. She was later released. In Navapolatsk two trade unionists were arrested: Andrei Berezovsky and Roman Shkodin, under article 19.11. They were not granted the possibility of paying a fine and they were given a penalty of seven and fifteen days of administrative arrest. The Navapolatsk trade union office was subjected to a thorough search.

In many of these arrests, the authorities falsely invoke the use of article 19.11. of the KOAP of Belarus. It refers to "Distribution, manufacture, storage, transportation of information products that contain calls for extremist activities or that promote such activities."

The arrests had also been going on in previous days. On the 20th, the BNP president, Máxim Poznyakov, was also imprisoned in the Novopolotk police department. Later they had to release him and made him pay a fine for an old publication on social media. A few days before, Máxim had spoken at the #IndustriALL Congress about the situation of Belarusian workers in terms of labor and union rights.

Other detainees were: Valentin Terenevich, Vice President of the BNP Primary Trade Union Organization, at JSC Grodno, Azot, who works at the "Khimvolokno" plant. During the weekend it

was the turn of Andrei Pogeriilo and Uladjd Uladj Zhuravko, members of the BNP, without clarification of the reasons for such a measure. For his part, Aliaksandr Gashnikov was arrested in Zhlobin. He had disappeared on Friday night and was only found on the 21st in Rovd.

It is a campaign of persecution and invented charges by the regime of Alexandr Lukashenko against workers, activists and the independent organizations of which they are members. These attitudes caused outrage in the Independent Union that published an [informative note](#) and announced that there will be a statement on the matter. There is a need for the broadest solidarity with the persecuted union activists, for the freedom of those in prison, for the right to express themselves and give their opinion freely, for the annulment of the charges and convictions.