

Ukraine: KVPU demands the release of leaders and activists of Belarusian independent trade unions that were detained and arrested

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The Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine demands the immediate release of leaders and activists of independent trade unions in Belarus detained by the KGB and illegally imprisoned.

On 19 April, the President of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP) Aliaksandr Yarashuk, BKDP Vice-President Sergey Antusevich, the Free Trade Union of Metal Workers (SPM) President Aleksandr Bukhvostov, Belarusian Free Trade UnionSPB President Nikolay Sharakh – were arrested. Besides, many other colleagues were detained, including Yana Malash, Vitaliy Chichmarev, Anna Dus, Vadim Paivin, Mikhail Gromov, Igor Komlik, Vasiliy Beresnev, Gennadiy Fedynich, Dmitri Borodko and Irina But-Gusaim. Several others are still not reachable and their location is not known.

The trade union premises of the BKDP in Minsk and those of the Free Trade Union of Metal Workers (SPM) and the Union of Radio-Electronic Workers (REP) were searched. The security forces also searched homes of the many trade union leaders and employees. As a result, of these searches, many objects were apprehended, including computers, flashcards, personal documents, passports, bank cards – including those of family members –, SIM cards of foreign mobile operators and trade union paraphernalia.

On the evening of April 21, we were informed about another detention: the international secretary of the Belarusian Independent Trade Union (BNP) Elizavetta Merlyak was detained.

Earlier, on April 13, the leader of the Belarusian Independent Trade Union of Naftan, Olga Britikova, was not released from the pre-trial detention center and was arrested for the fourth time in a row for 15 days. According to colleagues, she was convicted for the post “No to War!” on her social network page.

The Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP), leaders and activists of its member organizations have publicly opposed the war and Russia’s criminal invasion of Ukraine despite threats from the dictatorial regime in Belarus. We are grateful to our courageous and principled Belarusian brothers and sisters for their position, constant support, and solidarity.

We demand to release of leaders and activists of Belarusian independent trade unions!

Mykhailo Volynets,

Chairperson of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVPU)

P.S.

- KVPU. 21 April 2022:

<https://www.kvpu.org.ua/en/news/5206-kvpu-demands-release-of-leaders-and-activists-of-belarusian-independent-trade-unions>