

Belarus Jails Russian National for 11 Years in Protest Crackdown – Reports

December 27, 2021



Yegor Dudnikov, 21, was arrested for doing voice-over work for Belarusian opposition videos. belta.by

A court in Belarus has sentenced a Russian national to 11 years in prison on charges of threatening national security and inciting hatred online, the Belarusian human rights news website Charter 97 [reported](#) Monday.

Yegor Dudnikov, 21, was arrested in May for doing voice-over work for Belarusian opposition videos in the wake of mass protests against President Alexander Lukashenko's disputed 2020 election victory and the brutal crackdown that followed.

Related article: [Belarus Opposition Leader Tikhановский Sentenced to 18 Years in Prison](#)

A Minsk court found Dudnikov guilty of inciting social hatred and calling for actions endangering national security, granting the prosecution's request to jail him for 11 years, according to Charter 97.

Investigators accused Dudnikov of posting 55 voice-over messages on the Belarusian Groups of Civic Self-Defense (OGSB) Telegram channel, which authorities in Belarus have banned as "extremist."

The young Russian national faced a maximum sentence of 12 years.

According to Russia's independent Meduza news website, Dudnikov was initially [charged](#) with grossly violating public order, but those charges did not appear in the final indictment.

Dudnikov's lawyer had previously said that the defense planned to file for extradition after the verdict in the behind-closed-doors trial was delivered.

Lukashenko has publicly accused Dudnikov of acting as the moderator of the OGSB Telegram channel, which the Belarusian leader claimed was a "terrorist sleeper cell" creation intended to overthrow him.

Dudnikov says he was subjected to severe police beatings and forced to incriminate himself in custody, the U.S. news organization RFE/RL has [reported](#).

Rights groups accuse Belarusian authorities of subjecting thousands in Belarus, including dozens of Russian nationals, to detentions, forced exile or life in fear since last summer's protests erupted.

Lukashenko claims to have won more than 80% of the August 2020 vote and accuses the Belarusian opposition of trying to stage a "coup" last year.

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