

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1215

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1215

Notice: Undefined index: et_template in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1216

BELARUS: Prosecutor requests lengthy prison terms for three journalists

Prosecutor requests lengthy prison terms for journalists Raman Pratasevich, Stsypan Putsila, and Yan Rudzik

CPJ (21.04.2023)—A Belarusian prosecutor requested a 10-year prison sentence for detained journalist [Raman Pratasevich](#), a

19-year prison sentence in absentia for journalist Yan Rudzik, and a 20-year prison sentence in absentia for journalist Stsypan Putsila during a hearing on Friday, April 21, in Minsk, the capital, [news reports](#) said.

“The lengthy prison terms requested by a Belarusian prosecutor for Raman Pratasevich, Stsypan Putsila, and Yan Rudzik is yet another illustration of the regime’s vindictiveness against those who covered the 2020 protests against President Aleksandr Lukashenko,” said Gulnoza Said, CPJ’s Europe and Central Asia program coordinator, in New York. “Authorities should immediately drop all charges against the three journalists, release Pratasevich from house arrest, and allow members of the press to work freely.”

Belarusian authorities [arrested](#) Pratasevich, co-founder of the Telegram channel NEXTA and former chief editor of the Telegram channel Belarus Golovnogo Mozga (Belarus of the Brain), in May 2021 after diverting a commercial Ryanair flight and forcing it to land in Minsk. Pratasevich, who has since been [forced into several televised “confessions,”](#) is currently under house arrest.

Putsila, co-founder of NEXTA, and Rudzik, an administrator of NEXTA and former chief editor of Belarus Golovnogo Mozga, are in Poland, according to the [Belarusian Association of Journalists](#), an advocacy and trade group operating from exile.

NEXTA and Belarus Golovnogo Mozga extensively covered protests against Lukashenko’s disputed reelection in 2020. Authorities previously [labeled NEXTA](#) a terrorist organization and [Belarus Golovnogo Mozga](#) “extremist.”

The [trial began](#) on February 16, and authorities have filed more than 10 separate charges against each of the journalists, including organizing mass unrest, conspiracy to seize power, incitement to hatred, insulting the president, and creating an extremist group, according to [news reports](#). The prosecutor

also asked the journalists to pay a total of 30 million Belarusian rubles (US\$11.9 million) in compensation for the damage inflicted on the country, according to [media reports](#).

A representative from banned human rights group Viasna told CPJ via messaging app under the condition of anonymity, citing fear of reprisal, that a verdict in the trial could come in the coming weeks. CPJ's email to the prosecutor's office in Minsk did not receive a reply.

At least 26 journalists, including Pratasevich, were detained in Belarus at the time of [CPJ's December 1, 2022, prison census](#).

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Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in [/home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php](#) on line 1267

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Notice: Undefined index: et_template in [/home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php](#) on line 1269