

16 November 2021

Belarus: Woman human rights defender Olga Gorbunova detained

On 9 November 2021, police arrested woman human rights defender **Olga Gorbunova** in Minsk in relation to her alleged involvement in organising marches supporting women's rights in the summer of 2020. She is currently detained in the Okrestina detention centre in Minsk.

[Olga Gorbunova](#) is a Belarusian woman human rights defender. She is the former head of the non-governmental organisation Radislava. Radislava was established in 2002 by survivors of gender-based violence to help and offer support to women who are suffering from domestic and gender-based violence. Olga Gorbunova also created the social enterprise called Norm Cafe, which is an inclusive and safe cultural and social space that provides training and employment for women. In March 2021 Norm Cafe shut down due to security and economic reasons.

On 9 November 2021, woman human rights defender Olga Gorbunova was arrested by police in Minsk. Upon her arrest, the woman human rights defender was placed in detention the Okrestina detention centre in Minsk where she remains. Olga Gorbunova is allegedly being accused of violating Article 342 of the Criminal Code of Republic of Belarus, in relation to her role in organising marches in support of women's rights in the summer 2020 in Minsk. If convicted, she could face up to three years in prison. Olga Gorbunova is yet to be given access to her lawyer in the detention facility.

Front Line Defenders expresses grave concerns about the detention of woman human rights defender Olga Gorbunova and believes it is in retaliation for her long-term, peaceful and legitimate human rights work. Front Line Defenders reiterates its concern about the major crackdown against human rights defenders and members of civil society who are outspoken and critical of the government in Belarus.

Front Line Defenders calls on the Belarusian authorities to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Olga Gorbunova and drop all charges against her as it is believed that they are solely motivated by her legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Olga Gorbunova, while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the '*Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment*', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;
3. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Belarus and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.