



## E-NEWSLETTER: LGBTQ+ IN BELARUS

11-12.2025

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### 1. CURRENT SITUATION OF BELARUSIAN LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

Within the period of *November – December 2025*, the LGBTIQ+ people in Belarus lived in an atmosphere of fear and oppression, since new anti-LGBTIQ+ legislative acts adopted by the Belarusian come into force in Belarus on *January 12, 2026*. They provide absurd grounds, contradicting common sense, the Constitution of Belarus, and international law, for the persecution and discrimination of LGBTIQ+ people simply because of who they were born and who they are, as well as for the harassment of their families and loved ones.

The Belarusian law enforcement authorities continue to put pressure on the representatives of LGBTIQ+ community. Thus, gay men are summoned for 'talks' at

police stations as ‘witnesses’ for fictitious reasons. And they are actively persuaded to start ‘cooperation’ with the law enforcement, as [European Radio for Belarus](#) reports.

The interviewed gay men’s mobile phones are taken away from them at police stations. The law enforcement agents read their correspondence and connect their smartphones to the police computer equipment. If they find information that proves that they are part of LGBTIQ+ community, the gay men are persuaded to begin ‘cooperation’ with the police, i.e. to provide information about other LGBTIQ+ people in Belarus.

Law enforcement officers threaten to reveal the sexual orientation of the invited gay men to their relatives and at work.

It should be reminded that as per the Belarus’ Ministry of Culture resolution No. 24, adopted on *March 19, 2024*, the mere public appearance of a queer person or public support of LGBTIQ+ community and individuals offline or on social media is regarded as an act of ‘pornography’ in Belarus, punishable criminally with a jail term of up to ten years (Article 343 of the Criminal Code of Belarus).

New amendments to the Belarus Law ‘*On Protection of Children*’ were adopted as [the Law](#) #87-3 in the second reading by the Belarusian Parliament on *July 12, 2025*. They come into force in six months, i.e. on **January 12, 2026**.

According to the legislative amendments, there was [expanded the list of information, which is regarded as harmful](#) to the **psychological** health and development of a child by adding the information ‘*aimed at promoting homosexual relations, sex reassignment, pedophilia, and childlessness.*’ This effectively denies youngsters access to information on same-sex relations and sex reassignment and makes their parents, teachers, journalists and others legally liable for ‘exposing’ the children to any information about queerness or for being queer themselves.

The amendments to the law are accompanied by draft Art. 19.16 of the Administrative Code of Belarus that will provide for administrative liability for ‘propaganda of homosexual relations, gender transition, childlessness, and pedophilia.’

## 2. COVERAGE OF LGBTQ+ ISSUES IN THE BELARUSIAN MASS MEDIA

In 2025, the Belarusian state and pro-government media reached a peak with increasing momentum, [shaping the image of LGBTQ+ people as a ‘threat’](#), groundlessly accusing them of destroying traditional values, ‘engaging children’ and, ‘promoting foreign influence’.

The J4t research group presented the results of its traditional monitoring of hate speech against LGBTQ+ people in the Belarusian media for the period from January to October 2025. The results of the monitoring study in general and the increasingly frequent use of hate speech against LGBTQ+ people in the Belarusian pro-government media, in particular, suggest the application of certain communication strategies by the Belarusian authorities to devalue an entire category of LGBTQ+ people living in Belarus.

If we look for historical parallels in world history, it turns out that such purposeful and strategic devaluation of groups of people for having certain characteristics is a highly dangerous trend that led to mass hate crimes against humanity and genocides.

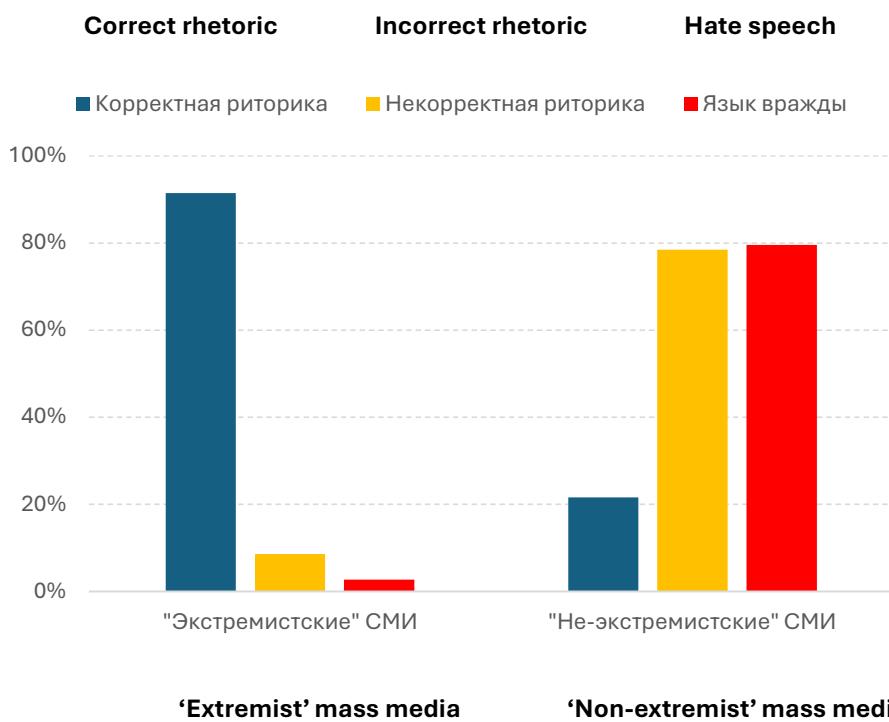
- In 2025, the share of incorrect materials slightly exceeded the share of correct publications: 52% of publications contained incorrect vocabulary regarding LGBTQ+, while 48% of publications contained correct vocabulary.
- Due to the purposeful incitement of hatred by the Belarusian authorities to the LGBTQ+ community through the controlled and funded state and proxy mass media, just like in 2022-2024, practically every second publication on the LGBTQ+ issue contained manifestations of hate speech in 2025. Although, the alternative representation of the LGBTQ+ community in the independent media is present as before, hate speech in relation to the queer community in the Belarusian media space prevails.
- Just like in 2022-2024, the J4t research team observed the situation, when correct vocabulary was used in some Belarusian mass media to incite hatred towards LGBTQ+ people in 2025. As for the use of incorrect vocabulary, it was registered again that it was accompanied by manifestations of hate speech in the overwhelming majority of cases.

- The mass media that have been labeled by the regime in power in Belarus as ‘extremist’ cover the LGBTQ+ issues in the utterly correct way in 2025. On the contrary, the ‘non-extremist’ media are inclined to inciting hatred.

The outcome of the media monitoring study is truly Orwellian:

91% of publications about LGBTQ+ people in the so-called “extremist” mass media were correct and that only 9% of such publications contained incorrect vocabulary and 3% of publications contained hate speech there.

At the same time, “non-extremist” media, predominantly adhering to the official position of the regime in power, covered correctly the LGBTQ+ issues in 22% of publications and incorrectly in 78% of publications. As far as the manifestations of hate speech is concerned, they can be observed in 80% of publications, i.e. out of every 10 materials on the LGBTQ+ issue in pro-governmental media, there can be found 8 publications that incite hatred towards LGBTQ+ people.



*Chart 1. Distribution of correct and incorrect publications on the LGBTQ+ issues, and the presence of hate speech in relation to the LGBTQ+ people, depending on the status of the media in 2025*

### **3. J4T / GPRESS.INFO NEWS**

The "Journalists for Tolerance" human rights initiative (J4t) has summarized the results of the J4T AWARDS – an annual competition for journalists and editorial team, which aims to raise professional standards in covering topics of equality, non-discrimination and the rights of vulnerable groups in Belarus. The competition is organized with the aim of developing social journalism, supporting an inclusive approach in the media and increasing the positive visibility of various vulnerable communities. In 2025, the jury considered materials published from November 1, 2024 to October 31, 2025.

The J4T AWARDS 2025 longlist included 57 pieces of content – texts, podcasts and videos. 24 authors and creative teams submitted their works. 22 materials were dedicated to the topic of LGBTQ+, 9 – about forced migration, 6 – about gender equality. Other topics of submitted competition materials included the issues of mental health, disability, HIV+, racism, harassment, ageism, political prisoners, religion, and full-scale war of Russia against Ukraine.

#### **'The Best Publication'**

This nomination accepted articles, photo reports, video materials, podcasts and radio programs that promote the ideas of equality and non-discrimination.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> position**

##### **Marina Mikhailova, "Solidarnasts" online newspaper**

Publication: ["When I received the first rejection, I thought if maybe something is wrong with me. Did I fail to talk in enough detail during the interview? Was I confused? Was I not convincing?"](#). The story of a Belarusian LGBTQ activist who has been trying to obtain international protection in Bulgaria for more than two years. Despite having his claims rejected by the courts, he does not give up.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> position**

**Alisa Sarmant, Anna Sergeevich, the material is published on the website of TG House – a Belarusian human rights organization for transgender people (non-registered in Belarus).**

Publication: [“Identity under ban: why has the LGBTQ+ community in Belarus become an object of repression?”](#)

The authors have collected testimonies of Belarusian queer people who have faced detentions, violence, fabricated charges and forced exile. Personal stories are supplemented with comments from experts and international LGBTQ+ organizations.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> position**

**Kateryna Kulakova, ‘Solidarnasts’ online newspaper**

Publication: [“Tatsiana Zhurauskaya - "Not everyone knows about their positive HIV status. There is discrimination, stigmatization, persecution"](#)

Interview with an HIV activist and head of the ‘Step by Step’ Fund about the discrimination faced by HIV+ people in Belarus and abroad, as well as the consequences of the destruction of non-profit organizations in the country.

The contest winners were determined by a professional jury consisting of editors of Belarusian media.

The holders of the first three positions will be awarded honorary certificates. And the contest winner will be provided with the opportunity to participate in a human rights study visit to one of the European countries in 2026.

## **Person of the Year**

**Alisa Sarmant** (TG House) is the winner of the J4T special nomination for systemic support for the LGBTQ+ community in conditions of repression and forced migration. The winner plays a significant role in organizing the evacuation of LGBTQ+ people in danger, accompanies the adaptation processes after relocation, and also initiates and coordinates educational, informational and supportive online and offline events.

Alisa Sarmant's work contributes to strengthening solidarity, increasing the visibility of the problems of vulnerable groups, and protecting the rights of Belarusian LGBTQ+ people in Belarus and abroad.

The winner was selected by the team of the "Journalists for Tolerance" human rights initiative.

## **Editorial Team of the Year**

In 2025, the 'Editorial Team of the Year' nomination was not awarded, as none of the nominees gained a significant advantage during the voting of NGO representatives and individual civil society activists.

## **Gpress.info / Gaypress.eu**

The Gpress.info / Gaypress.eu Web-site continued to provide the Belarusian LGBTQ+ community inside Belarus and in exile with regular updates about the situation with their [rights](#), providing advice on where to get assistance and how to remain in safety, being inside the country, as well as [how to get to safety](#) in case of force-major situations, including the current criminal and the looming administrative persecution for being openly queer in the country.

**[Gpress.info](#)** on the social media and messengers:

[TikTok](#)

[Telegram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[VK](#)

[Twitter](#)

[YouTube](#)

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