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## Belarus – Reports of detention of publisher and bookseller raise concerns

The International Publishers Association, the Federation of European Publishers and the European and International Booksellers Federation are extremely concerned by new [reports](#) from RadioFreeEurope regarding the detentions on 16 May of Andrey Yanushkevich, and his associate, Nasta Karnatskaya.

The pair were reportedly detained after they opened a general bookstore in Minsk, the Belarusian capital, and continued to sell copies of George Orwell's *1984*, which was banned, along with other publications, on 19 May 2022.

Kristenn Einarsson, Chair of the IPA's Freedom to Publish Committee said: *We recognized independent Belarusian publishers in the 2021 IPA Prix Voltaire shortlist. We know that publishing and bookselling is so difficult in Belarus now and incidents like this will undoubtedly lead to self-censorship on the part of authors, publishers and booksellers. We continue to offer our support to all those publishers in Belarus who want to publish freely.*

EIBF Co-President, Jean-Luc Treutenaere, added: *We are concerned by the reports of book-banning, bookshop searches and overall censorship coming from Belarus. We call on the full respect for the freedom to publish and sell books, and we stand firmly with the Belorussian, European and international publishing community against any form of censorship of the written word.*

Peter Kraus Vom Cleff, President of the Federation of European Publishers said: *George Orwell's book, 1984, denounces totalitarianism and mass surveillance. These are issues that, together with the role of truth and facts within politics and the ways in which they are manipulated, calls for increased consideration from politicians and society at large. No book, perhaps especially this one, should ever be banned. Freedom to publish and freedom to sell books are central to a democratic society.*