

Warsaw, August 3, 2021

Testimonies of Angelika Domańska - civil activist & victim of police brutality

My name is Angelika Domańska and I am a single mother and an activist. In the last 6 years I was repressed numerous times for my work. I was identified hundreds of times by police officers and removed from peaceful and legal assemblies dozens of times. I have been detained twice and both times I ended up in the emergency room because of the beatings I endured in the presence of police officers.

The first time I was beaten was during the monthly commemoration of the Smolensk plane catastrophe, in May 2017, after I showed a white rose to Jarosław Kaczyński. I was beaten for the second time, in October 2020, when, in protest against the de-facto total abortion ban spearheaded by the leaders of Catholic Church, I yelled during a mass that this Church is also mine. In both instances, not only did the police not help me and did not call medical services, but they also refused to intervene. Next, for holding up a white rose a few metres away from the Chairman of the Law and Justice party, criminal charges were brought against me for obstructing the actions of state authorities. After the second incident, the Prosecutor's Office initiated an investigation into the possibility that I committed the crime of insulting religious feelings, which, in Poland, is punishable by up to 2 years in prison. At the same time, my charges against the perpetrators of my beating were discontinued by the Prosecutor's Office on the grounds of "no public interest" in prosecuting the attackers...

There were attempts to intimidate me in another way as well. The police repeatedly questioned my neighbours about me. In January 2018, to the horror of the residents of my home village – the Internal Security Agency carried out a search for me in all the places I had lived up to that point. This was enough to make my neighbours look at me with distrust, as if I were a criminal. Tired of the insults, finger-pointing and, most of all, the way my growing daughter suffered during this, I moved to Warsaw. Since then, I have suffered further repression for my participation in protests, but I will focus on the dramatic events of August 7th, 2020.

On that day, together with a group of activists, we organised a blockade of the arrest of Margot, an LGBTQIA activist and a co-founder of the "Stop Bzdurom" collective. The blockade was met with a brutal response by the police. It was hell. Without warning, the police officers threw themselves at us, with up to several police officers per person. They also ran into the crowd, randomly grabbed single people, and took them away. I managed to break away and escape the first time I was stopped, for which I was later charged with violating the personal integrity of the three officers holding me. After the end of the protest, when I was returning home with a group of young people, a manhunt for us was organised. Suddenly, out of the blue, a squad of officers jumped out and the round-up began. I would have managed to escape, but, after seeing that three young and frightened people were pushed into one of the vans, I let myself be put in the car. I thought that it would be the "same as always": to the police station, providing ID, absurd charges, and a return home.

However, as soon as the car doors closed, our phones were confiscated. Nobody was willing to tell us where we were going. In front of the police station on Zakroczymska Street, I saw someone I knew and I yelled that I had been detained. I was put in handcuffs then and taken



away. I suffer from diabetes. I asked for medical help and was told that it would be provided later. We also did not receive any water. After around 6 hours, I was presented with the charges against me. At that point I was supposed to go to the hospital already, because my condition was deteriorating rapidly. Eventually, I was only taken to the emergency room in the morning. I was transported handcuffed to the front. When a doctor in the emergency room refused to sign a consent to detention, the police officers said they would wait for another doctor. In the meantime, I lost consciousness. A nurse instructed the officers to give me medication, as well as food and drink, but they continued to wait for the next doctor. I also asked them where my children were, to which the police officers replied that they did not know.

I was returned to the police station after three hours. When at last I was supposed to get medicine and something to drink, it turned out that an officer had lost the prescription and had to get a new one... another two hours passed. I lost consciousness. A police officer filmed me on camera, so that – in case of my death – she would not be held responsible. By the time I got to the detention centre I could barely communicate. I was told to do naked squats and other strange things. In the morning, on my way out, I was served with another charge based on the criminal code.

I came home, the children were fine. The police and social services were not interested in their fate. Two days after the incident I stopped sleeping. After five I had to go on strong anti-anxiety medication. After a month, when I saw a policeman on the sidewalk, I had convulsions. I live in fear, I fear for my children and myself.