

Who controls the controllers? Special and control services in Belarus's public administration

Abstract

This study examines the main institutions of state control in Belarus – the State Security Committee, the Operational and Analytical Centre, and the State Control Committee – between 2015 and 2025. The paper describes how these bodies have expanded their power not only in the security sphere, but also in the financial, economic, and digital spheres, and how they have become the main instruments of political repression, especially after 2020. The paper also analyses the main directions of personnel policy and the leadership of these bodies. Their overlapping powers, lack of external control, and direct dependence on Aliaksandr Lukashenka have led to the creation of an integrated system of political, economic, and information control, which underpins the consolidation of the authoritarian regime in Belarus. The study bases its conclusions on institutional analysis, career trajectory research, and content analysis.

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Introduction

The Belarusian state's security apparatus extends beyond judicial, law-enforcement, and supervisory agencies to include a broader set of structures that exercise control functions across public administration. Within the personalised system, formed over the years of Aliaksandr Lukashenka's rule, the security and control bodies became institutionally dependent on the "power vertical" that the president heads. This has led to a reduction in the autonomy of the control bodies and the politicisation of their functions.

This paper examines three governmental bodies that perform control functions: the State Security Committee (KGB), the Operational and Analytical Center under the President (OAC),¹ and the State Control Committee (SCC). Politically, they have strengthened Lukashenka's grip on power by being an integral part of the repressive apparatus. The KGB plays a central role, systematically discrediting and persecuting opponents of the regime. During the 2020 election campaign, the KGB and the SCC were involved in the neutralisation of Lukashenka's main rivals; all three bodies took part in the post-election repressions.

The KGB, which has retained both its name and functions from the Soviet period, is a traditional special service with a range of control powers, making it one of the key instruments of political control in Belarus. After 2020, its role expanded to encompass aspects of foreign policy, including its participation in negotiations with representatives of the US administration about the release of political prisoners.

The OAC is formally classed as one of the special services and carries out regulation in the field of information protection, including the protection of state secrets. At the same time, the OAC has wide powers in the field of information and communication technologies, including the administration of the national internet domain ".by". However, the high degree of institutional secrecy of the OAC significantly limits analysis of its actual powers and practices.

The SCC is the main control body in Belarus. It has wide-ranging powers, whilst being directly dependent on the head of state. The Department of Financial Investigations (DFI) occupies a special place in the structure of the SCC, dealing with so-called "white-collar" crime in the areas of economics, public administration, and corruption. A distinctive feature of the SCC is that its current

¹ Also translated from Russian as "the Operations and Analysis Centre", for example:
<https://president.gov.by/en/statebodies/the-operational-and-analysis-center-under-the-president>

chairman, Vasil Herasimau (Vasilij Gerasimov),² allows himself to criticise other high-ranking officials in public. This is unusual in Belarus's public administration system and reflects the SCC's special institutional position. At the same time, the SCC's powers extend across both the public and private sectors.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the role of the KGB, the OAC and the SCC in Belarusian public administration, their organisational structure, and the control functions they performed both before and after 2020. In addition, the paper examines the specific features of the personnel policy and the career trajectories of the heads of these bodies at the central and regional levels.

As in other authoritarian regimes, the security and law-enforcement agencies involved in repression in Belarus are highly secretive, and publicly available information remains extremely limited. Official websites often lack up-to-date data, and since 2020 access from abroad has in some cases been restricted. Open sources frequently provide very limited or no information at all on personnel, including senior appointments and personnel decisions.

Despite these constraints, this study analysed the biographies of 47 senior and mid-level officials. Between September and November 2025, we conducted seven interviews with experts possessing professional knowledge of the structure, activities, and control functions of the institutions concerned. The scarcity of data constitutes a limitation of the study; nevertheless, the use of multiple methods and sources allows for a robust analysis and the drawing of well-grounded conclusions.

² Throughout the text we transliterate from Belarusian, with transliterations from Russian provided in brackets.

1. Control bodies in the Belarusian public administration system

In public administration, the main purpose of control agencies is to identify errors, shortcomings, and inefficiencies in order to correct them. Under the authoritarian regime of Belarus, however, the purpose of control has changed – it is no longer a tool for improving efficiency, instead having become a mechanism for retaining power. One interviewee described it as follows:

"Each structure in the Belarusian system is responsible for its own area of activity, its own sector. This entire architecture is designed in such a way that these structures interact closely with each other. But they do not function as intended. That is, they do not interact exactly as intended. Each of them performs its own separate role in the system of forceful control."

In addition to the agencies examined in this paper, the prosecutor's office performs supervisory functions within Belarusian public administration, and several ministries exercise additional control powers. For example, the Ministry of Taxes and Duties conducts administrative oversight in the area of tax compliance. The agencies analysed in this study perform control functions, either as their primary activity (in the case of the SCC) or as a supplementary function (the KGB and the OAC). As interviewees emphasised, however, extensive control powers tend to expand beyond their original remit and become politicised:

"Control agencies in Belarus perform a very excessive function, which not only does not contribute to the development of the economy or business, but also hinders economic development. But supervisory bodies often, informally, perform the functions of punitive bodies. This often turns them into political regulatory bodies, as they are used to repress those who disagree with the government."

The KGB, SCC, and OAC, as state control agencies, have the following common characteristics:

- The KGB, SCC (represented by the DFI), and OAC are military formations or militarised organisations, and this fact influences their structure, internal hierarchy, and functioning.
- The regulatory framework governing their powers is unclear. Despite the constitutional status of the SCC and the existence of separate laws for each of these bodies, it is not possible, even from a legal point of view, to delineate their powers clearly and define their place in the system of public administration.

- Each of these bodies, in parallel with their regulatory functions, has a number of unofficial repressive and political functions that are carried out exclusively in the interests of the regime:

"It can be said that the functions of these supervisory bodies can be divided into two categories: officially, as stated, they regulate activities, and informally, they engage in political persecution and political repression of dissidents. Supervisory bodies play an enormous role in the country, [performing] functions of both deterrence and political repression."

- The staff of all these structures includes both military and civilian personnel, with the latter treated as civil service employees.

At the same time, there are differences between these agencies:

- The KGB and SCC are empowered to use force. The KGB has the most extensive system of structural divisions, institutions (including a detention centre), employees, and special equipment for this purpose. In the SCC, only the DFI has the characteristics of a law enforcement agency. The OAC does not have the means to employ force among its component parts, but it completely dominates the field of information technology in the country.
- The KGB does not practise horizontal rotation (the transfer of staff to similar positions in other regions) in personnel promotion. On the contrary, officers often build their entire careers within a single region. The KGB also rarely appoints senior officials from outside the organisation, with the exception of the DFI after 2020, and senior officials typically advance their careers within the KGB itself.

After 2020, both positions within public administration and the functions of control bodies changed. The entire governance system, including the KGB, the SCC, and the OAC, were involved in political repression. The special services, namely the KGB and the OAC, assumed a leading role in ensuring the security of the authoritarian regime as a whole, as well as Lukashenka's personal safety.

"In 2020, after the start of mass protests, it was the control bodies that played the main role in suppressing them. If we talk, for example, about business, it was bodies such as the Ministry of Emergencies, tax authorities, police, even banks and the social protection fund, that all participated in repressing dissenting businesses."

"There have been changes [to the KGB] in recent years, and this is not propaganda rhetoric; Lukashenka's regime seriously believes that foreign special services are waging war against it, and that they have heroically fought back. This is the attitude

within the system, as confirmed by their internal documents. The KGB is actively engaged in this now; they need to show results, so they are constantly raising the stakes, showing how they are fighting on this external track."

After the 2020 protests and the ensuing "counter-revolutionary" struggle, perceptions of security shifted both across the system as a whole and within the security forces themselves. This shift led to internal purges and generated a sense of institutional insecurity among personnel, with the previously established "rules of the game" ceasing to operate.

"Now anyone can be charged under the law. Your relationship with one department does not guarantee that another will not take an interest in you. This creates an unhealthy basis of absolute mistrust within the system, because you simply do not know what will happen to you tomorrow."

"It's just total fear, total intimidation of each other; that is, total distrust within the system. It's just to finally cement this fear within the system, in general, in the state apparatus, in all the law enforcement agencies, in all the controlling structures, in all the departmental structures."

Experts noted that five years of repression had transformed repressive practices, with the security forces increasingly engaging in transborder persecutions:

"Inside [Belarus], everything has been paved over, nothing 'alive' remains there, but the structures remain, and they need to show their importance, that they are not eating their 'bread' for nothing, and that they need to earn their stripes and build their careers somehow. Now everything is shifting to the 'outer contour', to transnational repression against activists, disloyal people, and anyone who is still somehow active here [outside of the country]."

2. The role and functions of the KGB in public administration

The KGB is a state body responsible for implementing national security policy and ensuring the security of individuals, society, and the state.³ The KGB – the institutional successor to the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission (Cheka), the Joint State Political Directorate (OGPU), and the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) – was formed within the framework of the Soviet political model of the 1920s and 1930s.

The collapse of the USSR initiated a process that saw state security agencies reformed and rebranded in most of the newly formed states: Ukraine established the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), while Russia divided the functions of the KGB between the Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR). In addition to renaming their special services, former Warsaw Pact countries also declassified most of their archives and carried out vetting of former employees. Belarus chose a different path, retaining not only the entire system and internal structure of the Soviet state security agencies, but also the very name “KGB”. Functionally, the KGB retained its special elite status in the power vertical and its dominant position in the power bloc of public administration.

In an interview, the role and significance of the KGB was described as follows:

"Since Soviet times, the KGB has played a huge and crucial role in the system of public administration. It can be said without any doubt that it is the country's main special service, reporting directly to Lukashenka."

The KGB's structure includes departments, main directorates, directorates, divisions, sectors (groups), and other subdivisions (see Figures 1 and 2),⁴ but a complete list of structural subdivisions is not publicly available. At the same time, the head of state retains the authority to create, reorganise, and liquidate organisations within the KGB structure.

³ Its powers derive from Article 14 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 390-Z dated 10 July 2012 (as amended on 3 January 2024), "On State Security Bodies of the Republic of Belarus" (hereinafter referred to as Law No. 390-Z), https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=h11200390&q_id=4876972

⁴ Various sources were used in compiling this list: Article 13 of Law No. 390-Z; the KGB website, and web archive as of 11 November 2021, <https://web.archive.org/web/20211111041027/http://www.kgb.by/ru/systema-organov-gb-ru/>; BelTA, "Thank you for everything you do for the country and the people" – Lukashenko presented state awards and general's epaulettes, <https://belta.by/president/view/spasibo-za-vse-chto-delaete-dlja-strany-i-naroda-lukashenko-vruchil-gosnagrady-i-generalskie-pogony-382295-2020/>; KGB Resolution No. 2 of 17 February 2021 "On the granting of powers", expired on 22 December 2023, https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=w22136382&q_id=4876934; BelTA, Two defendants who planned a violent overthrow of the government have been brought to Belarus, <https://belta.by/society/view/v-belarus-dostavili-dvoih-obvinjaemyh-planirovavshih-silovoe-sverzhenie-vlasti-713011-2025/>

Figure 1. System of state security bodies

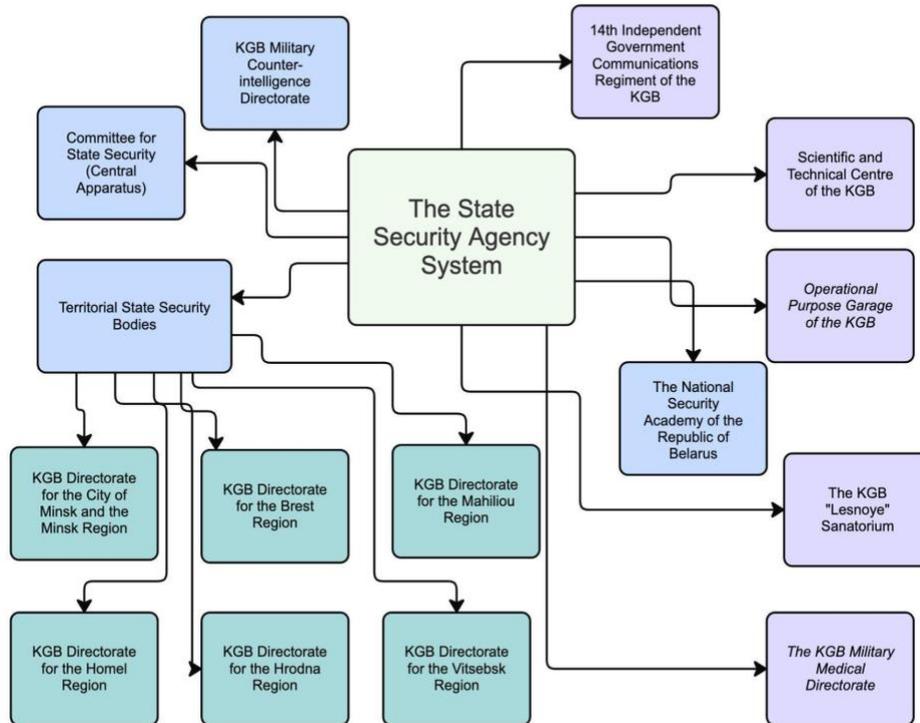
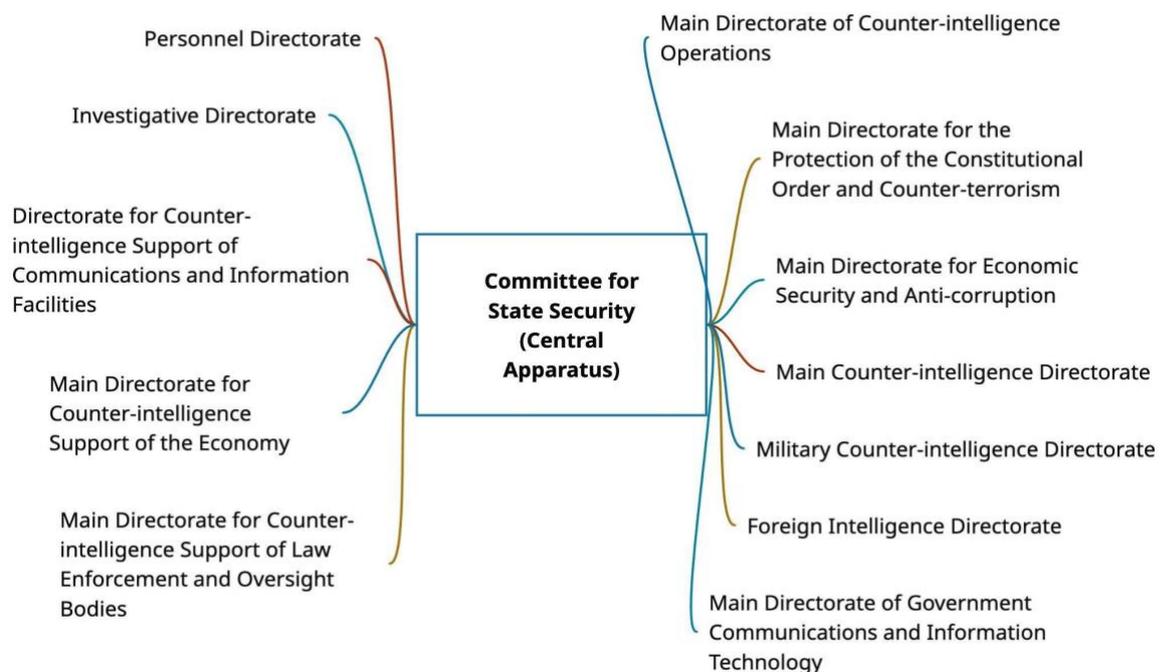


Figure 2. Structure of the KGB central apparatus



The KGB management system also includes a collegium, a collective advisory body for considering the most important issues, without external control functions. Decisions in the collegium are taken by majority vote and expressed in orders issued by the chairman. The collegium consists of the chairman of the KGB, his deputies, key department heads and, since July 2025, the deputy state secretary of the Security Council. Interestingly, Belarusian legislation provides for joint collegiums with the special services of other CIS countries and the Union State (i.e. Russia's FSB and SVR).⁵

The head of state exercises overall control over the activities of the KGB and, in essence, has unlimited power over the state security agencies,⁶ which is expressed in:

- **Personnel control:** the head of state appoints the chair of the committee, his deputies, and other employees;
- **Structural control:** the head of state determines the number of employees, structural divisions, and organisations within the KGB system;
- **Resource control:** the head of state determines the material and technical support of the KGB.

The KGB is headed by a chairman who reports directly to the head of state and bears personal responsibility for its activities. The chairman's powers fall into the following areas:

1. **Operational management:** command of the agency, introduction of counter-terrorism operation regimes, authorisation of the use of special forces, and involvement of the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
2. **Internal administration:** approval of the organisational and staffing structure, issuance of binding acts, and maintenance of secrecy.
3. **Reporting and intelligence provision:** informing the head of state of threats to national security and providing sensitive information across a range of areas.
4. **Personnel management:** appointment and dismissal of personnel, assignment of ranks up to lieutenant colonel, application of disciplinary penalties, and oversight of ideological work.

⁵ See Paragraphs 13 and 14 of the Regulations on the KGB, approved by Decree of the President of Belarus No. 325 of 23 July 2013 "On Certain Issues of the State Security Committee" (hereinafter referred to as Regulation No. 325), https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p31300325&q_id=4011211

⁶ See Article 7 of Law No. 390-Z

5. **Financial and material management:** allocation of budgetary resources, and the determination of salaries and other remuneration for confidential employees.⁷

Powers of the KGB

The KGB ensures the stability of the Belarusian regime by combining its formal legal powers with informal functions. The KGB's main formal powers include:

- Counterintelligence and intelligence activities
- Combating crime and "extremism"
- Administration of the system of operational-investigative activities
- Analytical and forecasting functions
- Protection of state secrets and regulation of access to them
- Ensuring the security of protected facilities and persons
- Organisation of special communications and cryptographic systems (for further details, see Appendix 1)

The experts noted the following informal functions of the KGB:

- Lobbying for the economic interests of big business associated with Lukashenka or the financing of his regime (his so-called "wallets"), with the KGB also pursuing its own interests:

"Ultimately, this is a corruption scheme, based on the understanding that corruption is the granting of preferences of any kind in exchange for some kind of benefit. The ultimate beneficiaries of these activities may be senior KGB officials. And they will create and pave the way for such business, somewhere creating tax breaks by entering Lukashenka's office and adopting special decrees. He [the businessman] may be Lukashenka's wallet and, a little bit, the KGB chairman's wallet."

- Gathering compromising information on candidates for high positions in the public administration system:

"This is about giving an opinion when civil servants are appointed. As they say in common parlance, every Belarusian has a 'File', only for some it's thinner, for others it's thicker. I've had to deal with it, and I can confirm that there definitely is a 'File'."

⁷ See Paragraph 12 of Regulation No. 325

Analysis of the biographies of KGB leadership

The study analyses the biographies of 17 high-ranking KGB officers at the republican and regional levels, including the chairman, his deputies, regional department heads, the head of military counterintelligence, the head of the National Security Academy, as well as seven biographies of former leaders (see Table 1). As already noted, data on most KGB officials is simply not available in open sources.

Table 1. Biographical information on KGB leaders at the republican and regional levels

Name	Position	Year of appointment (number of years in office when role ended)	Previous place of service, position held / Career trajectory	Subsequent career
Tsiertsel Ivan Stanislavavich (Tertel Ivan Stanislavovich)	Chairman of the KGB	2020	Chairman of the SCC (less than 3 months) / internal promotion	Current position
Vakulchyk Valeryi Paulavich (Vakulchik Valery Pavlovich)	Chairman of the KGB	2012-2020 (8 years)	Chairman of the Investigative Committee / "universal soldier"	State Secretary of the Security Council
Tsierabou Siarhei Yauhenavich (Terebov Sergey Evgenyevich)	First Deputy Chairman of the KGB	2020	Head of the KGB Directorate for the Homel Region / internal promotion	Current position
Reutski Dzmitryi Vasiljevich (Reutsky Dmitry Vasilyevich)	Deputy Chairman of the KGB	2020	Head of the KGB in Minsk and the Minsk Region / internal promotion	Current position
Gladyshau Siarhei Siarheievich (Gladyshev Sergey Sergeyeovich)	Deputy Chairman of the KGB	2021	Head of the KGB in the Brest Region / internal promotion	Current position
Busko Ihar Yauhenavich (Busko Igor Evgenyevich)	Deputy Chairman of the KGB	2013-2018 (5)	Head of the KGB in the Brest Region / internal promotion	N/K
Charnyshou Aleh Anatoljevich (Chernyshev Oleg Anatolyevich)	Deputy Chairman of the KGB	2014-2021 (7)	Commander of the KGB's special anti-terrorist unit, Group A / internal promotion along the security track	Deputy Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus

Kalach Uladzimir Viktaravich (Kalach Vladimir Viktorovich)	Deputy Chairman of the KGB	2018-2021 (3)	Head of the KGB Directorate for Minsk and the Minsk Region / internal promotion	Assistant to the President - Inspector for the Minsk Region, Presidential Administration (2021-2024)
Radzkou Maksim Uladzimiravich (Radkov Maksim Vladimirovich)	Head of the KGB Directorate for the Brest Region	2022	N/A	Current position
Staliarchuk Aleh Valeryevich (Stolyarchuk Oleg Valeryevich)	Head of the KGB Directorate for the Hrodna Region	2022	Head of the KGB in the Vitsebsk region / internal promotion	Current position
Tsierakhau Aliaksandr Aliaksandravich (Terekhov Aleksandr Aleksandrovich)	Head of the KGB Directorate in Minsk and Minsk Region	2021	Head of the KGB in the Mahiliou Region / internal promotion	Current position
Yazierski Viachaslau Vasiljevich (Ezersky Vyacheslav Vasilyevich)	Head of the Institute of National Security	2018-2020 (2)	Head of the KGB in the Brest Region / internal promotion	N/K
Pauliuchenka Ihar Aliaksandravich (Pavlyushchenko Igor Aleksandrovich)	Head of the KGB Directorate for the Mahiliou Region	2021	Head of the Institute of National Security / internal promotion	Current position
Mielnikau Aliaksandr Kuzmich (Melnikov Aleksandr Kuzmich)	Head of the KGB in the Homel Region	2020		Current position
Kuchynski Kanstantsin Anatoljevich (Kuchinsky Konstantin Anatolyevich)	Head of the KGB Military Counterintelligence Directorate	2017	Deputy Head of the KGB Military Counterintelligence Directorate / internal promotion	Current position
Nieviarouski Aliaksandr Viktaravich (Neverovsky Aleksandr Viktorovich)	Head of the KGB Directorate for the Hrodna Region	2018-2022 (4)	Head of the KGB Directorate for the Magileu Region / internal promotion	Deputy State Secretary of the Security Council
Siarheienka Ihar Piatrovich (Sergeenko Igor Petrovich)	First Deputy Chairman of the KGB	2013-2019 (6)	Head of the KGB Directorate for the Mahiliou Region / internal promotion	Head of the Presidential Administration

The average age at which an employee attains a senior leadership position in the KGB is 47.8 years (with an age range from 43 to 54 years). The birthplaces of six leading officials are known: four were born in villages and two in cities.

The available information on the education of high-ranking KGB officers indicates a predominance of specialised Soviet military training. Most received their initial higher education at specialised military academies in the USSR, mainly in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. The exception is Ihar Siarheienka, who began his career with a civilian education in history. Specialised educational institutions within the Soviet KGB system and, in the post-Soviet period, the Belarusian Institute of National Security played a major role in shaping the KGB's personnel corps.⁸ In addition, some of the officers were trained at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Belarus. Overall, the educational trajectories of the KGB leadership are characterised by continuity with the Soviet personnel model.

The KGB organisational structure gives ranks to officers corresponding to those used in the armed forces. Two of the leaders hold the rank of "lieutenant general": Ivan Tsiertsel (the current chairman) and Valeryi Vakulchyk (former chairman). Others are "major generals" – namely Siarhei Tsierabou, Dzmitryi Reutski, Siarhei Gladyshau, Ihar Busko, Aleh Charnyshou, Uladzimir Kalach, Aliaksandr Nieviariouski, Aliaksandr Tsierakhau, Maksim Radzkou, Aleh Staliarchuk, Viachaslau Yazierski, and Kanstantsin Kuchynski – or in one case, Aliaksandr Mielnikau, "colonel". There is no information about the rank of Ihar Pauliuchenka.

Career paths of KGB leadership

Despite the limited information available in open sources, it can be assumed that high-ranking KGB officials generally pursue their careers within the committee, whilst there is no practice of appointing leaders from other law enforcement agencies. The characteristic features of the career paths of KGB leadership include:

1. Corporate secrecy

Virtually all high-ranking KGB officers have pursued their careers within the committee. The KGB's personnel policy is closed and secretive, characterised by internal selection. Most leaders began their careers in low-ranking operational

⁸ Currently the National Security Academy (from October 2022:

<https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=P32200355&p1=1&p5=0>). It has three faculties, twelve specialised departments, two research departments, and a doctoral programme (adjuncture). It also offers bachelor's and master's degree programmes, and research-oriented and additional adult education programmes, KGB website, Web archive as of 11 November 2021, <https://web.archive.org/web/20211018223854/http://kgb.by/by/institut-nac-bez-by/>

positions and worked their way up to become head of department or division. One expert described a typical career path in this body as follows:

"Ivan Tsiertsel has spent his entire life serving in the KGB. Since 2011, he has been an employee of the KGB's central apparatus. His biography is extremely simple, a typical career for a KGB employee, and this is what makes it unique, because people who were in the KGB and then sent somewhere else will eventually return."

2. Experience as leaders in law enforcement agencies or border guard services

As a special service, the KGB is closely linked to the State Border Committee⁹ and the border guard services. Three KGB leaders have a background in law enforcement:

- Ivan Tsiertsel served in the border troops before joining the KGB (from 1993 to 2007).
- Valeryi Vakulchik began his career in the Brest border guard unit and was head of the KGB's military counterintelligence department in the border troops (from 1991 to 2008).¹⁰
- Aleh Charnyshou, before his career took off and he became deputy chairman of the KGB, was head of the KGB's Anti-Terrorism Centre (from 2002 to 2009) and then commander of the KGB's special anti-terrorism unit, Group "A" (from 2009 to 2014).

3. Horizontal rotation

Seven of the eleven senior KGB officers underwent "horizontal rotation," heading regional departments or units in the central apparatus before being promoted (as in other Belarusian government agencies, senior personnel are often "shuffled" between regions). This practice of promotion is probably due to Lukashenka's desire to prevent any individual consolidating their power "on the ground". For example, Aliaksandr Tsierakhau began his career in 2012 as head of the KGB's Main Directorate for Economic Security, became head of the KGB's Hrodna Region Directorate in 2014, took up a similar position in Mahiliou in 2018, and in 2021 in Minsk and the Minsk Region. Aliaksandr Nieviariouski, in turn, held a similar position in the Mahiliou region from 2013 until his appointment in 2018 as head of the KGB Directorate for the Hrodna region.

⁹ Hereinafter referred to as the GPK

¹⁰ BelTA, Valery Vakulchik appointed Head of the Council of Ministers, <https://belta.by/president/view/valerij-vakulchik-naznachen-rukovoditelem-apparata-soveta-ministrov-716428-2025/>

Career after the KGB

When Lukashenka removes KGB leaders from their positions, they are usually transferred to "civilian" positions in a wide variety of departments. Such appointments indicate a special trust on the part of Lukashenka. In their new positions, such leaders usually build a system similar to that of the KGB:

"It was believed that the system built by KGB employees, and the loyalty [of such employees], were absolute. After 2010, Lukashenka decided to appoint people from the KGB to senior positions in the security forces, people who had been thoroughly vetted. And so Shunevich was appointed to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and began to create the architecture of the Ministry of Internal Affairs along the lines of the KGB model. Roughly the same thing happened in the KGB in 2020."

In fact, the security forces in general, and the "committee members" in particular, are a political "personnel reserve" for various ministries and organisations:

- The Presidential Administration: Ihar Siarheienka became its head in 2019 after being transferred from the position of first deputy chairman of the KGB. In 2020 Valeryi Vakulchyk first became the president's authorised representative in the Brest region, and then his assistant – inspector for the Brest region (until 2025). Uladzimir Kalach became assistant to the president – inspector for the Minsk region in 2021, having been appointed from the position of deputy chairman of the KGB.
- In the legislative branch: Ihar Siarheienka was "elected" to the Belarusian parliament in 2024 and became chairman of the lower house of parliament.
- In the executive branch: Valeryi Vakulchyk became the head of the Council of Ministers' administration in 2025.
- In the national security system: In 2020 Valeryi Vakulchyk briefly held the position of State Secretary of the Security Council of Belarus.
- In the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus: Aleh Charnyshou was transferred to the position of deputy chairman of the Presidium in 2021 (from the position of deputy chairman of the KGB).

"Universal soldier": Valeryi Vakulchyk's career path

Valeryi Vakulchyk's career path is atypical for leaders of law enforcement agencies. With a military education and special training at a KGB educational institution, Vakulchyk rose to middle management level in the border troops. From 1991 to 2008, he served in the state security services in the Brest border guard detachment, where he rose to head the KGB's military counterintelligence

department working in the border troops. His next two appointments were to newly created security agencies. In 2008 Lukashenka appointed him head of the OAC and later, in 2011, chairman of the Investigative Committee, which showed Lukashenka's trust in Vakulchyk.

"As for Vakulchyk, his career took a bit of a hit after 2020 because the KGB really messed up the situation that was developing in Belarus, because they didn't expect it, they didn't analyse it, they couldn't figure out the mood that was prevailing. He had worked in the KGB system his entire life, starting in the 2010s, and served in the central apparatus, meaning there were no complaints about him, and his loyalty and dedication had been proven over the years."

"Back in September, I had two theories: it was unclear who needed to be monitored – the Brest region or Vakulchik himself – because there were questions about him. The second version: these September arrests, [when] they took Kalesnikava and then Znak, are directly linked to the fact that on the third [of September], Vakulchyk resigned and Tsiertsel came in."

Vakulchyk's transfer from the KGB to the Presidential Administration probably indicates Lukashenka's trust in him. Although Lukashenka was clearly dissatisfied that the special services were unable to prevent the 2020 crisis, Vakulchyk did not fall out of favour. Instead, his skills began to be used outside the security bloc, and in 2025 he was appointed head of the government apparatus.

3. The OAC as a special service

The OAC, as part of the security forces, has undergone a series of transformations, from the Minsk Regional Inspectorate for Comprehensive Technical Control (1979) to the Minsk Special Centre of the USSR State Technical Commission (1989) and the State Centre for Information Security (SCIS) under the Ministry of Defence (1993). The agency initially specialised in engineering and the protection of technical information in the military-industrial complex. The SCIS expanded its competence to encompass all areas of national security, whilst retaining its focus on government agencies and the defence sector (data protection in the development and operation of weapons, automated control systems, and specialist equipment). SCIS had been subordinated to different departments at different times: in 1994 it was transferred to the Security Council, and in 2000 to the president. In 2008 Lukashenka established the OAC on the basis of the SCIS through a decree, the text of which was classified, confirming the existing functional profile of the agency.¹¹

In functional terms, the OAC has evolved from an agency ensuring data security in a fairly narrow field – the military-industrial complex – to a full-fledged special service with broad powers in the field of data protection (ranging from state secrets and cybersecurity of state bodies to personal data protection), IT regulation throughout Belarus in all possible areas, and in the field of operational and investigative activities. At the same time, from 1994 through to the present, it has been Lukashenka who independently has determined the administrative subordination and powers of the OAC (formerly the SCIS). Since 2000, as already noted, he has subordinated the OAC directly to himself.

"To simplify, the OAC is an analogue of the NSA (US National Security Agency), which deals only with issues in the field of IT. But there is unofficial information about the OAC, and it is more accurate because it is confirmed not only by documents but also by the principle of their activities in general. The OAC was created as a structure controlled personally by Viktor Lukashenka [Aliaksandr Lukashenka's eldest son]."

"The OAC is a law enforcement agency that is directly controlled, directed, and protected by the Lukashenka family. It is for them that the OAC performs its key functions."

Officially, the OAC is a body that regulates activities to protect information containing state secrets or other information protected by law. Those protections aim to prevent leakage through technical channels, or unauthorised and

¹¹ Information about the OAC, OAC website, <https://www.oac.gov.by/info>

unintentional influences on such information.¹² At the same time, the OAC's powers in the field of operational and investigative activities are concealed, as is the OAC's technical ability to block the internet in Belarus.

The powers of the OAC: symbiosis of a "shadow" special service and an open IT regulator

Formal powers and functions

The legal regulation of the OAC's powers in public administration has a peculiarity: there is no single normative act regulating its status. Some of the normative acts that define the functions of the OAC are documents marked "for official use only," which indicates an intention to conceal information about the centre's activities even at the level of normative regulation.¹³ Thus, analysing the activities of the OAC from open sources is extremely problematic. Based on the formal legal powers of the OAC, however, it can be concluded that they combine a certain dualism. On the one hand, the centre performs "open" functions as a regulator in the field of information security in the broadest sense of the word. On the other hand, it clearly performs other, "closed" ("shadow") functions typical of a special service.

In legislation, the powers of the OAC are regulated based on its status as a "military formation."¹⁴ In other words, it is a full-fledged special service with a strict hierarchy, personnel ranks, and access to weapons. At the same time, it lacks its own enforcement officers or dedicated unit, unlike special units authorised to detain individuals directly and undertake investigative and procedural actions against them.

"The OAC is not a punitive structure in the literal sense, in that they do not directly punish or arrest anyone; it is specifically an information structure, which gathers information, and then the GUBOPiK or KGB will act on that information."

Within the governance system, the OAC carries out activities in various areas and has fairly broad powers (see Appendix No. 2). The formal functions of the OAC can be divided into the following areas:

¹² Ibid., <https://www.oac.gov.by/info>

¹³ For example, paragraph 1.8 of Decree No. 545 of the President of Belarus dated 6 October 2008 "On Amendments and Additions to Certain Decrees of the President of the Republic of Belarus", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p30800545&q_id=4920538. This decree effectively changes all Belarusian legislation regarding the transformation of the SCIS into the OAC.

¹⁴ See paragraph 1.1. of Decree of the President of Belarus No. 251 of 1 June 2007 "On certain issues concerning the activities of military formations and paramilitary organisations of the Republic of Belarus" (hereinafter referred to as Decree No. 251), https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p30700251&q_id=4920565

- Operational and investigative activities
- Management of the public telecommunications network
- Ensuring national cybersecurity
- Regulation of information technologies
- Management of the telecommunications services and international traffic market
- Protection of state secrets
- Licensing in the field of cybersecurity; protection of personal data
- Data exchange between state bodies, as well as other powers in specific areas.

Informal powers and functions of the OAC

According to the most commonly cited information in open sources, the OAC was originally created under the influence of Lukashenka's eldest son, Viktor, who was appointed Presidential Adviser on National Security in 2005.¹⁵ These links granted the OAC a special status within the security forces:

"Informally it [the OAC] is completely controlled by and subordinate to Lukashenka's eldest son."

"First and foremost, the OAC was created precisely to create competition and give Viktor, the eldest son, enormous powers and enormous opportunities."

Open sources and interviews also suggest that, in creating what was effectively a new special service in Belarus in 2008, Lukashenka's primary goal was to create a competitor to the KGB that could reduce the committee's influence in the state administration system:

"It is like the main competitor to the KGB, because Lukashenka has been afraid of the KGB all his life. He simply created an alternative to the KGB – one that is more controllable, more modern, and better equipped in technical terms."

"The function of the OAC is to blur the monopoly and some key component of both political persecution and political investigation. And, of course, it serves the financial and economic interests of the Lukashenka family."

In interviews, experts mentioned the rivalry between the KGB and the OAC, as well as the fact that Lukashenka has a deliberate tactic of creating conflicts and conflicting structures as a form of regime management. By competing with each

¹⁵ Viktor Aliksandravich Lukashenka, website of the National Olympic Committee of Belarus, <https://www.noc.by/noc/structure/guide/lukashenko-viktor-aleksandrovich-president%20NOC/>

other, such bodies and officials have fewer opportunities to participate in a struggle for state power:

"There has always been a very serious rivalry between the KGB and the OAC. From Lukashenka's point of view, it is important that none of the structures with significant powers should have a monopoly. The aim was to ensure that there was constant internal struggle so that no one could seize power and take any action against Lukashenka."

Discussing the powers and actual functions of the OAC, some interviewees pointed out that Lukashenka uses its analytics as additional or verifying information in relation to information received from the KGB and other sources:

"First and foremost, [the OAC exercises] total control over the internet. And it counterbalances the KGB in providing analytical information to Aliaksandr Lukashenka."

"Lukashenka had to receive objective, reliable information from them [the OAC] so that he could compare it with what other structures were giving him. It is a type of intelligence that does not depend on other security structures, which works specifically for one person so that he understands what is happening."

Continuing this line of reasoning, it was said that the OAC performs a kind of informal supervisory function over the other security agencies and government bodies:

"The agency was created to provide information that does not depend on anyone else. It is clear and truthful, even about the security forces themselves. One could say that the OAC is a supervisory body for the security forces themselves, checking their competence, loyalty and the accuracy of their reports. The OAC must open his [Lukashenka's] eyes so that he can see what is happening in the country."

In addition, the experts agreed that another important informal function of the OAC is to ensure the security and efficiency of businesses and commercial structures directly linked to the Lukashenka family.

"And this structure is above all other structures, including all law enforcement agencies in the Republic of Belarus. The OAC is designed to control the businesses run by the Lukashenka family and to control those businessmen who are part of the inner circle or circle of confidants."

According to interviewees' judgement, as part of its informal functions and powers, the OAC conducts surveillance and wiretapping not only of officials, but also of people from other spheres (businessmen, political opponents, journalists) when the personal interests of Lukashenka or his family so require.

"This function is not direct, it is not specified in any documents. But within the vertical structure of the security bloc, the OAC is considered a structure that can eavesdrop on KGB employees, tap phones, and monitor the mail of senior officials. This is a specific list of people who are personally loyal to Lukashenka. No one wants to quarrel with the OAC because everyone understands perfectly well that if you quarrel with the OAC, it means you are quarrelling directly with Lukashenka, and no one in the security forces is capable of doing that."

Structure of the OAC

The management hierarchy within the OAC is chosen by the head of state. Lukashenka appoints the head of the OAC, based on a nomination of the State Secretary of the Security Council (Sovbez).¹⁶ He also appoints the heads of individual structural units within the OAC.

The head of the OAC has two deputies, but there is no publicly available regulatory act that specifies the number of deputies and their powers. In addition, there is no reliable information about the structure of the OAC itself, the number of its employees, or the existence of territorial divisions. At the same time, it can be assumed that not only military personnel serve in the OAC, but also "civilian" specialists in the field of information technology.

An analysis of the legislation suggests that there are other organisational structures within the OAC. For example, the OAC has a commission on licensing activities related to technical and/or cryptographic information protection.¹⁷

Features of service in the OAC

Despite the official positioning of the OAC as a regulator in the field of information technology and a defender of data security in Belarus, this body is a militarised special service that is not covered by the Law "On Public Service" (which regulates

¹⁶ See paragraph 8 of the Annex to Decree of the President of Belarus No. 113 of 24 March 2025 "On improving the procedure for considering personnel issues", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p32500113&q_id=4877534

¹⁷ See Article 139 of the Law of Belarus No. 213-Z of 14 October 2022 "On Licensing" (hereinafter referred to as Law No. 213-Z), https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=h12200213&q_id=2695858

the activities of civilian government bodies).¹⁸ Service in the OAC is regulated by legislation relating to military service. It is subject to general military regulations and rules on the use of combat weapons, which effectively equates the OAC with militarised agencies such as the KGB, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Presidential Security Service (PSS).¹⁹ It is impossible to establish the specific features of service in the OAC compared to other military formations due to the closed nature of its activities.

Any employee of the security forces - whether the prosecutor's office, KGB, Investigative Committee, State Committee for Forensic Examination, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Taxes and Duties, or Ministry of Emergency Situations - can serve in the OAC.²⁰ This allows any security forces personnel with relevant experience in other agencies to be integrated into the OAC structure. According to the experts interviewed, the OAC acts as a "special service for the elite" as it has employees who know the ins and outs and have experience serving in other law enforcement or civil agencies.

"They tried to select the best from other structures, including the KGB, but people moved over less frequently. They tried to track down the best personnel in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but many from civilian departments also moved over. I know that there are people there from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Taxes, and the State Control Committee. They tried to gather the best people and thus create a competitor [to the KGB]."

At the same time, the OAC also has civilian employees with expertise in information technology. However, it is not known for certain how these "civilian" employees perform their duties. Nevertheless, the combination of "military" and "civilian" staff within the OAC once again testifies to its institutional dualism.

"There are a large number of employees from the Department of Operational and Investigative Activities here. If you are an IT specialist, you can be hired there because

¹⁸ See Articles 2 and 10 of the Law of Belarus No. 175-Z of 1 June 2022 "On Public Service", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=h12200175&q_id=2551363

¹⁹ See Clause 1 of the Regulations on the Procedure for Military Service, approved by Decree of the President of Belarus No. 186 of 25 April 2005 "On the Procedure for Military Service" (hereinafter referred to as Regulation No. 186), https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p30500186&q_id=2663225; Clause 1 of Decree of the President of Belarus No. 355 of 26 June 2001 "On the General Military Regulations of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p30100355&q_id=2522456; Clause 1 of Decree No. 473 of the President of Belarus dated 30 August 2002 "On Measures to Improve the Regulation of the Circulation of Military, Service and Civilian Weapons and Ammunition Therefor in the Territory of the Republic of Belarus", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p30200473&q_id=4924306

²⁰ In June 2025, the requirements for military personnel loyalty were tightened, including a ban on receiving and using foreign benefits and privileges on political, religious, or national grounds (see clause 6-1 of Regulation No. 186).

everything there is related to computers and cybersecurity. Its staff is not so large and has its own specific characteristics.”

Analysis of biographies

The OAC is one of the most secretive special services in Belarus. Neither the total number of its employees, nor information about its structure and staff, are known. There is no information about most of its management in open sources. We analysed six publicly available biographies of the OAC leadership, including one current and three former heads, and two deputies.

Despite the scant information, this analysis allows us to say that the career paths of OAC heads have certain characteristics – as a rule, senior officials are promoted from elsewhere in the special services (see Table 3).

Table 3. Career paths of OAC heads

Full name	Position	Period	Previous place of employment, position held	Subsequent career
Pauliuchenka Andrei Yurjevich (Pavlyuchenko Andrey Yuryevich)	Head of the OAC	Since 2017	Head of PSS since 2016	Current position
Zharnasek Siarhei Vasiljevich (Zhernosek Sergey Vasilyevich)	Deputy Head of the OAC	Since 2019	Head of Information Protection Department, OAC	Current position
Iukin Aliaksandr Siarheievich (Ivkin Aleksandr Sergeevich)	Deputy Head of the OAC	Since 2019	N/K	Current position
Shakhraieu Dzmitryi Vasiljevich (Shakhraev Dmitry Vasilyevich)	Head of OAC	2017-2017 (less than a year)	Deputy Head of Security	Head of the Security and Protection Department (2017-...)
Shpiahun Siarhei Vasiljevich (Shpegun Sergey Vasilyevich)	Head of the OAC	2011-2017 (6 years)	N/K	N/K
Vakulchyk Valeryi Paulavich (Vakulchik Valery Pavlovich)	Head of the OAC	2008-2011 (3 years)	Head of the KGB Military Counterintelligence Department in the Border Troops	Chairman of the Investigative Committee

An analysis of the biographies of the leaders does not allow us to identify a single criterion for promotion, but there is an obvious connection between the PSS and Lukashenka's personnel policy in the current period, with the relative "stability" of the OAC leadership (Andrei Pauliuchenka has been in his position for eight years, his deputies for six years).

"Pauliuchenka joined Lukashenka's Security Service. He is not a specialist in the field, i.e. he does not have the relevant skills characteristic of IT, and therefore he is a completely loyal person. He was appointed directly by Lukashenka, but was agreed upon and presented for signature by Viktor Lukashenka."

Aliaksandr Lukashenka clearly trusts the current head of the OAC. This is evident in the fact that he has given Pauliuchenka "delicate" political assignments. For example, intimidating Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya in August 2020 and forcibly expelling her from the country.²¹ At the same time, experts expressed some confusion when the head of a non-public structure appeared in a propaganda film²²:

"I found it very strange that, for example, the head of the OAC could appear in a silly film, with Tsikhanouskaya's money, but apparently there was some need for it."

²¹ BelTA, The head of the OAC personally accompanied Tikhonovskaya on her way to the border in 2020, <https://belta.by/society/view/rukovoditel-oats-v-2020-godu-lichno-soprovozhdal-tihanovskuju-po-puti-do-granitsy-730565-2025/>

²²The state television channel ONT aired a special report entitled "Truth Against Lies." The propaganda broadcast claims that the opposition, particularly Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, was "bought" or externally controlled. It features commentary by Pauliuchenka, who recounts his participation in the events of August 2020 on Lukashenka's orders. For more see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXabEdxCZog>

4. The place of SCC in public administration

The law defines the SCC as a state body that exercises state control over the execution of the republican budget, the use of state property, the execution of acts of the president, parliament, government and other state bodies, and regulates relations of state property, economic, financial and tax relations.²³

A distinctive feature of the SCC compared to other supervisory bodies is its constitutional and legal status. The current Constitution devotes a separate chapter to the SCC,²⁴ which testifies to its supra-departmental status.

The Soviet period laid the foundations for the SCC's hybrid nature: on the one hand, it is a financial audit body, and on the other, it is fully integrated into the political system that it is theoretically supposed to control. After 1991, two control services competed in Belarus: the Parliamentary Control Chamber (a financial and economic audit body) and the Presidential Control Service (oversight of the implementation of acts of the head of state).²⁵ The 1996 constitutional reform led to institutional reorganisation, transforming the Presidential Control Service into the State Control Committee and abolishing the Control Chamber.

The new agency combined the functions of financial audit and control over the implementation of presidential orders into a single structure directly subordinate to the president. In the 2000s the SSC expanded its powers to include law enforcement functions (the Department of Financial Investigations, DFI, was created in 2001) and financial intelligence functions (the Department of Financial Monitoring, DFM, was created in 2003).²⁶

The history of the SCC shows how a special, rather broad list of powers was gradually formed by absorbing and adding new functions: from classic financial auditing, the Soviet model of political control over law enforcement and financial control, to law enforcement (DFI) and intelligence (DFM) functions. Interviews confirmed both the broad powers of the SCC and that Lukashenka uses it for his own needs:

²³ See Article 1 of Belarusian Law No. 142-Z of 1 July 2010 "On the State Control Committee of the Republic of Belarus and its territorial bodies" (hereinafter referred to as Law No. 142-Z), https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=h11000142&q_id=4924075

²⁴ See Chapter 8 of the Constitution of Belarus No. 2875-XII dated 15 March 1994 (hereinafter referred to as the Constitution), https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=v19402875&q_id=2524604

²⁵ Historical reference, SCC website, <https://kgk.gov.by/ru/spravka-ru/>

²⁶ Ibid.

“The SCC is a structure that Lukashenka can direct at virtually any Belarusian enterprise. It is a kind of whip, but not a forceful one. It is a softer whip, used for lighter action against certain enterprises.”

The Constitution assigns the formation of the SCC to the exclusive competence of the head of state, who appoints and dismisses its chairperson (formally with the consent of the Council of the Republic). He also exercises leadership in three areas:

- Personnel policy: appointment of deputy chairpersons, department heads, and approval of regional committee chairpersons.
- Organisational and structural policy: determining the structure of the SCC, making decisions on the reorganisation or liquidation of departments, and establishing the number of its staff.
- Regulatory policy: approving regulations on the SCC, regulating the procedure for passing through the service, and issues of social protection of employees.²⁷

“In Lukashenka’s paradigm, the SCC is an independent body that must provide him with information about the real state of affairs in a particular area in order to make decisions. The documents signed by the SCC chairman describe a more realistic situation than we see from the relevant ministries.”

Structure and management of the SCC

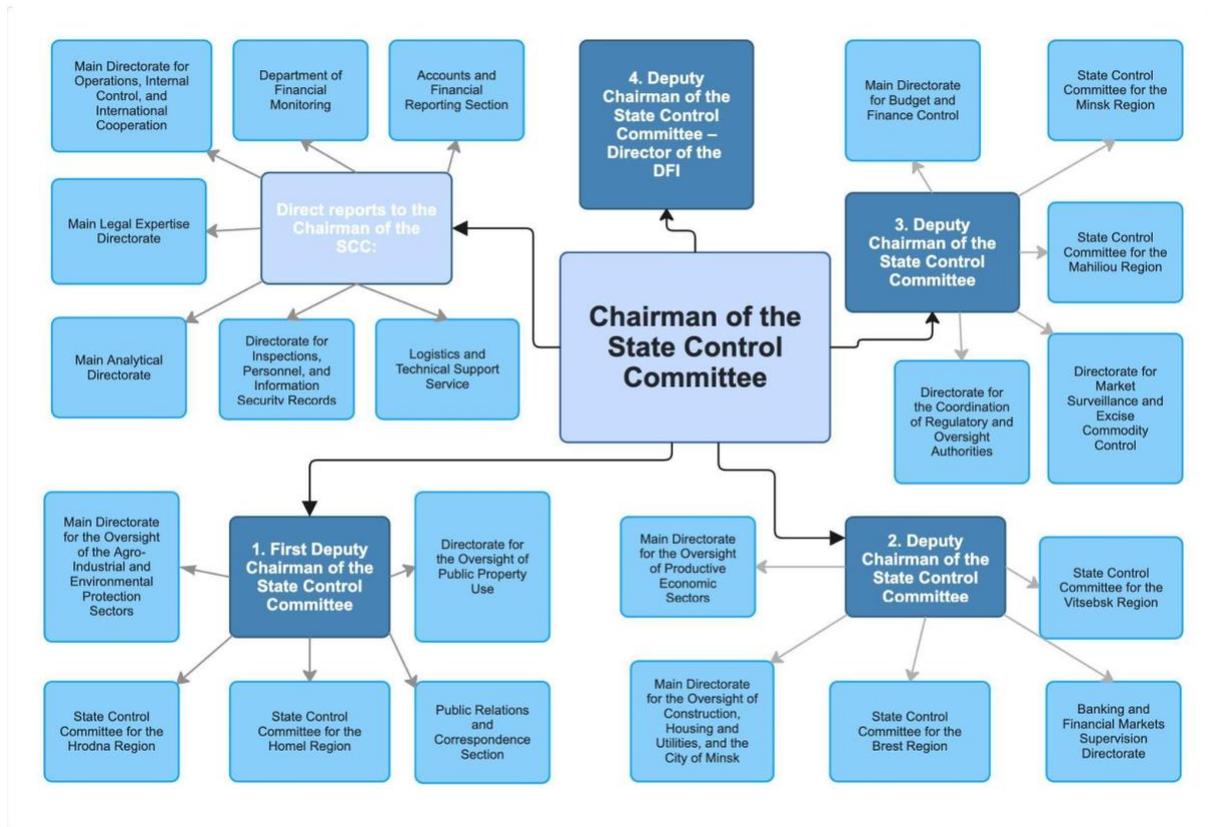
The SCC system consists of the SCC central office, regional bodies and financial investigation units. The structure includes the DFI and the DFM, which are legal entities possessed of rights accordingly. The organisational structure of the committee reflects its areas of activity and administrative-territorial divisions. The chairperson of the SCC heads the department's vertical structure, while four deputy chairpersons oversee the relevant departments, divisions and territorial units (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Structure of the SCC and its internal management hierarchy

Source: SCC website²⁸

²⁷ See Article 9 of Law No. 142-Z

²⁸ Structure, SCC website, <https://www.kgk.gov.by/ru/person-strukture-ru/>



The head of the SCC is responsible for operational management and bears personal responsibility for the implementation of the tasks assigned. His powers include approving the staffing timetable, scheduling inspections, issuing mandatory orders, and personnel policy, including the appointment of heads of regional and inter-district committees. The chairman represents the SCC in its interactions with the president, parliament, and international partners.

The heads of regional and interregional committees exercise similar powers within their territorial units. The chairpersons of regional committees additionally coordinate the activities of regional departments of the DFI.²⁹ Characteristically, the legislation also places personal responsibility on leadership at all levels for the state of ideological work and control over the political loyalty of employees. The structural divisions of the SCC have the right to initiate proposals for improving the regulatory framework.

At the republican and regional levels, there are collegiums – bodies for developing coordinated decisions on strategic issues. The composition of the republican collegium (chair, deputies, other employees) requires approval by the head of state.³⁰ The most interesting powers of the collegiums are that they can hear reports and explanations from the heads of state bodies and other organisations

²⁹ See Articles 10, 11 and 12 of Law No. 142-Z

³⁰ See Article 13 of Law No. 142-Z

on issues within the competence of the SCC bodies. As well as their punitive function, according to which the collegiums can make proposals to discipline the employees (going as far as proposing an employee's dismissal) of third-party organisations for violating the law or failing to comply with the decisions of state bodies. Thus, the collegiums of the SCC have broad powers outside the committee system itself, up to and including the adoption of binding decisions on the dismissal of employees of other state bodies and other organisations.

Powers of the SCC

The Constitution gives the SCC a broad mandate, including control over the execution of the budget, the use of state property, and the implementation of acts of the president, parliament, and government.³¹ The committee functions not as a classic accounting chamber, but as a multifunctional instrument integrated into the presidential vertical of power. The following areas of activity of the agency can be identified:

- Supreme financial control throughout the state; law enforcement function
- Coordination and supervision of all auditing structures in Belarus
- Financial intelligence and supervision of the legalisation of criminal proceeds
- Supervision in the banking, currency and foreign trade spheres;
- market regulation
- De-bureaucratisation and "communication with society"
- Control over financial transactions and property in the interests of the state
- Rule-making (for more details on the formal functions of the SCC, see Appendix 3).

"I would call the SCC the main supervisory body. Its function was to coordinate all inspection activities in Belarus. There are several dozen supervisory bodies in Belarus. In addition, it [the SCC] developed regulations in the field of control activities. There have been attempts to regulate this activity in some way, but it is still completely chaotic."

Thus, the SCC is the "controller of controllers", the de facto highest supervisory body in Belarus, which exercises overall control over all inspectors, regardless of their departmental affiliation.

"When it comes to national control activities, the SCC is the coordinating body and methodologist in this area. The SCC can express its opinion on what these bodies are not doing well, or where they are going too far, not using the right methods, not conducting enough inspections, and so on. Plus, if they come with their own inspections

³¹ See Article 129 of the Constitution

and see that the body that was supposed to control this issue or area before them has not done its job, it is convenient to demonstrate their competence, their higher position in relation to the republican bodies of state administration."

As well as its official functions, the SCC performs some unofficial functions. According to the interviewees, the committee is Lukashenka's "hand-picked" administrative and repressive body:

"Lukashenka's unofficial orders are usually related to political repression. There is no inter-clan struggle; its activities are linked to Lukashenka's personal interests. It performs functions when something needs to be prepared outside the framework of the law, such as secret orders or decrees that may be related to the granting of certain benefits or preferences to someone. In other words, it is a state body that is often used for the personal enrichment of Lukashenka's family."

It was also pointed out that the current chair of the SCC, Vasil Herasimau, allows himself on occasion to publicly criticise the heads of other departments, heads of state bodies, and individual ministers. At the same time, he is practically the only leader whom Lukashenka allows to do so public meetings.³² When discussing the reasons for this exception, experts offered various explanations: some saw it as an imitation of political struggle, others a manifestation of some kind of interdepartmental struggle for influence.

"Everything could be completely staged. In other words, it is a show to demonstrate that the processes in Belarus do not have the characteristics of an authoritarian kleptocracy, that there are certain processes taking place there, that officials can argue with each other about something. These are often staged performances where they simply play along with Lukashenka."

"It could be an interdepartmental struggle for power, for loyalty, for access to Lukashenka personally, that is, for some kind of career advancement, etc. In other words, an attempt to curry favour with Lukashenka."

Serving in the SCC

Service in the SCC has its own legal peculiarities, even without its enforcement arm, the DFI. As civil servants, SCC employees are subject to the provisions of the Law on Public Service. On the other hand, special legal norms grant the employees

³² Zerkalo, "Why isn't he walking around in handcuffs?" At a meeting with Lukashenka, there was a heated exchange involving officials and Lukashenka himself, <https://news.zerkalo.io/economics/104272.html>; SB: Belarus Today, Results of a meeting with Lukashenka on improving the effectiveness of control and supervisory activities, <https://www.sb.by/articles/proverochnaya-rabota-soveschanie.html>

of this committee certain powers, bringing their status closer to that of law enforcement staff.³³

Three key aspects defining service in the SCC can be identified:³⁴

1. Special requirements for employees

SCC employees are subject to increased requirements: as well as the appropriate education, employment candidates must meet certain criteria for personal, moral, and professional qualities. The law on the SCC introduces a direct restriction on political activity. Both before and after 2020, employees were unofficially required to be loyal to Lukashenka.

2. "Extended" powers of a representative of authority

In the performance of their duties, the status of SCC employees is as representatives of authority; they are vested with exceptional powers that bring them closer in status to law enforcement personnel. Their powers include extended control and coercive measures, including access to the premises of entities under investigation, restrictions on the disposal of property and transport, conducting searches, and the use of audio and video recording equipment.

3. Additional state protection for SCC employees

The broad powers of SCC employees are complemented by enhanced measures of legal and social state protection. Interference in their official activities is prohibited by law, and attacks or threats in connection with the performance of their official duties entail increased liability. The Committee is also responsible for ensuring the personal safety of employees and protecting their property.

Analysis of the biographies of SCC employees

The study examines the biographies of 24 heads of the SCC at the republican and regional levels (chairpersons and their deputies). Official sources do not contain complete information on three of them; their biographical data are provided to the extent that is available.

³³ See Article 19 of Law No. 142-Z; Clause 13 of the Regulations on the State Control Committee of Belarus, approved by Decree of the President of Belarus No. 647 of 27 November 2008 "On Issues Related to the Activities of the State Control Committee" (hereinafter referred to as Regulation No. 647), https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p30800647&q_id=4651841

³⁴ See Articles 17, 19, 20-22 of Law No. 142-Z of the SCC

Age and gender

The average age of entry into senior management positions in the SCC is 47.5 years (range: 39 to 60 years). There is a gender imbalance in the leadership, which is typical in Belarusian law enforcement agencies: men account for 87.5% (21 people) and women for 12.5% (3 people) of high-ranking SCC officials.

Origin

Most of the leaders come from cities (11 out of 24), while another seven come from rural areas. The vast majority are natives of Belarus; three were born outside its borders — in Russia (Lieanid Anfimau (Leonid Anfimov), Stanislau Narkievich (Stanislav Narkevich)) and Ukraine (Uladzimir Hadziatski (Vladimir Godyatsky)).

Education

As a rule, SCC managers received their first higher education degree from a Belarusian university, usually in law or economics. That said, there is significant variation in their specialisations: along with economics and law, some studied engineering and agricultural specialisations, which corresponded to the early stages of these employees' professional activities.

Some of the leaders have departmental military or police education (military schools of the Russian Federation, Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs). Many received a second higher education at the Academy of Management under the President, often specialising in "state management of the national economy." In some cases, SCC employees have a third or even fourth higher education degree.

Several managers who previously served in state security agencies were trained at the Institute (now Academy) of National Security of the Republic of Belarus. One of the regional managers, Aksana Tsytko (Oksana Tsytko), has a PhD in economics.

Ranks

In general, it is not typical for SCC leadership to have military or specialist ranks. The exception is former SCC chairman Ivan Tsiertsel (lieutenant general). In the DFI, some of the leadership does have a special rank, including the title of "colonel of the financial police."

Career paths

An analysis of the biographical data of the SCC leadership reveals several types of career paths (see Appendix 4):

Career path 1. Civilian nomenclature and economists

This is the largest group (14 people), which forms the personnel foundation of the agency, ensuring its bureaucratic functioning. This group is not monolithic and is divided into subgroups depending on career strategies:

1.1. Nomenclature with political rotation

Vasil Hierasimau's career trajectory is a typical model of personnel rotation in the SCC: the transfer of a staff member to higher political structures (the Presidential Administration) to gain administrative "weight" and prove loyalty, followed by a return to the department where they are given a senior management position.

"This [Hierasimau's career trajectory] is a fairly standard career path for people in this system. He clearly and unambiguously carried out all instructions, has no serious disciplinary penalties, has not been involved in any unpleasant situations, and has clearly passed all checks by the KGB."

1.2 Internal hierarchy

This subcategory includes employees whose professional careers have been exclusively or predominantly within the SCC structures (examples include Dzmitryi Basko, Maksim Alieshkievich, Yauhen Tseliatsitski, and Viktor Yakauleu). They provide the institutional "memory" and continuity of the committee.

1.3 Administrative resources and economic managers

This subcategory includes specialists who came into the SCC from the executive branch (either regional executive committees or ministries) or the real sector of the economy (e.g. forestry or agricultural enterprises). They were brought to the SCC to carry out sectoral supervision and rose through its ranks (examples include Andrei Labovich, Lieanid Anfimau, Stanislau Narkievich, Dzmitryi Zakharau).

Career path 2. Fiscal technocrats

The second largest group (six people) consists of professional bureaucrats from the Ministry of Taxes and Duties and the Ministry of Finance. A characteristic feature of this group is territorial "sedentariness", where career advancement occurs mainly within one region, and officials move from the inspectorate to the regional control committee without changing location. For example, Viachaslau Bychkouski (Inspectorate of the Ministry of Taxes and Duties for the city of Brest — Control and Audit Committee of the Brest Region), Uladzimir Hadziatski

(Ministry of Taxation Inspectorate for Vitsebsk – Control Committee of the Vitsebsk Region), and Natallia Nikifarava (Ministry of Taxes and Duties Inspectorate for Vitsebsk – Control Committee of the Vitsebsk Region).

Career path 3. Integration of special services and Ministry of Internal Affairs personnel

This group, comprising four people, represents the most influential cluster responsible for shaping the SCC's punitive capacity. Recruitment into this group takes place directly from the operational and investigative units of the KGB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Appointees in this category hold key positions in the DFI and influence the overall strategy of the SCC (examples include Andrei Sambuk, Siarhei Kasheta, Viktor Sialitski, and Ivan Tsiertsel).

Another example of a career trajectory in this group is Ivan Tsiertsel. His June 2020 appointment as chairman of the SCC was clearly political in nature: he moved to this position from the post of deputy chairman of the KGB, where he oversaw economic affairs. Less than two weeks after his appointment, Lukashenka's key opponent in the 2020 election, Viktor Babaryka, and his son Eduard were detained.³⁵ The willingness to use the SCC, primarily the DFI, as an instrument of repression was probably the basis for Tsiertsel's subsequent appointment as chairman of the KGB in September 2020. At the same time, in the summer of 2020, he began to act as an informal negotiator in relations with the United States, as well as holding closed briefings with diplomats.³⁶

Ivan Tsiertsel's three-month leadership of the SCC was a turning point for the DFI. Since June 2020, the department has been involved in direct repressive practices, targeting businesses that supported rivals to Lukashenka and/or the 2020 protests. Since 2021, the DFI, together with the KGB, has been interrogating people who made donations to various civil society initiatives.

In fact, the KGB, acting undercover and using the procedural capabilities of the DFI, has been persecuting the media (in particular, the *TUT.BY* portal) and civil society organisations. Since the summer of 2020, the DFI has been operating under the operational control of the KGB, acting as a formally "legitimate" investigative body in economic and corruption cases.

³⁵ BelTA, SCC: there is evidence of the involvement of the former head of Belgazprombank in illegal activities, <https://belta.by/society/view/kgk-est-dokazatelstva-prichastnosti-eks-glavy-belgazprombanka-k-protivopravnoj-deyatelnosti-394563-2020/>

³⁶ BelTA, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs discussed cooperation on the Belgazprombank case with EU ambassadors and the head of the US diplomatic mission, <https://belta.by/politics/view/v-mid-obsudili-s-poslami-stran-es-i-glavoj-dipmissii-ssha-vzaimodejstvie-po-delu-belgazprombanka-395305-2020/>

This informal subordination was institutionalised in 2024 through personnel decisions: in February, the former head of the KGB's investigative department, Andrei Sambuk, was appointed director of the DFI; and in June, Siarhei Kasheta, who had worked for the KGB since 2006, was appointed his deputy. Thus, the de facto leadership of the KGB's DFI was legalised, in contrast to the previous practice, where department heads (such as Ihar Marshalau and Ihar Franskevich) built their careers within the DFI itself and held their positions for more than ten years.³⁷

The Department of Financial Investigations as a special structural unit of the SCC

The DFI is a law enforcement unit within the SCC. It performs functions that are not typical for a supervisory body:

"The DFI is a very strange body. It doesn't fit in anywhere. On the one hand, the people working there wear uniforms, have ranks, have the right to conduct operational and investigative activities, and so on, but at the same time they are part of a civilian structure. It's something completely absurd, and often they themselves understand the absurdity of their existence."

Unlike other structures of the committee, the DFI is a military formation. This is embodied in the special ranks conferred on its staff (from private to major general of the financial police), the right to wear uniforms, carry combat weapons, and other powers of enforcement.³⁸

"The employees of the SCC are simply civilians, but when it comes to the employees of the DFI, these are people who undergo initial training and education at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, these are people who are certified, have ranks, and have the right to carry service weapons. They have a very small staff, and the number of people graduating from the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs is sufficient to fill their 'gaps' in terms of personnel and reserves."

In addition, the DFI has the status of an investigative body and carries out criminal proceedings in cases involving crimes in the sphere of economic activity, the financing of crime, and corruption.

³⁷ Official website of the State Control Committee, https://kgk.gov.by/ru/marshalov_i_a-ru;
<https://kgk.gov.by/ru/franskevich-ru>

³⁸ See section 1.1. of Decree No. 251

The institutional evolution of the DFI reflects its transition from being under parliamentary and governmental control to complete subordination to the president. Created in 1992 as a tax investigation body under the Ministry of Finance, by 1998 it had been transformed into a state committee, and in 2001 it was incorporated into the SCC.³⁹ Following the transfer of investigative functions to the Investigative Committee in 2012, the DFI retained its operational and investigative functions and powers of inquiry.⁴⁰

In the first half of the 1990s, the legal basis governing the activities of financial investigation bodies was established by parliament and the government. Since 1998, however, key decisions on their transformation and subordination have been taken solely by the president. In 2008, parliament effectively enshrined in law the established practice of the DFI's functioning, which had previously been regulated mainly through presidential decrees.⁴¹

All key aspects of the DFI's functioning, including staffing levels, the order of service and the appointment of the director, are the exclusive competence of the head of state. He alone decides on the creation of the department, appoints its leadership, determines the number of staff, approves the main regulatory acts, as well as the list of weapons and special equipment of the DFI. In this way, Lukashenka concentrates control in his hands, over both personnel, organisational matters relating to the department.⁴²

"The DFI was kept specifically to serve as Lukashenka's 'baton', [and] the SCC, a kind of force component. They have the right to carry weapons, they have their own operational units that can stage masked raids and come to the office."

Prior to 2020, representatives of the DFI frequently spoke to journalists about criminal cases they were working on. This practice disappeared in the post-protest period, though:

³⁹ See Decree of the President of Belarus No. 516 of 24 September 2001 "On improving the system of republican state administration bodies and other state organisations subordinate to the Government of the Republic of Belarus", <https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=P30100516>; Decree of the President of Belarus No. 617 of 2 November 2001 "On measures to improve the system of bodies of the State Control Committee of the Republic of Belarus",

https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p30100617&q_id=4921640

⁴⁰History of creation, official website of the State Control Committee,

https://kgk.gov.by/ru/istoria_finrassledovanij-ru/

⁴¹ The Law of Belarus "On the Financial Investigation Bodies of the State Control Committee of the Republic of Belarus" dated 16 July 2008 No. 414-Z (hereinafter referred to as Law No. 414-Z) was adopted.

https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=h10800414&q_id=4921557

⁴² See Article 9 of Law No. 414-Z

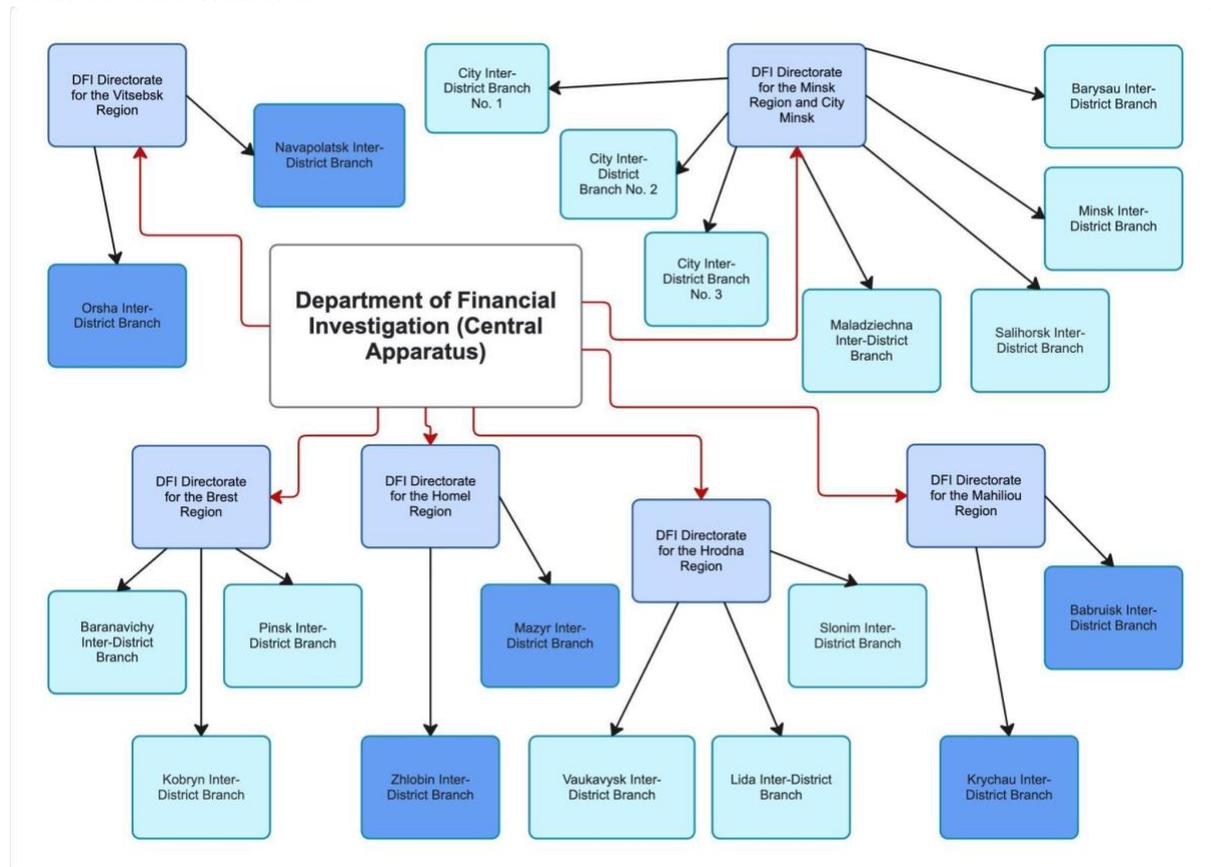
“We worked quite closely with them [the DFI] on some of their projects to combat ‘finka’ [bogus business structures]. They were very active and worked well with journalists, as well as with several businessmen. It was important for them to try to obtain certain information from us [journalists] and, in general, to influence public perception. They liked their image in this fight. Their subjectivity was noticeable, since all the other law enforcement agencies communicated with us [more] formally.”

Structure and management of the DFI

The financial investigation authorities have a unified centralised system that ensures direct and immediate execution of orders from the leadership of the SCC and the DFI throughout the country (see Figure 3).

Figure 4. Structure of the DFI

Source: SCC website



The SCC chairperson exercises direct control over the DFI. He supervises the activities of the director of the DFI, who is also his deputy, and submits proposals to the head of state on the appointment and dismissal of the director, as well as on the awarding of higher special ranks. In addition, the chairperson of the SCC appoints and dismisses middle and senior management of the DFI, approves its

structure and staffing timetable, and issues regulatory legal acts governing the department's activities.

The final link in the management chain is the director of the DFI, who is personally responsible for the performance of the department's tasks. In addition to operational management, he is empowered to award the first special ranks up to and including captain of the financial police, as well as to issue binding orders and instructions and manage the property of the DFI.⁴³

Powers of the DFI

The key powers of the DFI can be divided into the following areas:

- Operational and investigative activities
- Investigation of economic crimes and corruption
- Conducting administrative proceedings
- Control functions
- Direct influence on the financial activities of any person
- The lawful right to use physical force and weapons
- Ensuring the security of the SCC (see Appendix No. 5).

Specific features of service in the DFI

The specific features of service in the DFI are due to its militarised nature and include:

- The existence of special ranks specific to financial investigation agencies ("financial police"); ranks of "colonel" and above are assigned by the head of state.⁴⁴
- As a rule, recruitment of persons under the age of 28 with relevant education who have passed medical and psychological selection, special screening and polygraph testing.⁴⁵
- Training of employees at the Belarusian State University in the specialty of "state audit" and at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in a

⁴³ See Article 8 of Law No. 414-Z, paragraph 14 of Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 87 of 11 February 2009 "On measures to improve the activities of the financial investigation bodies of the State Control Committee" (hereinafter referred to as Decree No. 87), September 2025, https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p30900087&q_id=2602162

⁴⁴ See paragraph 70 of the Decree of the President of Belarus "On Issues of Financial Investigation Bodies of the State Control Committee" dated 20 December 2007 No. 660 (hereinafter referred to as Decree No. 660), https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p30700660&q_id=4921710

⁴⁵ See paragraphs 12, 14, 16 of Decree No. 660

specialised faculty, with DFI employees having the status of cadets of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the period of training;⁴⁶

- Enhanced social guarantees and additional legal protection measures characteristic of militarised organisations.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Education, State Control Committee website, <https://www.kgk.gov.by/ru/bgu-ru/>;
<https://www.kgk.gov.by/ru/academmv-d-ru/>

⁴⁷ See Chapter 7 of Law No. 414-Z

5. Main areas of activity of the SCC: results of media content analysis

As part of the study, we conducted a content analysis, looking at coverage of the SCC in the Belarusian state and independent media. We also analysed how the SCC positioned itself on its official information platforms, such as the SCC website. The analysis covered the period from 2015 to September 2025. The sample size was 13,279 media publications. We conditionally identified media groups as: pro-state (Belarusian Telegraph Agency (BelTA) and SB: Belarus Today); independent (Nasha Niva, Euro Radio and Plan B); and conditionally neutral (Office Life) (for more details on the methodology and sources of analysis, see Appendix 6).⁴⁸

As a result of the content analysis, we identified the following key areas of coverage of the SCC's activities in the Belarusian media:

1. The structure and role of the SCC in the system of state administration
2. Results and priorities of the State Control Committee's activities
3. Financial control
4. Fight against economic crimes
5. Control over public finances, public procurement and public property
6. Control of prices and the consumer market
7. Control in various socio-economic spheres
8. Reform and optimisation of control activities
9. Handling citizens' appeals and public control
10. International cooperation and control in the external sphere
11. Participation in political control and prosecutions
12. Public and non-work-related events

The distribution of publications on these themes in the media of various groups is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Number of publications about the SCC in different media groups

No	Topic	Neut ral	Indep enden t	SCC websit e	State	All
1	Structure and role of the SCC in the system of state administration	23	138	98	501	760
2	Results and priorities of the SCC 's activities	7	1	93	161	262
3	Financial control	12	26	85	191	314
4	Combating economic crime	161	257	839	1936	3193
5	Control over public finances, public procurement and public property	31	66	387	1022	1506
6	Price and consumer market control	76	102	51	703	932

⁴⁸ We would like to express our gratitude to the expert who conducted the content analysis and who asked to remain anonymous for security reasons.

7	Control in various socio-economic spheres	84	250	327	2752	3413
8	Reform and optimisation of control activities	43	73	46	345	507
9	Work with citizens' appeals and public oversight	16	20	236	606	878
10	International cooperation	3	2	258	360	623
11	Participation in political control and persecution	35	461	10	91	597
12	Public and non-work events	2	5	100	187	294
	Number between media groups	493	1401	2530	8855	13279

The analysis revealed a shift in the thematic structure of coverage of the SCC's activities, especially in the period after 2020 (diagrams showing changes in the number of publications on specific themes over time in quantitative terms are presented in Fig. 5, and in percentage terms in Fig. 6).

During 2015–2019, the media agenda was relatively balanced between key themes, with combating economic crime and controlling the public sector equally prominent. In 2020–2024, in contrast, there was a sharp thematic polarisation between different types of media. Pro-government media and the SCC itself focused on extensive control in the socio-economic sphere and price controls, which became the dominant theme. During the same period, independent media saw a sharp surge in news related to political control and repression, which, in turn, was completely ignored by state sources.

Fig. 5. Change in the number of publications in all media outlets and selected topics from January 2015 to October 2025 in quantitative terms

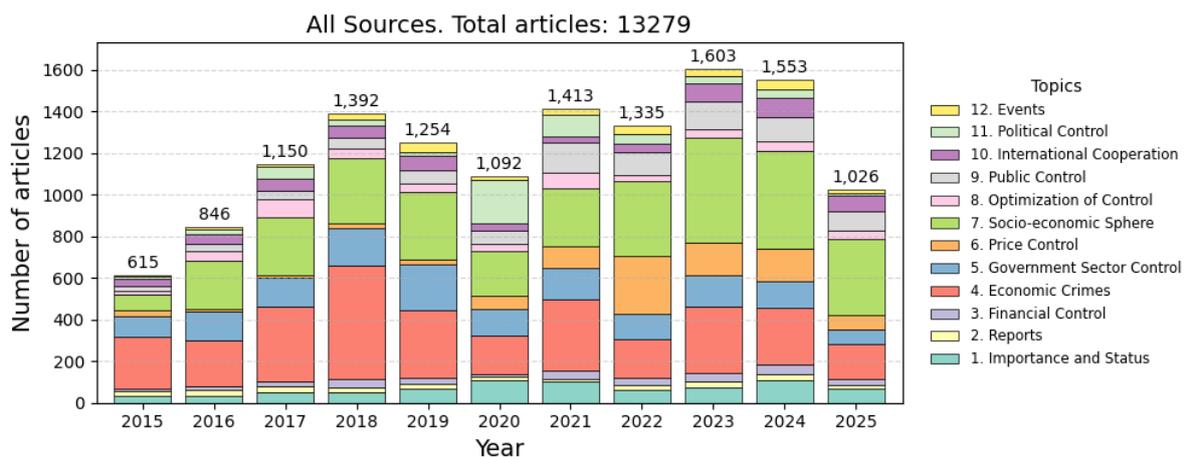
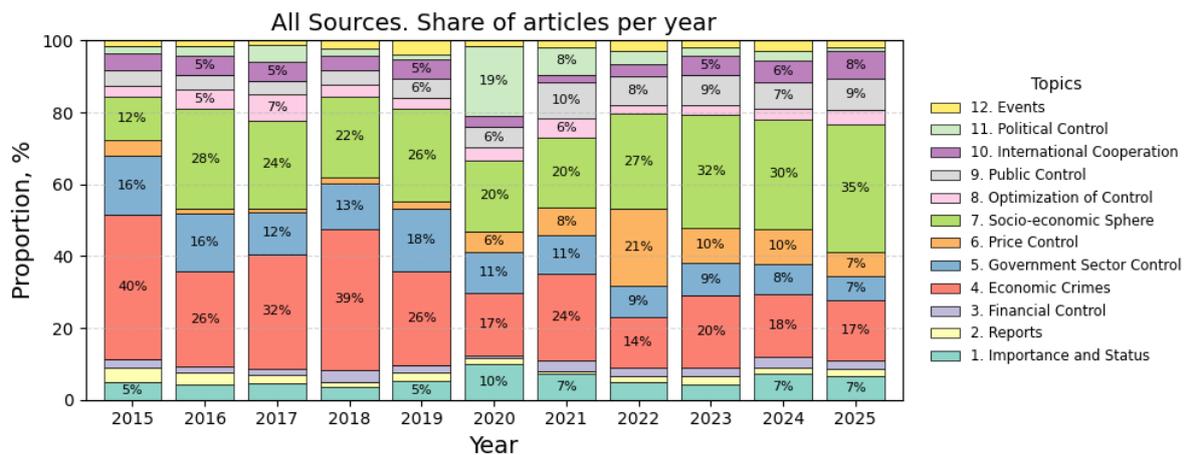


Fig. 6. Dynamics of the share of publications in all media on selected topics in the period from 01.01.2015 to 30.09.2025, %. For topics with a share of less than 5%, numerical values are not given.



An analysis of 12 thematic blocks in the coverage of the SCC's activities revealed a significant change in the structure of the information agenda between 2015–2019 and 2020–2024 (Additional data visualisation is provided in Appendix 7).

While in the first period (2015–2019) the theme of combating economic crime dominated in terms of quantity, reaching 39.3% of all publications in 2018, in the second period its share and absolute number decreased significantly (to an average of 18.64%). In its place came a significant increase in news related to social and consumer control and price control. The theme of price control, which was almost invisible in the first period (2.08% on average), grew to 10.87% in the second period (with a peak of 21.2% in 2022), while the theme of control in the socio-economic sphere became the most prolific, accounting for 35.48% of all publications in 2025.

This shift was accompanied by a sharp thematic polarisation among media groups after 2019. Pro-government media outlets drove this shift, accounting for most of the quantitative growth in the themes of 'control in the socio-economic sphere' and 'price control'. At the same time, independent media pursued a different agenda: during 2020-2024 they contributed minimally to 11 of the 12 leading topics. One theme, however, "political control and persecution," showed an exceptional surge in coverage in independent media in 2020, accounting for 74% of total reporting. This theme, in turn, was practically not covered by pro-government media and the SCC itself, which indicates the formation of two non-overlapping information agendas.

Against the backdrop of these notable shifts, niche topics showed varying trajectories. Themes such as "working with citizens' appeals" and "international cooperation" showed significant growth in the second period and reached record highs in 2025 (8.87% and 7.50%, respectively). In contrast, the themes of

"optimisation of control" and "results and priorities of the SCC" remained at a consistently low level.

As expected, the agenda of the SCC's official website differed significantly from that presented in the media. In 2020–2024, the number of publications on traditionally “strong” themes ("economic crimes" and "public sector control") decreased on the website, but in 2025 there was a sharp growth in the share of material related to "the socio-economic sphere" (25.23%) and "international cooperation" (17.12%), indicating a possible change in internal coverage priorities.

Thus, data on all 12 themes indicate that 2020 was a turning point when considerable changes occurred: a decline in some dominant themes, significant growth in others, and an exceptional surge in still others. Accordingly, two periods can be identified in the media coverage of the SCC:

1. The technocratic period (2015–2019), when the related media agenda was relatively balanced. The dominant themes were the fight against tax evasion, false entrepreneurship, and misuse of budget funds. State and independent media often covered similar themes.

2. The period of polarisation (2020–2025), during which there was a divergence between the agendas of state and independent media. State media began to actively promote the role of the SCC in the social sphere (prices, housing and communal services, availability of products), reducing the share of typical news related to criminal cases. In turn, independent media focused on the repressive function of the agency, describing the use of economic articles for political pressure. This gap is confirmed by statistics: the dynamics of topics in 2015–2019 did not continue directly in subsequent years in any of the areas.

The content analysis showed a transformation in the role of the Control and Audit Committee in the Belarusian system of public administration. This is evidenced by the gradual change in its image: from a body protecting the budget from embezzlement (2015–2019), it has, according to the official version, become an instrument for maintaining social stability (2020–2025). At the same time, the SCC (especially the DFI) actually performs the functions of a political police force alongside the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the KGB in the economic sphere, which is reported in detail by independent media but completely ignored by pro-government media. The Committee has made a populist "turn" in recent years and has begun to write much more about citizens' complaints and everyday problems (housing and utilities, prices), which indicates an attempt by the authorities to use the SCC to reduce social tension in society.

Conclusions

The five years since 2020 demonstrate a transformation of control functions within Belarusian public administration. Bodies originally established to ensure administrative efficiency and discipline have evolved into instruments of regime preservation.

Among the control bodies, the KGB occupies a special position. Although control is not its primary function, the committee possesses the broadest formal and informal powers in this sphere. On the one hand, the KGB retains the legal characteristics of a traditional special service, including counterintelligence, intelligence, and national security functions. On the other hand, it has played a central role in political repression in Belarus over several decades. The KGB is not subject to effective regulatory or formal oversight by judicial or legislative authorities. Its direct subordination to the head of state and its control over the full cycle of pre-trial proceedings, including its own detention facilities, provide it with essentially unlimited powers.

The OAC has evolved from an agency focused primarily on data protection within the military-industrial complex into a structure with an expanded mandate that effectively performs the functions of a special service. Its powers cover information protection and regulation of the information technology sphere at the national level, as well as operational and investigative activities. At present, the OAC exercises comprehensive control over the digital sphere and combines operational, regulatory, infrastructural, and economic control functions.

As a state body, the OAC is characterised by institutional dualism. It combines publicly declared functions related to the regulation of information and communication technologies with non-public functions typical of special services. This dualism is reinforced by the absence of transparent and clearly defined legal regulation of the OAC's powers, despite its status as a military formation.

The SCC also occupies a distinctive position within public administration. Unlike audit institutions or accounting chambers in other countries, it possesses significantly broader powers. At the same time, the SCC remains fully subordinate to the head of state, including responsibility for monitoring the execution of presidential orders. Its extensive control powers across all areas of government have transformed it from a chief audit body into an instrument for ensuring political loyalty. In practice, the SCC combines control, law enforcement, financial intelligence, and regulatory functions, making it one of the most powerful and versatile instruments of governance, coercion, and persecution.

The SCC structure includes the DFI, a law enforcement unit that combines control, coercive and investigative functions. Its mandate covers criminal proceedings and operational-investigative activities, administrative prosecution, direct intervention in the economic activities of organisations, and the use of weapons and special means. Service in the DFI differs substantially from the general organisational framework of the SCC. The DFI operates as a full-fledged law enforcement agency and plays a key role in ensuring economic security in Belarus. These features make its institutional placement within the SCC anomalous.

Personnel policy in the bodies examined reflects broader trends within the Belarusian security sector. The career trajectories of the KGB leadership are marked by institutional closure, specialised education, limited horizontal mobility, and frequent work experience in the security agencies or border guard. In the case of the OAC, close personal ties between its leadership and Lukashenka remain significant, as illustrated by regular transfers of senior figures from the Presidential Security Service. A distinctive feature of personnel policy in the KGB is the presence of three principal career tracks: civil servants and economists promoted internally within the committee, fiscal technocrats with experience in tax and financial authorities, and personnel transferred from the special services and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, particularly after 2020 within the DFI leadership. Unlike common practice in other law enforcement bodies, the KGB rarely rotates senior officials between regions, and regional leaders often pursue their entire careers within a single region.

Since 2020, a defining characteristic of control exercised by the KGB, the OAC, and the SCC, including the DFI, is its expansion across all areas of activity. These control functions enable security bodies to carry out repression on a scale unprecedented in Belarus. Political persecution, including the extensive use of control powers by these institutions, shifted from an emergency response in 2020 to routine practice by 2025. Such expansion of control and coordination with other security bodies contributes directly to the stability of the authoritarian system of governance.

Appendix 1. Key areas of KGB activity

1. **Counterintelligence and intelligence activities** (performs the classic functions of a special service; counterintelligence identifies the activities of foreign intelligence services and internal threats;⁴⁹ foreign intelligence gathers information in the political and economic spheres outside the country,⁵⁰ sharing jurisdiction with the Ministry of Defence and the State Border Committee (SBC)).⁵¹
2. **Combating crime and "extremism"** (carries out the full cycle of criminal prosecution from operational development to detention in its own pre-trial detention centre; investigates cases of terrorism, corruption and treason;⁵² since 2020, it has been using anti-extremist and anti-terrorist legislation for politically motivated repression; it operates in the absence of external oversight of investigations).
3. **Administration of the operational-search system** (conducts operational activities to gather information and prevent threats; jointly with the OAC, manages the technical surveillance and interception system; officially uses cover documents to conceal the identities of employees and departmental transport).⁵³
4. **Analytical and forecasting function** (acts as the main analytical centre for the head of state; monitors the domestic political and external situation;

⁴⁹ See Article 9 of Law No. 390-Z; clause 10.8 of Regulation No. 325

⁵⁰ Article 10 of Law No. 390-Z; clause 10.7 of Regulation No. 325

⁵¹ See subparagraph 1.1. Decree of the President of Belarus No. 116 of 25 March 2003 "On Foreign Intelligence Issues", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p30300116&q_id=4920359

⁵² The KGB is vested with the right to conduct preliminary investigations into certain categories of criminal cases; mainly related to ensuring public and national security, illegal trafficking in weapons and other particularly dangerous substances, encroachments on the state system, and the dissemination of information constituting state secrets. KGB investigative units may also investigate other categories of crimes. In practice, these are most often corruption and high-profile economic cases, as well as crimes related to illegal drug trafficking and similar violations (see pp. 24-25 Law Enforcement Agencies and the Prosecutor's Office of Belarus: Career Trajectories Before and After 2020, KAS, https://www.kas.de/documents/d/belarus/ pravoohranitel-nye_organy_i_prokuratura_belarusi). According to the association of former law enforcement officers "BELPOL", after the events of 2020, the KGB began to initiate and investigate politically motivated criminal cases much more frequently. This manifested itself both in the emergence of new types of crimes in its proceedings and in a decrease in activity in previously "popular" areas of investigative work (see: BELPOL, What does Lukashenka's "KGB" do?, <https://belpol.pro/en/chem-zanimaetsya-kgb-lukashenko/>).

⁵³ Article 12 of the Law of Belarus No. 307-Z of 15 July 2015 "On Operational-Investigative Activities" (hereinafter referred to as Law No. 307-Z), https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=h11500307&q_id=2548803; Decree of the President of Belarus No. 368 of 18 October 2022 "On the interaction of telecommunications operators, telecommunications service providers and Internet resource owners with the authorities carrying out operational-search activities" (hereinafter referred to as Decree No. 368), https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p32200368&q_id=4931124; Resolution of the OAC, KGB dated 10 January 2023 No. 1/1 "On Technical Requirements", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=t22305256&q_id=4931139; see clause 10.47 of Regulation No. 325

forecasts threats to national security; reports information directly to the president, excluding intermediaries).⁵⁴

5. **Protection of state secrets and access to them** (regulates the circulation of classified information; controls the procedure for access to state secrets; checks civil servants using operational methods; effectively accumulates information at all levels of state administration).⁵⁵
6. **Ensuring the security of protected facilities and persons** (functions as a militarised guard for critical infrastructure, including the defence sector and nuclear power plants; ensures the physical security of senior officials in Belarus and abroad).⁵⁶
7. **Organisation of special communications and cryptography** (has a monopoly on organising government communications; acts as the central body for the encryption service; administers cryptographic security; controls sensitive information in all government agencies).⁵⁷
8. **Other powers of the KGB** (licenses activities in the field of cryptography and covert information gathering;⁵⁸ certifies means of protecting state secrets;⁵⁹ ensures its own material and technical functioning).

⁵⁴ See clause 10.2 of Regulation No. 325

⁵⁵ See paragraphs 10.27-10.30 of Regulation No. 325

⁵⁶ See paragraphs 10.10 and 10.12 of Regulation No. 325

⁵⁷ See clauses 10.33 and 10.34 of Regulation No. 325

⁵⁸ Article 140 of Law No. 213-Z

⁵⁹ See clause 10.36 of Regulation No. 325

Appendix 2. Key powers of the OAC

Areas of activity of the OAC	Powers of the OAC
1. In the field of operational and investigative activities	Operates as an independent special service with the right to conduct intelligence work and operational infiltration; jointly with the KGB, administers the Operational Search Measures System (SORM) ⁶⁰ ; determines technical requirements for telecommunications operators and Internet resource owners; blocks access to resources in case of refusal to provide access to user data) ⁶¹
2. In the field of public telecommunications network management	Has the sole right to suspend network operations and Internet access; ⁶² uses vague wording such as "threats to national security" without clear legal criteria; issues mandatory instructions to telecommunications operators, exempting them from liability to customers for failures
3. In the field of ensuring republican cybersecurity	Coordinates the creation of a national defence system; establishes mandatory requirements for government agencies; controls industry cybersecurity centres; authorises the disconnection of government agencies from communication services when incidents are detected. ⁶³
4. In the field of information technology regulation	Has the status of an "independent" regulator of information and communication technologies (ICT); ⁶⁴ intervenes in the work of the public sector and investment processes; extends control to areas beyond the protection of state secrets ⁶⁵
5. In the field of telecommunications services and international traffic market management	Effectively regulates the market with the right to veto licences issued by the Ministry of Communications; forms a closed list of international traffic operators in agreement with the president; controls access to the Unified Republican Data Transmission Network; resolves disputes between operators ⁶⁶

⁶⁰ The creation and regulation of SORM is not the exclusive right of the OAC, which shows the actual competition between the special services (OAC and KGB) in one area of public administration, with the functions of the two bodies effectively duplicating each other.

⁶¹ See Article 12 of Law No. 307-Z; paragraphs 11, 13, 9, 20, 23 of Decree No. 368

⁶² See Article 21-1 of Law of Belarus No. 45-Z of 19 July 2005 "On Telecommunications" (hereinafter – Law No. 45-Z), https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=h10500045&q_id=4931189

⁶³ See section 3.1 of Decree No. 40 of the President of Belarus dated 14 February 2023 "On Cybersecurity", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p32300040&q_id=4931208

⁶⁴ See section 2.4. Decree of the President of Belarus No. 515 of 30 September 2010 "On Certain Measures for the Development of the Data Transmission Network in the Republic of Belarus", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p31000515&q_id=4931212

⁶⁵ This status effectively attests to the unlimited powers of the OAC, which interferes not only in the activities of the public sector, not only in relation to the protection of state secrets, but also in other areas (personal data, the communications services market, investments).

⁶⁶ See Article 9-1 of Law No. 45-Z

6. In the area of protecting state secrets	Monopolises the technical side of protecting classified information; certifies equipment and audits state bodies; supplements the administrative control of the KGB with technological oversight ⁶⁷
7. In the field of cybersecurity licensing	Sole authority to issue and revoke licences for technical and cryptographic information protection activities; determines the list of permissible means of protection ⁶⁸
8. In the field of personal data protection	Sets standards for technical data protection; ⁶⁹ exercises institutional control over the formally independent National Centre for Personal Data Protection (NCPDP); appoints the management and approves the structure of the NCPDP; combines the functions of intelligence and privacy oversight, creating a conflict of interest ⁷⁰
9. In the area of data exchange between government agencies	Regulates interdepartmental electronic interaction; establishes rules for the exchange of official information; controls the security of departmental network equipment. ⁷¹
10. Other powers in specific areas	Certifies the authenticity of electronic signatures and electronic documents; administers investment policy in the ICT sector; approves investment projects; has the right to conclude contracts and adjust penalties for investors. ⁷²

⁶⁷ Article 9 of Belarusian Law No. 170-Z of 19 July 2010 "On State Secrets", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=h11000170&q_id=3048509; At the same time, the KGB has certain powers in the field of circulation of information relating to state secrets. However, in this case, it is the OAC that retains the leading role in the technical support of state secrets protection.

⁶⁸ See Chapter 21 of Law No. 213-Z; OAC Order No. 210 of 29 December 2022 "On the implementation of Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 213-Z of 14 October 2022 "On Licensing"", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=t62205249&q_id=4931289

⁶⁹ See Article 17 of the Law of Belarus No. 99-Z of 7 May 2021 "On the Protection of Personal Data", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=h12100099&q_id=4931318; Paragraphs 10 and 11 of Decree of the President of Belarus No. 422 of 28 October 2021 "On Measures to Improve the Protection of Personal Data", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p32100422&q_id=4931334

⁷⁰ These powers of the OAC reveal the dual nature of its functions: on the one hand, the OAC has the functions of a special service (ORD, SORM), and on the other hand, it functions as a "shadow" curator of the "independent" body of the NCZPD, i.e., having unlimited access to personal data, the OAC "guarantees" their protection

⁷¹ See Article 12 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 455-Z of 10 November 2008 "On Information, Informatisation and Information Protection", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=h10800455&q_id=4931345

⁷² See Article 11 of the Law of Belarus No. 113-Z of 28 December 2009 "On Electronic Documents and Electronic Digital Signatures", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=h10900113&q_id=2545708; Law of Belarus No. 53-Z of 12 July 2013 "On Investments" (hereinafter referred to as Law No. 53-Z), <https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=H11300053>; Resolution of the Council of Ministers of Belarus No. 650 of 4 September 2024 "On Measures to Implement Law No. 53-Z", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=c22400650&q_id=4255580

Appendix 3. Key powers of the SCC

Areas of activity of the SCC	Powers of the SCC
1. Supreme financial control throughout the state	The SCC audits financial flows, including the republican and local budgets, extrabudgetary funds and the expenditures of all state organisations. The agency checks not only the legality (targeted use) but also the economic efficiency of spending and property management, ⁷³ which allows the SCC to hold people accountable (administratively, criminally, disciplinarily) for the quality of management.
2. Law enforcement function	The DFI within the structure of the SCC acts as a militarised investigative body with the right to conduct operational and investigative activities. ⁷⁴ Having its own force creates a closed cycle of control: from identifying violations to initiating criminal cases and detaining suspects. The concentration of auditing and punitive functions in a single agency eliminates inter-agency barriers, but excludes external oversight of the actions of the controller itself, which leads to the concentration of punitive control power in the "hands" of a single body that has no interest in identifying its own mistakes.
3. Coordination and supervision of all inspection bodies in Belarus	The SCC performs the function of a "meta-controller" that manages the activities of all supervisory bodies in the country. The committee coordinates inspection plans, monitors compliance with the procedure for conducting them, and has the right to cancel or initiate audits of third-party agencies. ⁷⁵ These powers give the SCC uncontrolled opportunities to abuse its rights (from lobbying for the interests of specific commercial structures to "pressuring" specific state bodies), which, combined with its complete subordination to the president, turns the SCC into an effective instrument of repression.
4. Financial intelligence and "anti-money laundering"	The Department of Financial Monitoring (DFM) of the SCC combines the functions of national financial intelligence and a direct action agency. The DFM was established as an independent body by a separate presidential decree, but it is part of the SCC structure. ⁷⁶ The DFM's powers can be divided into two key groups: 1) financial intelligence — mandatory provision of information and documents, access to information systems and

⁷³ See Article 8 of Law No. 142-Z

⁷⁴ See Article 7 of Law No. 142-Z

⁷⁵ See Article 8 of Law No. 142-Z; Clause 28 of Decree of the President of Belarus No. 510 of 16 October 2009 "On improving control (supervisory) activities in the Republic of Belarus", <https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=P30900510>

⁷⁶ See paragraph 1 of Decree of the President of Belarus No. 408 of 14 September 2003 "On the Establishment of the Financial Monitoring Department of the State Control Committee of the Republic of Belarus" (hereinafter referred to as Decree No. 408), https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=p30300408&q_id=4931555

	<p>databases, obtaining information, including banking secrecy and personal data, as well as maintaining an automated data system on special control operations.⁷⁷</p> <p>2) direct intervention in financial flows — suspension of transactions for up to 7 working days for any person, freezing of funds and blocking of transactions of persons involved in terrorist activities. The DFM ensures that the "List of Persons Involved in Terrorist Activities" is communicated to financial institutions and enforced; the KGB initiates the inclusion of persons in the list, while the DFM performs technical and executive functions.⁷⁸</p> <p>The DFM also engages in international cooperation aimed at implementing standards for combating money laundering and terrorist financing (including the FATF Recommendations), including Belarus' participation in the EAG.⁷⁹ The DFM may conclude interdepartmental international agreements and exchange information with foreign financial intelligence agencies. Thus, as part of the SCC, the DFM has the tools to access financial and personal information within the country, including banking secrecy and personal data, without the need for the consent of citizens or the approval of a court or prosecutor's office. The DFM is used by the authoritarian regime to persecute political opponents and all dissidents, equating them with "terrorists" or "extremists," which results in the defeat of their financial rights and the virtual impossibility of finding employment, making payments, connecting to telecommunications operators, etc.⁸⁰</p>
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⁷⁷ See Article 11 of Law of Belarus No. 165-Z of 30 June 2014 "On Measures to Prevent the Legalisation of Proceeds from Crime, the Financing of Terrorism and the Financing of the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=h11400165&q_id=4931569; clause 7 of Decree No. 408

⁷⁸ See paragraph 7 of Resolution of the Council of Ministers of Belarus No. 954 of 23 November 2016 "On the Approval of the Regulations on the Procedure for Suspending and Resuming Financial Transactions by the Financial Monitoring Authority, Interaction of the Financial Monitoring Authority with Persons Carrying Out Financial Transactions", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=c21600954&q_id=4931582; clause 8 Resolution of the Council of Ministers of Belarus No. 735 of 16 September 2016 "On approval of the Regulations on the procedure for applying measures related to the freezing of funds and (or) blocking of financial transactions of persons involved in terrorist activities", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=c21600735&q_id=4931604; clause 10 of Resolution of the Council of Ministers of Belarus No. 1256 of 30 December 2014 "On approval of the Regulations on the procedure for determining the list of organisations and individuals, including individual entrepreneurs, involved in terrorist activities, appealing against the decision to include an organisation, individual, including an individual entrepreneur, in such a list and consideration of other appeals of these organisations, individuals, including individual entrepreneurs, bringing this list to the attention of persons carrying out financial transactions and the financial monitoring authority", https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=c21401256&q_id=4931618

⁷⁹ FATF – Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering. EAG – Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism. (History of creation, SCC website, https://kgk.gov.by/ru/istoria_dfm-ru/)

⁸⁰ Present, "As if I had never left prison." How the Belarusian authorities control political prisoners after their release, <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/kak-v-belarusi-kontroliruyut-politzaklyuchennyh-posle-osvobozhdeniya/33312299.html>

5. Supervision in the banking, currency and foreign trade spheres	The SCC controls the banking system, including supervision of the National Bank, compliance with currency legislation, the legality of foreign trade operations and the receipt of export proceeds. ⁸¹
6. Market regulator	The SCC ensures compliance with price discipline and trade rules, controls pricing and quality standards, ⁸² acting as the key executor of the president's decisions on administrative price regulation, using repressive tools to force businesses to comply with established tariffs. ⁸³
7. Debureaucratisation and "communication with society"	The SCC controls debureaucratisation and manages the system of appeals from citizens and legal entities. ⁸⁴ Complaints serve as grounds for unscheduled inspections, which gives the SCC quasi-judicial powers to promptly punish officials at any level. The feedback mechanism legitimises the direct actions of controllers, bypassing standard procedures. This creates the false impression that the population has "control" over any low-level official. Lukashenko's frequent references to "ordinary people" and their needs during meetings are realised precisely through the mechanism of complaints to the SCC. ⁸⁵
8. Control over financial transactions and property in the interests of the state	The Committee assesses the effectiveness of investment projects, public procurement and the turnover of strategic resources (precious metals, ferrous and non-ferrous scrap metal). ⁸⁶ A broad interpretation of economic expediency allows the SCC to intervene in the economic activities of enterprises and to recognise management decisions as unjustified, with subsequent sanctions.
9. Rule-making	The SCC participates in shaping the legal environment by adopting its own regulations and requiring the approval of other agencies' drafts. ⁸⁷ The Committee conducts internal audits of the activities of state bodies, including diplomatic missions, and makes binding proposals for adjustments to their work.

⁸¹ See Article 8 of Law No. 142-Z

⁸² See Article 8 of Law No. 142-Z

⁸³ Zerkalo, "They paid a huge amount of money, we're talking millions." What is known about the "Neighbours" who were charged with criminal offences and the co-owner of the chain, <https://news.zerkalo.io/economics/24721.html>

⁸⁴ See Article 8 of Law No. 142-Z

⁸⁵ BelTA, What price chaos is the President criticising? We explain using the example of ordinary potatoes, <https://belta.by/president/view/za-kakoj-bardak-s-tsenami-kritiku-et-prezident-rasskazyvaem-na-primere-prostogo-kartofelja-699265-2025/>

⁸⁶ See Article 8 of Law No. 142-Z

⁸⁷ See Article 8 of Law No. 142-Z

Appendix 4. Overview of SCC executives' career paths

No	Official	Position	Origin	Career type
1	Hierasimau Vasil (Gerasimov Vasily)	Chairman of the SCC	SCC (insider) – Presidential Administration – SCC	Nomenclature with political rotation
2	Basko Dzmitryi (Basko Dmitry)	First Deputy Chairman	Internal Service of the SCC	Career Administrator
3	Labovich Andrei (Lobovich Andrey)	Deputy Chairman	Minsk City Executive Committee / Ministry of Labour and Social Protection	Executive vertical
4	Narkievich Stanislau (Narkevich Stanislav)	Deputy Chairman	Production Sector / Within the SCC	Economist / Equipment Operator
5	Sambuk Andrei (Sambuk Andrey)	Deputy Chairman – Director of the DFI	KGB (Investigative Department)	Security official / Special services
6	Zakharau Dzmitryi (Zakharov Dmitry)	Director of the DFM	Housing and Utilities Sector / SCC (region)	Economist / Manager
7	Kasheta Siarhei (Kasheta Sergey)	Deputy Director of DFI	KGB (Operational Units)	Security Official / Special Services
8	Sialitski Viktor (Selitsky Viktor)	Deputy Director of the DFI	Ministry of Internal Affairs (Minsk City Police Department)	Security official / Police
9	Tsylko Aksana (Tsylo Oksana)	Chairman of the SCC for the Brest Region	Science (Agricultural Complex) / Regional Executive Committee	Industry expert
10	Bychkouski Viachaslau (Bychkovsky Vyacheslav)	First Deputy Chairman of the SCC for the Brest Region	Ministry of Taxes and Duties (Tax Inspectorate)	Fiscal technocrat
11	Hadziatski Uladzimir (Godyatsky Vladimir)	Chairman of the SCC for the Vitsebsk Region	Ministry of Taxes and Duties / Armed Forces	Mixed (fiscal/military)
12	Davydzienka Dzmitryi (Davydenko Dmitry)	First Deputy Chairman of the SCC for the Vitsebsk Region	Forestry / State Inspectorate for Fauna and Flora Protection	Industry expert
13	Nikifarava Natallia (Nikiforova Natalya)	Deputy Chairman of the SCC for the Vitsebsk Region	Ministry of Taxes and Duties (Tax Inspectorate)	Fiscal technocrat
14	Ihlikau Aliaksei (Iglikov Aleksey)	Chairman of the SCC for the Homel Region	Ministry of Finance (Control and Audit Service)	Financial Auditor
15	Prykota Andrei (Prikota Andrey)	First Deputy Chairman of the SCC for the Homel Region	Ministry of Taxes and Duties (Tax Inspectorate)	Fiscal technocrat
16	Salauiova Volha (Solovyeva Olga)	Deputy Deputy Chairman of the	Regional Executive Committee (Trade)	Executive vertical

		SCC for the Homel Region		
17	Darozhka Anatol (Dorozhko Anatoly)	Chairman of the SCC for the Hrodna Region	Agricultural College / AIC	Industry expert
18	Sadounichy Aliaksandr (Sadovnichy Aleksandr)	First Deputy Chairman of the SCC for the Hrodna Region	Regional Executive Committee (Secretariat)	Executive vertical
19	Alieshkievich Maksim (Aleshkevich Maksim)	Chairman of the SCC for the Minsk Region	Internal Service of the Control and Audit Committee	Career administrator
20	Tseliatsitski Yauhen (Telyatitsky Evgeny)	First Deputy Chairman of the SCC for the Minsk Region	Internal Service of the SCC	Career administrator
21	Yakauleu Viktor (Yakovlev Viktor)	Deputy Chairman of the Control and Audit Committee of Minsk Region	Internal Service of the SCC	Career administrator
22	Sadouski Aleh (Sadovsky Oleg)	Chairman of the SCC of the Mahiliou Region	Ministry of Taxes and Duties (Tax Inspectorate)	Fiscal technocrat
23	Tsiertsel Ivan (Tertel Ivan)*	Chairman of the SCC (former) / KGB	KGB / Border Committee	Security official / Special services
24	Anfimau Lieanid (Anfimov Leonid)*	Chairman of the SCC (former)	Presidential Administration / Executive Committee	Executive branch / Political nomenclature

*former Chairman of the SCC

Appendix 5. Key powers of the DFI

Direction of the DFI's activities	Powers
1. Operational and investigative activities	The DFI has broad powers to conduct operational and investigative activities in the field of ensuring the economic security of Belarus and combating economic crimes. ⁸⁸
2. Investigation of economic crimes and corruption	The Department identifies signs of crime, initiates criminal proceedings and conducts urgent investigative actions, detains suspects and transfers materials to the Investigative Committee.
3. The body conducting administrative proceedings	The DFI is authorised to conduct administrative proceedings on a wide range of offences in the financial and business spheres. This gives it the right to independently draw up reports, consider cases and impose penalties. ⁸⁹
4. Control functions	The DFI is authorised to conduct inspections; ⁹⁰ unlike the similar powers of the SCC, these powers are backed up by force. DFI inspections (often unscheduled) are one of the most formidable tools for influencing government agencies and businesses. DFI employees have the right to enter any territory and any premises without hindrance and to demand the provision of all documentation. The department has unlimited access to information regarding the organisations being audited (including banking and tax secrets and personal data) and does not need to spend a long time obtaining court approval for such access.
5. Direct impact on the financial activities of any person	The Department has overlapping functions, and the head of its division has the right to make decisions that are binding on everyone: to suspend bank account operations; to seize funds and other property of individuals, as well as to confiscate property as an object, instrument or means of committing a violation; to suspend (or terminate) the production or sale of goods (works, services); to confiscate goods in the event of violations (e.g., lack of a complete set of documents). ⁹¹ This group of powers also includes the right of the DFI to file lawsuits in court for the liquidation of specific legal entities (individual entrepreneurs) and for the invalidation of the state registration of such legal entities.
6. The right to the lawful use of physical force and weapons	The DFI has the classic powers of any law enforcement agency. The law devotes an entire chapter to regulating the use of physical force, special means and firearms by DFI officers. ⁹²

⁸⁸ See Article 12 of Law No. 307-Z

⁸⁹ See Article 3.7. Procedural and Enforcement Code of the Republic of Belarus on Administrative Offences of 06.01.2021 No. 92-Z, https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=hk2100092&q_id=4931670

⁹⁰ See paragraph 8.1. of Decree No. 87

⁹¹ See Article 13 of Law No. 414-Z

⁹² See Chapter 5 of Law No. 414-Z

7. Ensuring the security of the SCC

The DFI is obliged to ensure the security of the entire SCC system (in fact, to monitor violations by employees) and to protect employees from unlawful attacks.⁹³ In other words, the DFI acts both as an internal "controller" against bribery, abuse and violations within the SCC system, and as a "defender" of employees against dangers outside the system.

⁹³ See section 8.16 of Decree No. 87

Appendix 6. Methodology and sources for the content analysis of SCC activities

As part of the analytical report, a content analysis was conducted of the SCC's self-presentation and its coverage in the Belarusian state and independent media for the period from 2015 to September 2025. Publications were collected from the official website of the SCC, as well as from pro-state, independent and conditionally neutral media news portals. The following sources of information were used for content analysis:

1. Publications from the official website of the State Control Committee (SCC);
2. materials from "Office Life", classified as a conditionally neutral media outlet;
3. Publications from pro-government media, in particular the "Belarusian Telegraph Agency (BelTA)" and "SB: Belarus Today";
4. publications from independent media outlets, including "Nasha Niva", "Euroradio", and "Plan B".

Publications for the period from 1 January 2015 to 30 September 2025 were collected from the above sources automatically using the Python programming language and relevant libraries for web scraping. It should be noted that access to the official website of the State Control Committee required the use of a VPN connection. Relevant publications were selected using the keyword search functions built into the websites (State Control Committee, State Control, State Control, and other variants). In cases where the search functionality was limited (for example, on Nasha Niva and Plan B), an automated check of the entire news archive of the relevant resource was performed for mentions of the State Control Committee.

Collecting data from Office Life presented a particular challenge, as the editorial team had removed a significant portion of publications from before 2021 from the website. In order to partially restore the news publications, the publication's social media accounts were analysed to collect links to the deleted materials. Subsequently, most of the articles found but unavailable on the website were restored using the Web Archive internet archive service.⁹⁴

As a result, a final set of 13,279 news publications was formed, of which 2,530 were from the official website of the SCC, 8,855 from pro-government media,

⁹⁴ Thus, 446 articles were obtained directly from the website, and 47 were recovered from the archive for the period from 2018 to 2020.

1,401 from independent media, and 493 from conditionally neutral media. A detailed breakdown of articles by each online publication is provided in Table 7.

Table 7. Number of articles collected for each media outlet from 01.01.2015 to 30.09.2025

SCC	BeITA	SB	Office Life	Nasha Niva	Euro Radio	Plan B
2530	4660	4195	493	594	777	30

Upon completion of the data collection stage, an automatic clustering (grouping) method was applied to the publications by topic using the Python programming language and the top2vec thematic modelling library. Initial processing identified 149 unique topics. The top2vec algorithm automatically aggregated them into 42 thematic clusters. These clusters were manually assigned names, which were then verified using the NotebookLM generative document analysis tool. The application of this algorithm had a limitation: top2vec assigns only one topic to each publication (hard clustering), while a single news item could simultaneously touch on several subject areas, which could affect the accuracy of the classification. Such semantic overlaps are present to some extent in each of the 12 meta-topics. The correspondence between the assigned topic names and the content of the classified publications was further verified using specialised queries (prompts) in NotebookLM. This check is not exact, but it showed that the share of semantically irrelevant publications is less than 5% and can reach 10% in some topics.

Appendix 7. Distribution of thematic blocks in media coverage of SCC activities over time

