
Belarus: Tarina Andreeva and Darja Chulcova sentenced to two years in jail. Federations of journalists, they are “political prisoners”

Condemned to two years in jail: this is the sentence delivered today by Judge Natallya Buhuk, of the Frunze District Court in Minsk, against Tarina Andreeva and Darja Chulcova, two journalists for Belsat, the Polish satellite television station broadcasting in Belarus. The two journalists were arrested on 15 November last year while reporting live during an anti-government rally in Minsk. The jury found them guilty of “organizing public events aimed at disrupting civil order”. The European and International Federations of Journalists (EFJ-IFJ) immediately said they “strongly condemn” the “criminalisation of journalism by President Lukashenko’s regime”. Andreeva and Chulcova are “political prisoners” according to the two Federations, which demanded their immediate release and the dropping of all charges against them. The two journalists, too, rejected the charges against them and also called for the “immediate release” of “all political prisoners in Belarus”. For the Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ), the sentence is aimed at intimidating “all media workers so they stop doing their job of reporting on socially important events in the country, which in fact means a ban on the profession”.

Valentina Bombelli