



Iryna Khalip

Belarus

Ms. Khalip (born 12 November 1967) is a Belarusian journalist and the wife of imprisoned opposition leader Andrei Sannikov. Police arrested Ms. Khalip as she and her husband traveled to a hospital following the post-election crackdown on December 19, 2010. She was convicted on charges for organizing or participating in a public disorder and given a two year suspended sentence.

Before her arrest, Ms. Khalip worked as a journalist and editor at the Minsk bureau of the independent Novaya Gazeta newspaper. During her career, she has been detained, interrogated, beaten, and subjected to surveillance by the police, including in 1997 when riot police clubbed her as she attempted to report on a demonstration opposing unification with Russia. In recognition of her work, the International Women's Media Foundation awarded Ms. Khalip its Courage in Journalism Award in 2009.

On December 19, 2010, after the presidential polls closed, Ms. Khalip joined thousands of protesters peacefully demonstrating in downtown Minsk. After a small group of individuals at the back of the crowd broke the windows and doors of a government building, riot police responded with indiscriminate and disproportionate force. Just before midnight, police moved in and violently dispersed the crowd, and although they encountered virtually no resistance, authorities arrested over 700 people, severely beating many of them.

After police injured her husband during the crackdown, Ms. Khalip and her husband fled towards a hospital. However, police stopped their car, punched Ms. Khalip in the face, and arrested her and her husband. After 41 days imprisoned at the KGB pretrial detention center in Minsk, authorities placed Ms. Khalip under house arrest.

On May 16, 2011, Ms. Khalip received a two year suspended sentence. She is no longer under house arrest, but she remains under surveillance and is prohibited from leaving Minsk.