

Measure to Alleviate the Political Situation in Belarus

Forum: Advisory Panel

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Introduction

The sudden refusal of the Belarusian Olympic athlete impacted the global community drastically. Since the Belarusian Olympic athlete refused to go back to her home country after the games, the incident did not only spark a diplomatic incident within the country, but also altered the political sanctions in Belarus – a landlocked country in Eastern Europe – between Russia and Europe.

Currently, Belarus is ruled by the “last dictator” Alexander Lukashenko who won re-election in 2020 for a sixth time; however, the “fraudulent elections” provoked massive protest in the nation leading a crackdown from its government. This massive protest also caused arrests of civil society activists, independent journalists, and 35,000 citizens.



Protests in Belarus in 16th, August 2020

History

Before World War I, Belarus was undeveloped nation. Not only did the economy was weak, but education was also one of the key issues that impacted the nation. The current territories of Belarus were belonged to Lithuania which means that have never enjoyed statehood. During World War I, the frontier passes Belarus for 4 years. Most of the population fled deep into Russia to escape the war. The nationalist elite took advantage of the German occupation of western Belorussia to carry out its national plan. The situation on the east side of the front line was very difficult. The Russian Imperial Army has concentrated its troops in central and easter Belarus. Prior to the independence in 1991, Belarus was formerly known as White Russia or Belorussia. It was the par of the smallest of the three Slavic republics of the Soviet Union. Although Belarus shares a language with a distinct ethnic group, it did not enjoy unity and political sovereignty until 1918. Thus, the history of Belarus is no more isolated from the study of regional powers, relations, and impact on people. Now, Belarus is divided and changed over times and these changes led the history to be inseparable from neighboring nations. After the nation gained independence, Belarus maintained close ties with neighboring country, Russia. In 1999, Russia and Belarus signed the Union State Foundation Treaty. This aimed to “create a politically integrated confederation with a common currency; the precise nature of the partnership.” However, the exact nature of the partnership was not well known until the 21st century. Belarus’ former Soviet legacy is reflected in the continued popularity of

communist parties and the country's dictatorial style of governing. One-fifth of Belarus' population has been almost completely rebuilt in the central capital, Minsk, since World War II.

Background

Belarus was a peaceful, but well-governed state which is emerged between Poland and Russia. Democrats are now warning that their country could turn from Europe into North Korea. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko has expressed strong opposition after the election in August. Huge protests have been broken out when Lukashenko was nominated as the winner of the sixth term. In November 2021, the Organization for Economic and Cooperation and Development (OECD) ruled that the election had been rigged and that Belarusian security forces had responded to peaceful and systematic human rights violations in response to peaceful protests. Belarus is facing greater isolation after Lukashenko forced a commercial airliner to arrest an opposition activist on board, with Russia being his only ally. The Kremlin's support for the Belarusian regime is likely to appear at a summit between President Biden and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

International Actions

The Human Rights Council (HRC) ratified by the United Nations (UN) in April of 2020 have designated that in relation to human rights. To be specific, the resolution targeted explicitly on promoting human rights for all people at all ages and ensuring healthy lives of all people. Their main goal is to: justify violence and intimidation; to coordinate with the European Union (EU) and other partners and allies; and to develop a list of targeted sanctions against key members associated with ongoing abuses and human rights. During the conference, the international community supported the nation to protect the country's opposition movement while holding Belarus accountable. Since October 2020, the European Union (EU) has incrementally forced measures against Belarus. These specific measures were embraced in response to the Belarusian authorities' intolerable violence against peaceful protester, arbitrary arrests, intimidation, and detentions. The EU did not perceive the result of the election and recognized it as neither fair, nor free. The fifth declaration of EU was continued over human rights abuses and the instrumentalism of migrants were decided since 2021 December. The 9th article of the UDHR has significantly emphasized that "no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile. In 2021 November 15, the EU has reconsidered the political sanctions in response to the Belarusian regime's use of people for political purposes, given the situation on the Belarusian – EU border. The EU has extended the criteria for a list, which can be based on specific criteria. In simple words, the EU could



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target individuals and organizations which organize or contribute to activities that facilitate illegal crossing of the EU's external borders. In 2021 June, the council decided to impose sanctions on 78 Belarusian individuals. The decision was made in response to the proliferation of human rights violation in Belarus and attack on civil society, opposition groups and journalists. In addition, a strict action was taken in connection with the forced and illegal landing at Minsk airport. The EU has also decided to enforce existing restrictive measures in regard to the political situation in Belarus by introducing a ban on the overflight of EU airspace.

The Stances of the P5 Nations

United States of America

The United States supported a sovereign, independent Belarus that respects the rights and voices of the Belarusian people. On December 25th, 1991, the US recognized the independence of the Belarus and on December 28th, 1991, Belarus and the US established diplomatic relations. On January 31st, 1992, the US Embassy officially opened in Minsk. The Belarusian embassy opened in Washington in 1991. Lukashenko came to power during the 1994 presidential elections in Belarus, which were generally considered free and fair, but has since strengthened authoritarian control and corruption in the country through widespread intervention.



Signing of an Intergovernmental Agreement between Belarus and the U.S

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom (UK) government has worked with the government and non-governmental organization of Belarus to support economic, social, and political reform to improve the situations regarding human rights and rule of law. They also worked together to build links for mutual growth and to increase their economic connection with two nations.

France

Following the results of the presidential election, Belarus hosted the largest exhibition in its history. Tens of thousands of Belarusians have taken part in a peaceful protest rally against election fraud and the resignation of Lukashenko who has been power since 1991. France like its European allies, rejected the legitimacy of the vote and supported democracy movement.

China

In 2013, there was an active and steady increase in relations between China and Belarus, and the fruitful results of practical cooperation in various fields. The two countries established a comprehensive strategic partnership in July. In addition, China and Belarus assisted each other on issues concerning their main interests and maintained a close coordination in international organizations. Two nations pragmatic cooperation continued to deepen. On October 21, 2021, the 14th meeting of the China-Belarus Intergovernmental Economic and Trade Cooperation

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Committee was held in Beijing. The three cement production line projects and the first-phase railway electrification project undertaken by Chinese enterprises in Belarus were successfully completed. Thus, they strengthened their exchanges and promoted practical and fruitful cooperation.

Russian Federation

Belarus and Russia's relations are considered as bilateral. The two countries share a land border and form an alliance territory. The two nations have reached a number of agreements. Russia is Belarus' largest and most significant economic and political partner. Both are member of Commonwealth of Independent States, the Eurasian Customs Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States and various international organization which included the United Nations.

Possible Solutions

As there are many aspects to this problem, many solutions can be proposed. Among the many problems that exist within this issue, the three of the gravest are the following:

1. The constitutional reform should be a starting point for this issue and there should be some aspects that should be guaranteed: there should be an end for all forms of violence and repression against peaceful protestors; there should not be prosecution to protestors; there should be a release of all prisoners who are arrested due to political sanctions and the possible return of all exiles and deportees; the return of dismissed public employees; fair presidential and parliamentary elections in relation to Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) criteria,
2. Belarus' economy was considered as undeveloped before the election, and it is still considered as undeveloped. The only way out is international support for the 'Marshall Plan for Democratic Belarus. "National and international financial institutions should announce that they will provide substantial financial support through grants or low-interest loans, but only if democratic change occurs first. Thus, the government should announce a package of economic support for a democratic government, so that it can lead to send a strong signal to economic reformers.
3. The Lukashenko regime must be subject to severe international sanctions, but so far, only selective visa restrictions or account freezing have been introduced, which have little impact on the actual situation at the local level. The list of visa sanctions needs to be expanded, but more importantly, the system needs to come under greater economic pressure. The companies most important to Lukashenko's business interests must be identified and sanctioned, all their trade activities must be suspended, and all the foreign accounts need to be frozen. In simple words, the government should introduce targeted



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economic and political sanction to halt all repression.

Therefore, it is especially necessary for the government to produce a new form of political and economic regime to protect citizen's human rights.

Glossary

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): international document adopted by the UN that enforces the rights and freedom of all human beings.

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE): largest security-oriented intergovernmental organization with observer status at the UN.

European Union (EU): political and economic union of 27 member states located in Europe.

Timeline

1991- Lukashenko is elected as the president of Belarus

1992- U.S embassy opens in Minsk

2013- Active and steady increase in relations between China and Belarus

2020- Lukashenko wins the re-election

2021- The Organization for Economic and Cooperation and Development (OECD) rules that the election had been rigged and that Belarusian security forces had responded to peaceful and systematic human rights violations in response to peaceful protests.

2021- The 14th meeting of the China-Belarus Intergovernmental Economic and Trade Cooperation Committee is held in Beijing

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