

Discussing the Illegal Migrants Entering the Countries Around Belarus

Forum: Advisory Panel

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Introduction

From the second half of the year, the borders by Belarus have constantly been the top issue on table in Europe. Immense numbers of migrants from the Middle East such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria began to arrive the European territory from Minsk, the capital city of Belarus. The large number of migrants hit the thousands after Belarusian government facilitated the entering to Europe. This action has undermined the European refugee problem and led to a serious crisis in the entire of the Europe. This issue has cornered migrants from Iraq and Middle East to a deadly situation and exposed them to inhumane environment and forces. Some of the surrounding countries including Poland, Lithuania, and more are perplexedly experiencing crowd flocked on the borders. European Union (EU) recognized the migrant issue as the top issue that threatens the entire Europe as well as some of the P5 nation as well as United States, Canada, United Kingdom seeing the denaturation of democracy in Belarus. This is because the EU further discovered the violation of human rights as well. Hence, the EU, United States, Canada, United Kingdom and more is currently imposing sanction upon Belarusian authority and economics. Combining with current situation at Russian Ukraine border and internal system of Belarusian government, experts speculated that the problem would be more complex and long-lasting.

History

Belarus was born under the independence of Belarusians from the Soviet Union in 1991. The territory under Belarus has undergone series of division amongst newly emerged power for a long period of time. Therefore, the country itself has long historical relationship with countries enclose its territory, Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, Ukraine, and Poland. In fact, Belarus as a country is not as clear as some of the other countries or nations that hold commonly rooted ethnicity and identity on their land.

However, there had been attempts of founding a new independent country on the land where Belarus is originated.

Nevertheless, those attempts had been put on a pause due to the World War I.

However, there were more massive and progressive movements toward nationalism on the former Belarus territory, and in 1917

and 1918, when the Russian Empire were ended, the large portion of the territory which had



Belarus National Flag

constantly been claimed to be independent was yielded to the German Empire, which proclaimed the People Republics of White Russia in the following years, was all in vain. After all, the Soviet Union took over and claimed it to be Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1919 which led to the war between the Soviet Union and Poland in two years. Even afterward, the Belarusian territory became a battlefield between Germany and the Soviet Union when they came to assail each other. Belarusians were finally able to achieve their sovereignty, when the Soviet Union was dissembled as well as many other countries. Due to this complicatedly intertwined background, Belarus has highly connected relationship with Russia being constantly a political and economic partner. With that in mind, Russians who migrated during the time of Belorussian S.S.R constitutes the second largest ethnic group in Belarus. Still, the vast majority of the country are Belarusians which uses Belarusian and Russian as official languages of Belarus.

Background

The issue has been recognized immediately as a major refuge crisis by EU and peripheral countries. Virtually all of the European countries currently are or estimated to be affected by the abnormal numbers of asylum seekers flow through the entire Europe that starts from Minsk. Regarding the issue, European countries are accusing the president of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko for luring migrants by facilitating their entrance. He enabled migrants to easily obtain tourist visa from Belarus and move out from there to countries under beneficial conditions and great treatment for migrants such as Germany, Portugal, Spain. In addition, smugglers have also publicized false information pertaining to travelling to Belarus. Some of the media introduced that the Belarusian military force compelled migrants to spread out to contacted border. As these circumstantial evidence is getting clearer, amongst the European country however, Poland takes the strongest implication on the migrant crisis. As for Poland, walls are built up on the issued area for protection. According to Polish Border Guard, the barrier is measured to be 186km which is almost half the length of the border between two countries. Polish government spent 400 million U.S. dollar for setting the walls where further expanse is predicted. Lithuania started building walls as well by declaring state of emergency to the issued areas.



The Border Between Belarus and Poland

Beside the macro perspective of damages to the community, the utmost issue that requires a resolution is for people trapped between the borders without any international aid. It is estimated that there are almost 20,000 migrants are present in Belarus. At least 5000 refugees including women and children trapped swaying at the border between Belarus and adjacent countries. There have been reported deaths of people included in thousands of people wandering around countries. Although local volunteers formed their network to aid these people, necessities for refugees are sparse which ask more supplies and help.

There is a conflict between EU, UNHCR (United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees) and countries border Belarus; Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. On 13 July and 10

August, Lithuanian Parliament allowed them to refuse to accept asylum applications in exceptional circumstances at the Belarusian-Lithuanian border. Latvia has also declared state of emergency at the border region with Belarus being prolonged constantly, which could reject the asylum applications. On 14 October 2021, Polish government has allowed border guards to refuse application for asylum without an individual examination. EU and UNHCR have announced that these countries use “pushback and other violation of human rights.” EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson stressed that pushbacks are illegal under the EU law and international UN agreements that people have the right to apply for asylum.



The Border Between Belarus and Poland

EU and other countries have seen this problem attributed from serial financial and transactional sanction against Belarus. Belarus has been observed to commit multiple different infringements primarily on the field of human right and regime system, first accused of inhumane suppression and voting system, and then by rendering Ryanair airline to forcibly land on Minsk to capture and detain a Belarusian dissident. Belarus claims that the Ryanair had to land on Minsk on the middle of concern for bombing; however, EU regarded the case to be happened without any context. Thus, since then, there has been fifth package of restriction against Belarus president and officials.

Meanwhile, the recent conflict between Russia and Ukraine is disarranging the circumstance further. While the political and military tension seems to get on deadlock, countries perspective to Belarus is getting worse by time goes. Belarus showed collaborated military movement with Russia on the border of Ukraine. This rapid movement is gravely considered to drive into catastrophe of the World War III by media and leader of countries.

International Actions

Since October 2020, the EU has progressively imposed restricted measures against Belarus. Furthermore, EU, United Kingdom, United States, and Canada progressed on further sanction against Belarus. According to Director of the Office of Foreign Assets Control Andrea M. Gacki of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, United States would cooperate with international community to halt the severe disregards of norms committed by Lukashenka’s regime and impose corresponding sovereign debt restriction on Belarus. Canada has also announced economic sanction against 11 Belarusian officials under the Special Economic Measures Act. These restrictions prohibit any transaction or financial service between countries and Belarus which is harshly affecting the root of economy. Noting that international actions has already gotten into the fifth phase, it is possible to have several more actions by international community. Since, the sanction targets the current Belarusian government abusing the human rights and not adhering to democracy, the Belarus government requires radical shift in its governing now. Moreover, Poland and Lithuania decided to send back all the people entering their territory to automatically return to borders without any application for international

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protection. This action is rather inevitable to execute in this way, but this is a tremendous vulnerability for people in border.

The Stances of the P5 Nations

United States of America

The U.S. is putting its best effort to ask Belarusian responsibility to the infringement of human rights by implicating updating economic restriction toward Belarus. Note that Belarus is one of the closest ally of Russian Federation and the most significant for Russian Federation influencing its power on Europe. The US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control ("OFAC") escalated sanctions against Belarus. OFAC also published ten new FAQs providing guidance on the scope of the sanctions. U.S. have record of distrusting the public announcement of Belarusian authority. It is seemed that sanction led by OFAC would constantly be elated with the allied nations such as U.K. and Canada.

United Kingdom

U.K. so far is on the greatest opposition of Belarusian. The U.K. has forced initial sanctions on eight Belarusian individuals and asset freeze on OJSC Belaruskali, a major Belarusian producer and exporter of potassium chloride fertilizer. The latest sanctions have 118 designations under the UK Belarus sanctions regime to which is 108 individuals and ten entities. UK has also designated Belarusian parties under the UK's Global Human Rights Regime. U.K. highly encourages the Government of Belarus to respect democratic principles and separate of institutional power.

China

President Lukashenka had strategically been approaching China to dismiss the economic reliance to Russian Federation. China also forced the relationship with Belarusian authority. Since the late 2000s, China's economic presence and impression in Belarus was incessantly increasing. However, the result of partnership wasn't satisfying for both countries. Moreover, Belarus made considerable number of debts for expanding industry. Out of Lukashenko's expectation, China did not endorse politically nor economically when he was harassed by protesting against the Belarusian election. Therefore, their relationship has grim expectation for both of them as for now.

Russian Federation

Russian Federation is recognized as the steadfast ally for Belarus. Vladimir Vladimirovich, the president of Russian Federation and Aleksandr G. Lukashenko, the president of Belarus has at least met five times just last year. Amongst the experts and journalist, Lukashenko is dependent on Putin more than ever militarily and politically. In recent, Russian and Belarusian military conducted missile drills at Ukraine border and raising the tension between them and Ukraine. Moreover, according to NATO, Russia has sent 30,000 troops to Belarus including jets and missiles.

Possible Solutions

Due to the impasse of Belarus and international community, there could be less solution to be considered to mitigate the issue greatly. However, international assistance is needed for

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migrants locked up between the borders. Noting the fact that borders are secured more and more, urgent situation should be resolved rapidly. Among the many problems that exist within this issue, the three of the gravest are the following:

1. Inhumane Treatment and Negligence to Refugees Locked between the Borders.
2. Stationary Belarusian Authoritarians and Government.
3. Complex Political Circumstance at the Issued Areas; Belarus, Poland, Russian Federation, Ukraine.

Therefore, it is especially necessary that the refugees are guaranteed with their safety with supplied necessities. However, the circumstances of countries on the frontier should also be considered. For example, Poland historically has antagonistic view on accepting refugees as well as other surrounding countries. Nevertheless, the influx lured by the Belarusian government targeting the Middle East compel them to immediate choice which incur the worse position to help from a humanitarian point of view. However, EU and NATO have to beware of military escalation to the border of Belarus and Ukraine.

Currently, Belarus does not response to consecutive sanctions. Thereby, citizens and self-ownerships became the victims of extensive influence. Moreover, Belarusian Government is cooperating to Russian Federation of adding tension and pressure to the Ukraine border. Most importantly, it seems that the international community necessitates further patience and actions of powerful nations. since the EU is already weighting with the support of powerful nations across the sea. The current situation is at a stalemate. In order to break it down, progressive sanctions and decisive diplomatic languages are needed.

Glossary

Political Asylum: the right to live in a foreign country that is given by the government of the country to the people who left their own countries for political purposes.

Refugee: people who are forced to leave their country because of several reasons, for example, war or conflict over religious beliefs.

Sanction: an official order, such as the stopping of trade, that is taken against a country in order to make it obey international law.

Election: a time when people vote in order to choose someone for a political or official job.

Ally: a country that has agreed officially to give help and support to another one, especially during a war.

Border: a line that has been agreed to divide one country from another.

Pushback: a set of state measures by which refugees and migrants are forced back over a border.

Timeline

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2020 – Alexander Lukashenko announces to win the presidential election, crediting him with 80% of the vote on 9 August 2021.

2020 – EU imposes three consecutive sanctions for repression and election falsification to Alexander Lukashenko and related officials.

2021 – Ryanair Flight 4978 diverts to Minsk in Belarus from Greece to Lithuania route due to a bomb scare having dissident Belarus journalist detained there on 23 May 2021.

2021 – EU bans Belarussian air carriers on 4 June 2021.

2021 – Satellite shows a concentration of Russian troops on the borders with Ukraine in November 2021.

2021 – Joe Biden, the president of U.S. warns Russia of invading Ukraine.

2021 – Russia announces minute security demands to NATO that they refrain all of their activity in Europe.

2021 – Fourth and fifth package of sanction over constant repression, forced landing of Ryanair flight, and human right abuse and instrumentalities of migrants with additional sanction of EU, UK, US, and Canada on 21 June 2021 and 2 December 2021

2022 – NATO reinforces their military power in Eastern Europe. The US puts 8500 troops on alert.



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