

Belarus Nabs 'Hannibal Lecter' in Blast

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A woman paying her respects Wednesday at Minsk's Oktyabrskaya metro. **Vasily Fedosenko**

Belarussian authorities on Wednesday announced the arrest of the perpetrators of a deadly blast in Minsk's metro, with a source denying a political motive for the attack and likening one suspect to the fictional psychopath Hannibal Lecter.

But officials released little information on the three suspects accused in Monday's blast, which killed 12 and injured 200. President Alexander Lukashenko was quick to threaten a crackdown on the political opposition over the attack.

Lukashenko said two suspects were detained Tuesday and have admitted to staging the attack and two earlier blasts.

"Most important is that we know who has done it. We don't now yet why. But we will find out," Lukashenko said, Interfax reported.

He added that one suspect worked as an electrician and the other as a lathe operator, but that

they could have been hired to carry out the blast. He said the possibility that they were hired killers mandated a thorough investigation of all politicians to find out who wanted to destabilize the country.

Meanwhile, an unidentified law enforcement source told Interfax that the blast was actually staged by a 25-year-old former conscript soldier with sadistic tendencies and no political agenda.

Psychiatrists who interviewed the suspect compared him to Hannibal Lecter, a cannibalistic serial killer from books by Thomas Harris popularized by the Hollywood adaptation of "Silence of the Lambs," the source said.

The suspect said he "enjoys seeing human suffering," the source added.

Belarussian Interior Minister Anatoly Kuleshov said later Wednesday that a third suspect was detained. He did not elaborate. The country's KGB [released](#) composite pictures of two suspects.

The person who planted the bomb was reportedly filmed by metro surveillance cameras. The possible involvement of the other suspects remained unclear. The KGB said the explosives used in the blast were unknown "to any country worldwide" and that the attackers had purchased them online.

If charged and convicted, the blast perpetrators may face the death penalty.

The ex-conscript pleaded guilty to blasts in Vitebsk in 2005 and at a Minsk discotheque in 2008, the Interfax source said. Lukashenko also said the detainees were responsible for these two unsolved bombings, each of which injured about 50.

But security analyst Andrei Soldatov, head of Agentura.ru think tank, doubted the link between the bombings.

Monday's attack was too well prepared and used a lot of explosives — the equivalent of 5 kilograms of TNT — which made the involvement of an amateur psychopath unlikely, Soldatov said by telephone. He refused to speculate who might have been behind the blast.

Pro-Lukashenko political analyst Sergei Musiyenko told The Moscow Times that the political opposition had "created an atmosphere of hate" in the country that led to the bombing.

But opposition leader Vitaly Romashevsky dismissed the accusations while predicting that the blast would be used for a crackdown on the opposition, the Bela Pan news agency [reported](#).

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