

Belarus Expels 3 Observers

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MINSK — Three Russian human rights observers attending Minsk trials of opposition activists have been expelled from Belarus, their organization said.

The Committee on International Control Over the Human Rights Situation in Belarus said its three representatives at the trials — Lyubov Zakharova, Yekaterina Korosteleva and Irina Paykacheva — were arrested in Minsk on Friday night.

"The Russian human rights representatives were released at about midnight with an order for them to leave the territory of Belarus within 24 hours," the organization said in a statement.

The three women had been monitoring the trials of 16 opposition activists who took part in mass street protests on Dec. 19 against the re-election of President Alexander Lukashenko. They include three opposition leaders who ran against him.

The human rights organization said the three had been told that their presence in Belarus was either forbidden or unwanted. The Interior Ministry had no comment.

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