

Belarus Deports Reporter Who Met Lukashenko Opponents

October 26, 2011



Plainclothes officers detaining an opposition activist in Minsk on Tuesday. **Julia Darashkevich**

MINSK — Belarussian police have deported a Moskovsky Komsomolets reporter who was working on a story about jailed opposition leaders, the reporter, Igor Karmazin, said Wednesday.

Karmazin, who met the wife of jailed former presidential candidate Andrei Sannikov, said by telephone from Moscow that police had put him on a night train on Tuesday after briefly detaining him. Police declined to comment.

"After ending my meeting with [Sannikov's wife, Irina Khalip], I had only taken a few steps when two plainclothes [policemen] came up to me, grabbed my arms, put me into a car ... and took me to a police station. ... They said I was a threat to Belarus' security," Karmazin said.

Karmazin said he was barred from visiting Belarus for a year.

The government of President Alexander Lukashenko cracked down on the opposition after a mass protest against his re-election to a fourth term in December 2010.

After the European Union and the United States introduced sanctions against Belarus this year and called for the release of political prisoners, Lukashenko has pardoned dozens of those jailed for taking part in the December 2010 rally.

But Sannikov and Nikolai Statkevich are two former presidential candidates who remain behind bars.

Minsk police have arrested at least five people at a protest demanding the release of all political prisoners, The Associated Press reported.

A few dozen activists from a movement called European Belarus held the protest Tuesday evening on the main square in Minsk. They held portraits of those jailed and shouted, "Freedom to political prisoners."

Police quickly moved in and arrested at least five of them.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/10/26/belarus-deports-reporter-who-met-lukashenko-opponents-a10428>