

Losing Your Mind Over the Belarus Executions

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Belarus executed Dmitry Konovalov and Vladislav Kovalyov, both 26, who were charged with bombing the Oktyabrskaya metro station in Minsk in April 2011. Sympathizers of the victims and opponents of Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko placed flowers and candles at the Belarussian Embassy in Moscow. The Internet is rife with people denouncing the action. One typical example is this LiveJournal post by journalist Olga Bakushinskaya: "They actually killed them. God, help and remember them."

Have these people completely lost their minds? ☒

The bomb those men detonated killed 15 people and wounded more than 300. It sent Lukashenko into a fury.

The Belarussian security services responded in a manner befitting any totalitarian state — like a well-oiled and perfectly tuned machine. They analyzed surveillance cameras from the metro station where the blast occurred and saw a man leave a 20-kilogram bag and ascend the steps toward the exit, where cameras captured his face. The authorities examined

the footage from all metro cameras, determined the station Konovalov exited from, and followed him home a day later.

Konovalov left his home in Vitebsk and arrived in Minsk one day before the terrorist attack. In the basement of his house, investigators found a lab containing both explosives and metal beads and shards identical to those used in the blast. ☒

And this was not the first explosion of this type. Two improvised explosive devices were detonated in Vitebsk in September 2005 and later at a folk festival in Minsk on Belarussian Independence Day, July 3, 2008. In the second incident, one of the bombs failed to detonate, and police managed to lift a set of fingerprints from the juice container in which the device was found.

☒The Belarussian security services then moved heaven and earth to find the terrorist. They questioned 854 witnesses, combed through 84,000 mobile phone subscribers, conducted 509 searches and fingerprinted 2 million Belarussians. But Konovalov called in sick on the day employees were fingerprinted at the factory where he worked, and when he was later inducted into the army, he told recruiters that he had already been fingerprinted at work.

When the authorities finally apprehended Konovalov, his fingerprints matched those found on the juice container. Investigators were able to reconstruct the crime right down to the very second each event occurred.

All of this was stated publicly at the trial and a good portion of those proceedings is available on the Internet. ☒

Could any doubt possibly remain as to Konovalov's guilt? Could anyone actually believe that the surveillance footage was fabricated and that the bloodthirsty Belarussian regime actually spent three years and hundreds of thousands of hours to find the owner of the fingerprints that the authorities themselves had planted on the juice container? Would Lukashenko, who controls absolutely everything in Belarus, have any reason to leave the case unsolved for six long years and at enormous expense?

Did Lukashenko try to pin the bombings on the political opposition, on Moscow or on Washington? No, the verdict clearly states that the maniac detonated the bombs for fun.

If some people don't like the fact that Belarus has the death penalty, they should protest the death penalty. If they don't like the fact that Lukashenko is a dictator, they should protest dictatorships.

But they should never turn the fight for freedom into a fight to prove that a convicted maniac and killer is innocent. The fact that Lukashenko is a dictator doesn't make Konovalov a martyr.

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