

# Belarus Suspends Controversial 'Parasite Tax' After Protests

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Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko **Sergei Grits / AP**

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko has said a tax on the unemployed should not be enforced this year.

“We will not collect this money for 2016 from those who were meant to pay it,” Lukashenko told state news agency Belta.

The move comes after a wave of protests spread across the country against the so-called “law against social parasites” which would require Belarusians who work less than 183 days per year to pay \$250 to the government.

The law, which is hugely unpopular, comes at a time when Belarus is in its third year of a serious economic recession. The average salary in Belarus has fallen from a record \$630 in 2014 to \$380 at the start of this year.

Lukashenko has been in power since 1994. The move is a rare concession from the Belarusian

strongman.

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