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# Belarus Plant Workers Go on Strike After Contested Vote – Reports

August 10, 2020

Workers at Belarusian Steel Works said last month that they would go on strike "in the event of unfair elections." **Viktir Tolochko / TASS**

Workers at a major steel plant in Belarus have gone on strike over the country's contentious presidential election that they described as "unfair," Belarusian media reported Monday.

Belarus' longtime leader Alexander Lukashenko claimed an overwhelming victory after Sunday's vote, while his main challenger said it had been rigged and called on him to give up power. Major clashes broke out between pro-opposition protesters and law enforcement officials in Minsk and other cities after the vote.

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Belarusian Steel Works (BMZ) in the southeastern region of Gomel partially suspended operations Monday, the tut.by news outlet reported.

The Nexta Telegram channel published photographs of workers in BMZ uniforms standing around at one of the plant's units and reported that the workers called on supporters from other factories to join them in striking.

Last month, Nexta shared a photograph of a written warning by BMZ workers that they would strike from Aug. 10–12 "in the event of unfair elections."

"We want to LIVE and not exist!!!" they wrote in the notice circulated on July 24.

The Sputnik Belarus news website reported, citing unnamed sources, that at least two BMZ units have suspended work.

The plant employs around 11,000 people and is one of the five largest companies in Belarus in terms of output.

The workers went back to work a few hours after the partial suspension, opting to send a letter to Minsk urging to hold fair elections, Russia's Dozhd television channel reported. Their employer was reported to have vowed not to punish or fire them.

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