Masked Men Raid Uber and Yandex's Belarus Offices Amid Election Protests

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Uber merged operations with Yandex.Taxi in Russia and other post-Soviet countries including Belarus in 2017. **Sergei Konkov / TASS**

Armed and masked men raided the Belarus offices of Uber and Russian tech giant Yandex on Thursday as authorities continued to crack down on protesters disputing the country's presidential election results.

The black-clad men blocked entrances to Uber and Yandex's office in Minsk with some employees still stuck inside, early reports said and Yandex confirmed.

Related article: [Belarus Detains Hundreds More in Post-Election Crackdown](#)

"Yandex and Uber share one office in Minsk, so the searches are carried out in both companies," a Yandex spokesperson [told](#) BBC's Russian-language service.

The Russian tech company previously told Forbes Russia that most of its staff has been

working from home since the early summer due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Yandex's press service later [told](#) Interfax that the armed men, who identified themselves as members of Belarus' security forces, had left without detaining anyone or confiscating any equipment or documents. The men didn't give a reason for their search, Yandex said.

Belarusian law enforcement officials have not yet confirmed or denied whether their officers were involved in the raid.

Rolling internet blackouts have been reported in Belarus this week, with access to search engines and social media networks curtailed amid the crackdown.

Yandex apps including its taxi and map services appeared to be working "considering how the internet is working in the country as a whole," an unnamed source close to Yandex [told](#) TASS.

President Alexander Lukashenko has accused foreign powers of stoking the unrest that has resulted in around 7,000 detentions and hundreds of injuries. Authorities also reported at least two deaths.

Election officials declared Lukashenko, 65, the winner of his sixth presidential term Sunday with roughly a 70% margin over his main challenger. Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, a 37-year-old stay-at-home mother who galvanized the opposition, left Belarus for neighboring Lithuania after challenging the election results this week. Her allies claimed that the authorities forced Tikhanovskaya out of the country in an attempt to quell the protests.

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