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Workers at Major Belarus Plants Strike in Growing Protest Against Police Violence

August 13, 2020



Crowds of workers were filmed gathering at the Belarusian Automobile Plant (BelAZ) in the town of Zhodino near Minsk, as well as the state-run Minsk Automobile Plant (MAZ) and Minsk Tractor Works (MTZ). **yor2010 / VKontakte**

Workers at two major automotive plants and several other companies in Belarus went on strike in protest against police violence following the country's disputed election, local media reported Thursday.

Thousands of Belarusians have taken to the streets in the five days since election officials declared strongman Alexander Lukashenko winner in Sunday's polls. Authorities have detained around 7,000 protesters, using seemingly unprovoked violence in many of the eyewitness videos of detentions shared online.

Embed:

> Belarusians are not to be underestimated. Street protests smaller last night, faced with brutal response from sec forces. So here come the strikes.
>
> This is giant, state-owned BELaz & its workers are shouting 'Go!' - to Lukashenko.
>
> They know they can lose their jobs - at least. https://t.co/WPvnKA5cCv
>
> — Sarah Rainsford (@sarahrainsford) August 13, 2020

Crowds of workers were filmed gathering at the state-owned Belarusian Automobile Plant (BelAZ) in the town of Zhodino near Minsk, as well as the state-run Minsk Automobile Plant (MAZ) and Minsk Tractor Works (MTZ).

According to the independent news website tut.by, BelAZ employees called for a repeat of the disputed election and for the expulsion of riot police from Zhodino.

The workers were also angry that law enforcement officials have used BelAZ haulage vehicles to detain protesters, tut.by reported. Zhodino's mayor promised the workers that BelAZ vehicles and riot police would no longer patrol the town's streets.

Embed:

> another state enterprise in Hrodna: "Who voted for #Tsikhanouskaya?" Everybody raises hands!!! pic.twitter.com/U9eQ1zrF23
>
> — Olga Dryndova (@OlgaDryndova) August 13, 2020

MTZ's workers demanded the release of political prisoners.

Viral videos filmed by workers meeting their managers showed crowds of them raising hands and cheering when polled about who voted for Lukashenko's main challenger.

The challenger, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, 37, claimed victory and urged Lukashenko, 65, to cede power before fleeing the country this week.

tut.by listed at least 10 other companies where workers gathered to condemn police violence or discuss further steps amid the unrest.

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