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Lukashenko Awards 'Impeccable Service' Medals to Security Forces Following Protest Crackdown

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Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko has handed out medals to more than 300 members of the security forces for "impeccable service" days after a violent crackdown on post-election protesters.

Up to 7,000 people have been detained, hundreds injured and two have died in the days of protests against the Aug. 9 election results which showed an overwhelming victory for Lukashenko. Belarusian investigators said they received more than 600 complaints of injuries during arrest and 100 reports of injury inside detention cells.

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Lukashenko awarded riot officers, police van drivers, prison guards and others for "exemplary performance of official duties," according to the order published early Tuesday.

The order signed by Lukashenko is dated Aug. 13, the last day of police violence and detentions against anti-Lukashenko protesters.

Detainees have since been slowly released following public pressure from a growing wave of demonstrations and high-profile condemnations. Many of them have given disturbing accounts of beatings, humiliation and torture in detention.

The European Union last week announced that it will draw up new sanctions "against those responsible for the violence, arrests and fraud in connection with the election" in Belarus.

Following the cracksdown, Belarus Interior Minister Yury Karayev apologized on state television for the arrest of innocent people.

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Belarusian investigators said they are also looking into 124 reports of violence against law enforcement officials during protests.

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