

## Belarus Briefing | Nov. 17

November 13, 2020



AP / TASS

Belarus has seen weekly mass protests against the disputed presidential re-election of Alexander Lukashenko for nearly three months.

Here's more of the latest news from Russia's ex-Soviet neighbor:

### Nov. 17: What you need to know today

- The Belarusian Association of Journalists has won the Media Freedom Award, a prize awarded by the governments of Britain and Canada
- At least 1,000 people were detained across Belarus on November 15, according to local human rights watchdog Viasna, amid mass demonstrations against longstanding leader Alexander Lukashenko
- Police brutality against demonstrators in Belarus, unprovoked by protesters, is impermissible, but the very instances of provocations must not be ruled out, Russian presidential spokesman, Dmitry Peskov told the media on Tuesday.

### **Nov. 13**

- Roman Bondarenko, 31, died on Thursday after being beaten to death by unknown security agents. Witnesses say Bondarenko was detained in Minsk after scuffling with people in plain clothes who came to a playground to remove red-and-white ribbons.
- Thousands of people carrying candles and flowers gathered in Minsk on Thursday to mourn the death of Bondarenko.
- The EU has added Lukashenko and his son Viktor to its sanctions blacklist of Belarus officials, bringing the total to 59.

### **Nov. 9**

- Hundreds of people were detained in Minsk as protests continued for the 14th Sunday in a row.
- Opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, who fled to Lithuania under pressure from officials after the nationwide ballot, has seemed out the help of U.S. President-elect Joe Biden, to heap pressure on Lukashenko. "Joe Biden has spoken out more than once and taken a firm position of support for the Belarusian people," she said.

### **Nov. 6**

- A report from the OSCE election-monitoring organization published on Thursday condemned "massive" rights abuses and torture in Belarus and called for a re-run of the country's August presidential polls in which President Alexander Lukashenko claimed victory.

### **Nov. 4**

- Belarus on Tuesday launched its controversial Russia-built nuclear power station despite safety concerns from neighboring Baltic states three decades after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.
- The OSCE says there is "overwhelming evidence" that Belarus's August presidential election results were falsified and that "systematic" human rights violations have been committed by the country's security forces.
- More than 1,000 demonstrators, including many pensioners, took part in a march in Minsk on Nov. 2 to demand the resignation of Lukashenko, a day after hundreds of people were detained by police during a similar protest.

### **Oct. 30**

- Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko held a meeting with his new security chiefs on Friday following a reshuffle as he seeks to tighten his grip on power after months of unprecedented protests.
- Belarus has partly closed its land borders with all neighbors except Russia for most travelers, citing the coronavirus, while critics say it was a political move against the opposition.

### **Oct. 29**

- Lukashenko dismissed controversial Belarusian interior minister Yury Karayeu, who oversaw a brutal crackdown on protesters in the days after the Aug. 9 presidential election, on Thursday. State media reported that Karayeu was replaced by Ivan Kubrakou, who previously headed the Minsk city police department.
- Prominent American political strategist and former Bernie Sanders campaign adviser Vitali Shkliarov on Wednesday [returned](#) to the United States from Belarus where he was detained in late July on charges of mobilizing protesters. Shkliarov was among several prominent figures seized in Belarus amid a crackdown on Lukashenko's opponents.
- Belarus opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya has called Monday's general strike aimed at putting pressure on President Alexander Lukashenko a "collective success" and vowed to continue calling for his resignation.
- Lukashenko has called on universities to expel students who joined the anti-government rallies across Belarus.

*With reporting from AFP, TASS and RFE.*

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