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U.S. Capitol Rioter Seeks Asylum in Belarus – State TV

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Belarusian state television covered Evan Neumann's story in a segment titled “Goodbye, America!”
Screenshot / Belarus 1

A man on the FBI’s Most Wanted List for allegedly attacking police during the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol riot is now seeking asylum in Belarus, the ex-Soviet country’s state-run television reported Sunday.

Evan Neumann, 48, is wanted in the United States on charges of violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds, as well as for assaulting, resisting and obstructing law enforcement during civil disorder. Neumann denies the charges as “unfounded.”

Neumann sold his California home in spring and was thought to have moved to Ukraine to evade arrest, ABC News reported this summer.

“Judging by his story, [Neumann] is the same type of simple American whose shops were burned by Black Lives Matter activists,” a Belarus 1 TV channel presenter said, echoing a common talking point on Russian state television.

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Neumann "sought justice and asked uncomfortable questions" following the 2020 U.S. elections disputed by ex-President Donald Trump, the presenter added, "but lost almost everything and is being persecuted by the U.S. government."

Belarusian border authorities detained Neumann on the border with Ukraine on Aug. 15, Belarus 1 reported.

"This situation has not only never happened, but was difficult to imagine," said the channel's reporter in a segment titled "Goodbye, America!"

In a sit-down interview, Neumann recalled crossing swampy forests and meeting wild hogs and snakes in his journey from Ukraine to Belarus. Belarus 1 reported that Neumann traveled from the U.S. to Italy in March, then took a train to Switzerland and drove to Germany and Poland before settling in western Ukraine, where he had rented an apartment for four months.

Neumann said he noticed Ukrainian security services "following" him two weeks into his stay, which prompted him to cross into neighboring Belarus and seek asylum.

Belarusian migration authorities declined to comment, citing confidentiality of personal data, the Russian state-run RIA Novosti reported Monday.

At least three U.S. citizens have applied for asylum in Belarus so far in 2021, the outlet added.

Belarus meanwhile has been accused of orchestrating a wave of migrants and refugees, mainly from the Middle East, toward European Union members' borders in retaliation to EU sanctions. Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko has denied the charges.

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