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Belarus Jails Son of Ex-Presidential Candidate

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Eduard Babariko. **Vesna Human Rights Centre / Telegram**

The son of a jailed Belarusian banker and philanthropist was sentenced to eight years in prison on charges related to the disputed 2020 elections in Belarus that sparked mass protests and a brutal crackdown on critics of President Alexander Lukashenko.

Eduard Babariko, 33, was arrested along with his father Viktor Babariko in the run-up to the 2020 Belarusian presidential elections that Lukashenko claimed to have won despite widespread reports of fraud.

The elder Babariko was the front-runner to defeat Lukashenko before having his candidacy rejected.

In 2021, he was sentenced to 14 years in a maximum-security prison on bribery and tax evasion charges that supporters dismissed as politically motivated.

Related article: Belarus Sentences Ex-Presidential Candidate to 17 Years in Absentia

The Minsk District Court on Wednesday found the younger Babariko guilty of tax evasion, money laundering, incitement of hatred and organizing mass riots, according to Belarus' independent rights group Viasna.

He was sentenced to eight years in a maximum-security prison.

Prosecutors had requested the court to sentence him to 10 years in prison.

The state-run daily Minskaya Pravda published video of the younger Babariko handcuffed inside a courtroom during his hearing.

He is the latest Belarusian opposition figure who has been jailed or forced into exile amid Lukashenko's crackdown on political dissent.

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