Nobel Laureates Urge Trump, EU to Secure Release of Belarusian Political Prisoners

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Belarusian opposition activists Maxim Znak and Maria Kolesnikova. **Ramil Nasibulin / BELTA / TASS**

Dozens of Nobel laureates on Monday urged U.S. President Donald Trump and EU leaders to help secure the release of more than 1,400 political prisoners held in Belarus.

The appeal came days after the United States carried out a "special operation" to secure the release of Belarusian journalist Andrei Kuznechyk, activist Yelena Movshuk and an unidentified U.S. citizen.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Smith later told Western diplomats that Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko was willing to release other political prisoners in exchange for sanctions relief, The New York Times reported Saturday, citing anonymous sources who attended the discussions.

Smith reportedly said Lukashenko had assured Washington he was ready to "scale back

repression," while U.S. engagement with Belarus was seen as a way to prevent Minsk from becoming entirely dependent on its close ally Moscow.

Related article: [American Among 3 Detainees Freed by Belarus, White House Says](#)

In Monday's appeal, the Nobel laureates said some Belarusian political prisoners had been held in inhumane conditions, spent years in solitary confinement or even died behind bars.

"We urge U.S. President Donald Trump and the leaders of the European Union to take urgent and comprehensive measures to secure the release of all political prisoners in Belarus," they said.

"We call on the Belarusian authorities to immediately cease the repression and release all political prisoners. No one should lose their freedom for expressing their opinion," the group added.

The appeal was signed by 31 Nobel laureates across various fields, including peace, literature, physics, chemistry, medicine and economics. It was published on the website of exiled Belarusian journalist Dmitry Bolunets.

The laureates [made](#) a similar appeal last July, shortly before Lukashenko released several political prisoners.

Belarus was rocked by months of mass anti-government protests after Lukashenko claimed victory in a disputed August 2020 election, securing a sixth term in office.

A group of independent experts convened by the UN Human Rights Council [said](#) Friday that serious human rights violations remain widespread in Belarus.