

BelarusBrief

News from the Belarusian Diaspora in the USA, AUGUST 2021 aba-together.org

August 2021 marks a year since the start of the mass protests against the falsified presidential elections and the brutal regime of Aliaksandr Lukashenka.

BELARUS

Political prisoners: 667

For weeks, a large group of Afghan refugees has been stuck at the Belarusian-Polish border **without adequate access to clean water, food, shelter, or restrooms** (via [The Guardian](#), [Washington Post](#), and [New York Times](#)). The Belarusian regime facilitates the transit of refugees, mainly from Iraq, to the EU border to retaliate against Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland.

The crackdown in Belarus continued in August with **raids, searches, interrogations, at least 395 arrests** – often targeting former protest participants – and **liquidation of 200 civil organizations** (via [Viasna](#)).

The authorities banned as “extremist” the most popular independent news site, tut.by, and its affiliated zerkalo.io (via [Committee to Protect Journalists](#)).

Vitaly Shishov, the head of the Belarusian House in Ukraine (BHU), **was found hanged** in a park in Kyiv (via [BBC](#) and [BBC](#), and [New York Times](#)). The BHU provided assistance to Belarusians in exile.

After criticizing her coaches at the Olympic Games in Tokyo, sprinter Kristina Timanovskaya faced a forcible return to Belarus and had to ask for asylum in the Polish Embassy ([NPR](#), [New York Times](#), [SBS](#)).

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The International Monetary Fund will give Belarus \$910 million to fight the coronavirus pandemic. The much-criticized move will undermine the effects of the international sanctions and provide a massive boost to the regime. According to the IMF, the allocation is made because “the international community continues to deal with the current administration” (via [Bloomberg](#), [Reuters](#), [Washington Post](#), and [Atlantic Council](#)).

Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. Bob Menendez, **called for the IMF to de-recognize the Lukashenka government** and for the US government to lead this effort (via [US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations](#)).

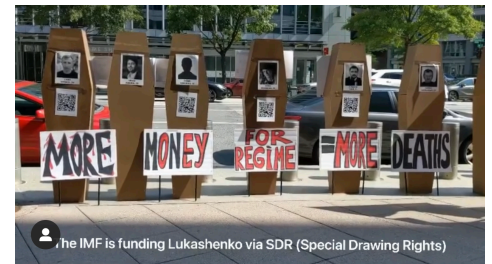
The US Department of the Treasury issued more sanctions against the Belarusian regime (via [The White House](#)).

In her op-ed, pro-democracy leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya argued that Lukashenka's regime became a security threat for Europe (via [New York Times](#)).

See also a new [report on torture in Belarus](#) (in Russian only).

BELARUSIAN DIASPORA

American Belarusians joined in a flashmob held by [Masha Zabara in front of the International Monetary Fund](#) building in Washington, D.C., to protest its allocation to the illegitimate government of Belarus (via [Belsat](#)).



Team Belarus, made of 12 athletes, participated in a 200-mile relay race "Hood to Coast!" to collect funds for the Belarusian Sport Solidarity Foundation. The foundation supports dissident Belarusian sportspeople ([Reuters](#)), including sprinter Kristina Timanovskaya.



Write to political prisoners (See [Viasna](#), [dissentby](#)) and support [#FREEVIASNA on September 17](#).

For weekly news on Belarus, visit BelarusFF.org. You can [add your email](#) to receive weekly news summaries.

BelarusBrief AUGUST 2021

In August, Belarusian-American communities joined Belarusians worldwide to commemorate one year since the start of the peaceful protests and remember political prisoners and those who lost their lives in their fight for freedom (see [BelarusTogether.com](https://belarus.together.com)).



In **Chicago**, the Belarusian community celebrated the Festival of Cultures in Mount Prospect and marked August 8 as a Day of Path to Freedom for Belarus.



Belarusians of **Boston** gathered at the statue of Tadeusz Kościuszko to mark a year of the Belarusian fight for freedom, democracy, and human rights.



Austin, next to the Texas State Capitol



"Chain of Solidarity for Belarus" at the **Philadelphia** Museum of Art



The Belarusian diaspora in **St. Petersburg, FL**, organized a bike race at St. Pete Pier.



Belarusians from **North Carolina** held a picnic and a rally "Belarus Will Be Free" next to the NC State Capital.