



Newsletter #30 (June 28-July 12)

Quote of the day

"We should also talk about democracy and the importance of democratic development, whether it is in Russia itself, where we hope that Russia would enhance its commitment to democratic development, but also in places like Belarus".

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in an interview on CNN on June 28, 2006

In Focus

On July 16, the customary **Day of Solidarity** will be observed in Belarus and abroad. Organizers have called upon Belarusian citizens to come to the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Minsk and bring candles and portraits of disappeared Belarusians and political prisoners. In an address on <http://www.solidarity16.org/>, the initiators of the protest reminded everyone that the G8 summit is to take place in St. Petersburg, Russia, on July 15-17. "Leaders of the most developed countries of the world are to discuss crucial issues there. Russia, presiding at the summit, is the only country in the G8 to have recognized the results of the presidential elections in Belarus," the address reads.

On July 3, a **military parade** celebrating Independence Day was held in Minsk. (This day was designated as Independence Day by Alyaksandr Lukashenka. On July 3, 1944 Minsk was liberated from German troops. The opposition celebrates Independence Day on July 27, the day when the Declaration of Independence of Belarus was signed). 2,500 troops took part in the parade. Addressing the participants of the parade, Alyaksandr Lukashenka said that "the armed forces and other military formations of Belarus have everything they need for the successful repulsion of aggression against our state".
(<http://www.kommersant.ua/doc-y.html?docId=687502&issueId=35679>)

On June 25, on Belarusian TV, Viktor Sheiman, Security Council Secretary of Belarus, who has been banned from entry to the US and the EU for his alleged implication in the disappearance of opposition leaders, called the policy of the EU and the USA "die-hard and ugly". He also stated that "adequate, symmetric **measures would be introduced against George Bush and Condoleezza Rice**". "We would freeze their accounts and take their shares," Sheiman said.
(<http://www.afn.minsk.by/news/news.asp?pg=2&d=26&m=6&y=2006&x=6&y=5&newsid=75792#data>)

Civil Society in Action

On July 7 in Belarus, **rallies in memory of disappeared journalist** Dzmitry Zavadski were held. More than a hundred people gathered on October Square in Minsk with portraits of the missing journalist and of political prisoners and disappeared opposition leaders. Riot policemen were sent against the protesters and the rally was broken up. Memorial rallies were also held in other Belarusian cities.

[\(<http://www.charter97.org/bel/news/2006/07/07/minsk>\)](http://www.charter97.org/bel/news/2006/07/07/minsk)

As of the end of July, about 370 students that have been expelled from Belarusian universities or are threatened with expulsion have **appealed against their predicament**.

[\(<http://news.tut.by/politics/70816.html>\)](http://news.tut.by/politics/70816.html)

On June 28 the Belarusian Helsinki Committee (BHC) published a **report "Elections of the President of Belarus: results of independent observation"**. The report consists of more than 100 pages and consists of chapters with an analysis of electoral law and law-enforcement, characteristics of the electoral process in 2006, and the situation in the country before, during and after announcing the elections results.

[\(<http://www.afn.minsk.by/news/news.asp?d=29&m=6&y=2006&newsid=75933#data>\)](http://www.afn.minsk.by/news/news.asp?d=29&m=6&y=2006&newsid=75933#data)

On June 30, leaders of Belarusian democratic parties signed a **declaration outlining an action plan** for the release of former presidential candidate and now political prisoner Alyaksandr Kazulin.

[\(<http://www.svaboda.org/articlesfeatures/politics/2006/6/EE7F1F6A-344A-4A81-8A72-FE6ED287196A.html>\)](http://www.svaboda.org/articlesfeatures/politics/2006/6/EE7F1F6A-344A-4A81-8A72-FE6ED287196A.html)

On July 10, family members of imprisoned Belarusian politicians sent an open letter to the heads of state of the G8 with a request for them to study the Belarusian issue and assist in the release of their relatives.

[\(\[http://www.interfax.by/?id=33&id_sp=24892&lang=ru\]\(http://www.interfax.by/?id=33&id_sp=24892&lang=ru\)\)](http://www.interfax.by/?id=33&id_sp=24892&lang=ru)

In July, an independent label called VoliaMusic prepared the release of a CD -- Pesni Svabody-2 (Songs of Freedom-2). Some songs were inspired by the recent presidential elections and events on March 19-25 in Minsk.

[\(<http://www.svaboda.org/articlesfeatures/culture/2006/7/E1350161-7430-4131-8882-FB0206E71DD1.html>\)](http://www.svaboda.org/articlesfeatures/culture/2006/7/E1350161-7430-4131-8882-FB0206E71DD1.html)

...despite the repressions

On June 26 youth activist Alyaksei Lyaukovich was convicted by the court of the Tsentralny district in Minsk and sentenced to **10 days in jail**. The activist took part in the protest rally against Russian military bases in Belarus on June 23 in Minsk. Seven activists were detained during the rally.

[\(<http://www.afn.minsk.by/news/news.asp?d=26&m=6&y=2006&x=6&y=5&newsid=75825#data>\)](http://www.afn.minsk.by/news/news.asp?d=26&m=6&y=2006&x=6&y=5&newsid=75825#data)

On June 29 youth leader Artur Finkevich was sent to serve a sentence in the Mahilyou special settlement. Finkevich was sentenced to **two years of restriction of freedom** for writing graffiti saying "Fed up with him!" and "We want a new one!" during the presidential campaign.

[\(<http://www.svaboda.org/articlesfeatures/politics/2006/6/E9B80592-7126-4BFE-A5B2-ECE3E7CD49FF.html>\)](http://www.svaboda.org/articlesfeatures/politics/2006/6/E9B80592-7126-4BFE-A5B2-ECE3E7CD49FF.html)

On June 30, the court of Zhlobin (Homel region) found youth activist Eduard Zelyankou guilty of participation in the activities of an unregistered organization, "Young Front". The activist was **fined 930,000 BYR**.

[\(<http://www.br.minsk.by/index.php?article=27902>\)](http://www.br.minsk.by/index.php?article=27902)

On July 6 Alyaksandr Kazulin's **trial** began.
(<http://www.svaboda.org/articlesfeatures/politics/2006/6/5F7E8C97-B2E2-450E-921A-F0FDEF562E0E.html>)

On July 6, an entrepreneur from Vaukavysk, Mikalay Autukhovich, was sentenced to **3 years and 6 months in a medium security colony** and to confiscation of property. He was also banned from conducting business activities for 5 years.. The director of the firm Nika-Trans Yury Lyavonau, was sentenced to 3 years and 5 months imprisonment in a medium security colony without confiscation of property.

(<http://www.charter97.org/bel/news/2006/07/07/avtuhovich>)

Belarus and the International Community

On July 23-26, a visit by **Venezuelan President** Hugo Chavez is expected.
(<http://www.svaboda.org/features/archiveallf.aspx?y=2006&m=6&d=26>)

A second session of a **joint commission on trade** and economic cooperation between the government of Belarus and the government of the People's Republic of China was held on June 26-30.

(<http://www.afn.minsk.by/news/news.asp?pg=2&d=27&m=6&y=2006&newsid=75835#data>)

On June 29, Alyaksandr Milinkevich and the leader of the Belarusian Popular Front party Vintsuk Vyachorka met with the **head of the Swedish government** Göran Persson in Stockholm.

(<http://www.svaboda.org/articlesfeatures/politics/2006/6/43E90F03-77A3-4DDE-869D-AB463CEFA13B.html>)

On June 29 the **situation in Belarus** was discussed by foreign ministers of G-8 countries at a meeting in Moscow.

(<http://www.afn.minsk.by/news/news.asp?d=29&m=6&y=2006&newsid=75945#data>)

On June 30, near the Presidential Secretariat **in Kyiv a small demonstration** was held. It was organized by youth organizations that demand Ukrainian authorities join in with the sanctions of the European Union against Lukashenka and his entourage.

(<http://www.svaboda.org/articlesfeatures/politics/2006/6/CADE3057-2269-4A4E-BA94-5FCBF1D04A62.html>)

On June 30, during his visit to Sweden, Alyaksandr Milinkevich met with the **president of Georgia** Mikhail Saakashvili.

(<http://www.afn.minsk.by/news/news.asp?pg=2&d=4&m=7&y=2006&newsid=76027#data>)

On June 30, Switzerland instituted European Union **sanctions** against Belarusian top officials.

(<http://lenta.ru/news/2006/06/30/swiss/>)

On July 7, the **European Parliament adopted a resolution** calling Belarus the second country after China with the harshest censorship on the Internet.

(<http://www.charter97.org/bel/news/2006/07/10/internet>)

On July 8, Belarusian border guards **denied entry** to Belarus to four Polish Senators.

(<http://www.svaboda.org/articlesfeatures/politics/2006/7/2B661852-0B26-42DE-8D99-5B99FC9F1849.html>)

Date



On July 7, 2000 a journalist Dzmitry Zavadski went missing in Belarus. A number of high-ranking Belarusian officials, in particular, Interior Minister Uladzimir Navumau, Security Council Secretary Viktor Sheiman, a former head of the Interior Ministry Yury Sivakou and SOBR commander Dzmitry Paulichenka have been banned entry to the EU countries and the USA, as they are suspected of implication in the journalist's

disappearance.

Must read

«The Democracy Backlash», By Fred Hiatt, «The Washington Post», July 10, 2006

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/09/AR2006070900536.html>

Editorial Board of Free Belarus Newsletter all@freebelarus.info