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By Aamer Madhani

Biden imposes sanctions against Belarus' Lukashenko regime

Д. Байден вводить нові санкції проти режиму Лукашенко в Білорусі

Президент США Джо Байден заявив, що Сполучені Штати вводять нові санкції проти Білорусі, відзначаючи річницю обрання Олександра Лукашенка президентом на виборах, які, як заявили США та міжнародна спільнота, пов'язані з порушеннями. Оголошуючи санкції, Білий дім також відзначив вимушену посадку європейського авіалайнера, який подорожував повітряним простором Білорусі, щоб заарештувати на борту відомого опозиційного журналіста. Серед тих, кого Міністерство фінансів наводить у нових санкційних списках, - ВАТ "Білоруськалій", яке є одним з найбільших державних підприємств Білорусі та джерелом багатства для режиму; Білоруський національний олімпійський комітет; і 15 приватних компаній, включаючи відомий білоруський банк "Абсолютбанк", які мають зв'язки з режимом О. Лукашенка.

<https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-europe-belarus-6adf187862771cb7869cd3bb777fd92a>



President Joe Biden leaves St. Joseph on the Brandywine Catholic Church in Wilmington, Del., after attending a Mass, Saturday, Aug. 7, 2021. Biden is spending the weekend at his home in Delaware. (AP Photo/Manuel BalceCeneta)

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — President Joe Biden on Monday said the United States is levying new sanctions against Belarus, marking the one-year anniversary of Alexander Lukashenko's selection as president in an election that the U.S. and international community have said was fraught with irregularities.

In announcing the sanctions, the White House also noted the forced landing of a European airliner traveling through Belarus' airspace in order to arrest a prominent opposition journalist aboard.

Among those the Treasury Department cites in the new sanctions are Belaruskali OAO, which is one of Belarus's largest state-owned enterprises and a source of wealth for the regime; the Belarusian National Olympic Committee; and 15 private companies, including the prominent Belarusian bank Absolutbank, that have ties to the Lukashenko regime.

The Belarus Olympic committee has been accused of facilitating money laundering, sanctions evasion and the circumvention of visa bans. The International Olympic Committee has also reprimanded it for its failure to protect Belarusian athletes from political discrimination and repression.

“It is the responsibility of all those who care about human rights, free and fair elections and freedom of expression to stand against this oppression,” Biden said in a statement. “The United States will continue to stand up for human rights and free expression, while holding the Lukashenka regime accountable, in concert with our allies and partners.”

The White House sanctions came as Britain announced new measures meant to target trade with Belarusian state-owned companies, government finance and aviation.

The British sanctions also restrict trade in potash, oil products, interception and monitoring technology and goods used in cigarette manufacturing. British investors are barred from buying securities issued by the Belarusian state or providing insurance and reinsurance to Belarusian state bodies.

Asked about the sanctions during his annual press conference on Monday, Lukashenko replied, “you in Britain can choke on these sanctions.”

Lukashenko was awarded a sixth term leading the Eastern European nation last year in a vote that the opposition and many in the West view as fraudulent.

Widespread belief that the vote was stolen triggered mass protests in Belarus that led to increased repressions by Lukashenko’s regime on protesters, dissidents and independent media. More than 35,000 people were arrested and thousands were beaten and jailed.

Lukashenko has earned the nickname of “Europe’s last dictator” in the West for his relentless repression of dissent since taking the helm in Belarus in 1994.

Last week, [Krystsina Tsimanouskaya](#), an Olympic sprinter who feared reprisals at home for criticizing her coaches, fled from the Tokyo Olympics to Poland.

The Biden administration has called on the Lukashenko regime to allow an independent international investigation into the Ryanair flight diversion; release all political prisoners; and begin talks with democratic opposition and civil society figures that results in a free and fair presidential election under observation by Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.