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Bomb blast during the Independence Day concert on the night of July 4 got the greatest public attention. More than 50 people were injured, some of them are still in serious condition.

The President attended the concert. It is officially reported that Mr. Lukashenka was in the area of explosion but wasn't wounded in the blast.

Specialists note that the bomb was intended to wound and not to kill. Lukashenka doesn't think that he was the target of the attack. Analysts think that whoever did this was aiming to ruin the government's reputation which was relying the myth about Belarus as an island of stability in the ocean of chaos.

At Monday's government conference regarding the bomb explosion, the President expressed sharp criticism against security agencies administration. He announced that their actions were totally unprofessional. On the following day July 8 Lukashenka dismissed Head of the Security



Council Viktor Sheyman and Head of the Presidential Administration Henadz Nyavyhlas.

Some politicians and analysts think that the tragic accident is just an excuse for cadres turnover.

Specialists say that it indicates administrative reformatting, and in particular reposing power from the "old guard" to the so called youth group in the President's

environment. But independent analysts doubt that this will lead to any serious changes in the government policies.

"The blast which took place on the night of July 3 is only a good excuse for staff turnover in Lukashenka's environment. The real reason of Sheyman's dismissal is fight for influence between intergovernmental groups. The President's actions show that the group headed by Lukashenka's elder son Viktor gains more influence.

Earlier this group managed to help its members get important posts in security agencies administration, such as head of

Committee for State Security (KGB) and head of border-security troops." --- said opposition politician Mikhola Statkievich during his interview for



the German international broadcaster “Deutsche Welle” (DW).

Last year Viktor Lukashenka was appointed President's aid for national security affairs. Analysts note that he actually becomes his father's right hand man.

There may be one more cause for the beforementioned high-profile stuff turnover. The leader of the United Civil Party Anatol Liabedzka thinks that “this may be a message for the USA about the cadres replacements and moving out some odious names”.

Analysts emphasize the fact that Viktor Sheyman is on the “black list” of Belarusian officials who cannot go abroad to the USA and EU. And in the famous report “Disappeared people in Belarus” by deputy of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) Christos Pourgourides the name of Sheyman and some other top-level officials is mentioned in connection with the case of the so called “high-profile disappearances” of Lukashenka's political opponents.

Meanwhile security agencies began interrogations and house searches of the opposition activists as part of the investigation of the criminal case on the July 4 bomb explosion. 4 people were arrested. KGB is checking whether they are connected to any “unregistered destructive organisations”. Independent observers think

that the government couldn't stand the temptation to use the accident as a good excuse for putting political opponents under greater pressure.

At the same time at the government conference on the future election campaign Aliaksandar Lukashenka announced that parliamentary elections are to be held on September 28. He added that they should be 100% open and democratic and absolutely transparent.

Lukashenka stressed that all parliamentary candidates should be given equal chances to be elected. In particular “equal access to the media should be provide for all candidates so that we are not later reproached for creating favorable conditions for some and unfavorable for others”. Lukashenka noted that “we shouldn't in any case fight any ephemeral opposition”.

“So-called oppositionists are waiting today for the authorities to start pressurizing them because they cannot be elected. But they need to explain to their sponsors why they have not been elected. The people will reject them anyway. But you create conditions equal for all,” said the President to government officials.

The day before the Belarusian foreign ministry has sent official invitations to international OSCE observers for monitoring this September's elections for the House of Representatives.

Analysts note that the invitations have been sent 2,5 months before the elections. That gives OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights plenty of time to make thorough observations.



“Belarusian government is not afraid that opposition will win the elections or even get fifty percent of the votes which could be followed by mass protests. I think the government calculated the chances and understood that opposition doesn't have any chances, especially after the Minsk bomb blast. That's why they are not afraid to invite international observers,” --- said political analyst Dzianis Melyantsou during interview for independent radio station “Radio Freedom”.

Melyancou thinks that “Belarusian government also wants to improve relations with the EU. That's why the government will try to give the appearance of fair, transparent and open elections.”

Other analysts note that Belarusian government tries to improve relations with the West with as little compromising as possible. For example, less popular opposition candidates could be given mandates in the Lower Chamber, which practically has no power at all. Tired with futile attempts to resolve “Belarusian question” Europe could turn a blind eye to the change in the subject of the discussion, in other words would agree to the minimum “mandate quota” for opposition instead of real democratisation.

POLITICS

Pressure on Members of Electoral Committees from Opposition

Pressure on representatives of electoral committees, nominated from the opposition, by the police started. The member of the United Civic Party Mikalai Ulasevich felt this pressure the first.

The police visited the activist allegedly on the case with the explosion in

July 3. They were interested in where Ulasevich was during that time.

Mikalai Ulasevich expressed an opinion to “Human Defenders for Free Elections” that this is all an attempt to threaten him and interfere with the work before Parliamentary elections.

OFFICIALLY

39 Victims of Explosion Stay in Hospitals

39 victims of explosion, which took place in July 3, still stay in Minsk hospitals.

Ministry of Health informs that the majority of the hospital patients remain in stable condition. The condition of three injured people is evaluated as grave, of two others – as moderately grave.

It should be reminded that after the explosion a total of 47 people got to hospitals.

OPPOSITION

What Has Opposition in Common with the Explosion?

As it came to notice, two activists of the opposition – Miraslau

Lazousky and Igar Korsak have been arrested in Minsk in connection with the investigation of the explosion circumstances.

Nina Shydlouskaya, wife of Miraslau Lazousky, emphasized that a computer and documents were confiscated. Besides, screws and rubber gloves were found and confiscated at home of Igar Korsak. According to Nina Shydlouskaya, every man has similar things, and it can't be a reason for accusing in the preparation of the explosion.

BelaPAN news agency informs that an activist of the opposition Anastasiya Azarka was interrogated by the same case.

Five Days in Detention for EU Flags

Youth activist of the campaign «European Belarus» Palina Kur'janovich will spend 5 days in detention because she carried EU flag in her backpack.

Palina was arrested on the 3rd of July in downtown Minsk by strangers. They said they were from militia and examined Palina's personal things. They found a couple of EU flags in Palina's backpack. The girl was escorted to the Centralny Department

of Internal Affairs and later — to the Akrestina prison.

Till the last moment nobody knew where Palina was, when the trial would take place, and what charges would be brought. The judge found Palina guilty of “using obscene language” and arrested for 5 days. Witnesses for Palina didn't even get a word. The judge Taciana Paulyuchuk took into consideration only militia-man's testimonies.

ECONOMY

Belarusian Banks Are Risky



According to S&P (Standard and Poor's agency) estimation Belarusian banks are put into the 9-th group out of 10.

“The reason for such an estimation is a high level of risks in Belarus and a slow development of bank system,” - says the S&P analyst Eugene Tarzimanov.

Though, some positive tendencies can be noticed in bank system development. Among them there is relatively high level of welfare and economic progress which helps to develop bank services.

The 9-th group contains also Nigeria, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Libya and Vietnam. The Ukraine is placed on the 10-th place; meanwhile Russia and Kazakhstan occupy the 8-th group.

More Belarusians Buy With Plastic Cards

The Ministry of Trade informs that Belarusians began to pay by credit card. During this year the percentage of credit card payments grew and is now 3%.

According to the project of internal trade development non-cash transfers should make 30% of commodity exchange by year 2010.

Belarus doesn't produce payment terminals, so the Ministry of Trade approached the Ministry of Industry with the proposal to establish production of such equipment. High cost

of such terminals is not the biggest problem. Belarusians are not ready for the changes. They are ware of the things which have long become the everyday reality of the Western Europe. To encourage credit card payment, many banks arrange promotional games, some supermarkets offer discounts for those shoppers who are using plastic cards.

SOCIETY

Admission Privileges for Youth from the Country

Admission exams and the processing of applications began in Belarusian Universities. Belarus has one of the highest students/citizens ratio in Europe (425 students per 10,000 citizens).

There are Universities even in the depth of the country. Country youth has admission privileges as compared to young people from cities. Those who have referrals become students at once and countrymen get additional points. According to politician Ludmila Graznova this is demonstration of old soviet practices. The government wants to fill the places with people who are easy to manipulate. This brings back the old model for

preparing the cadres typical for autocratic systems.

CULTURE

Yiddish-Belarusian Dictionary Published in Miensk

Miensk publishing agency «Medisont» published illustrated Yiddish-Belarusian dictionary. It was compiled by Yiddish linguist and restorer Aliaksandar Astravukh.

The 928-page dictionary has 25 entries and 50,000 words, the edition includes 1000 copies. The publication was sponsored by St. Petersburg businessman Andrei Garbenka.

“The purpose of this dictionary was to put together the best of Yiddish language, the treasures of the Jews which were scattered through different countries, languages and books by cruel fate,” --- is written in the foreword by Aliaksandar Astravukh.

It is the second and the largest Yiddish-Belarusian dictionary published in Belarus. The first was published by Samuil Plaunik (Zmitrok Byadulya) in 1932 and included 8,000 words.



There are various sites devoted to events in Belarus, which are, however, little known in Western Europe, and among people dealing with politics towards Belarus who do not understand the Russian or Belarusian languages.

The site belarus-live fills this gap. The site allows to order weekly reception of news in English, Polish, Belarusian, Russian.