

Video: Brussels Mulls New Sanctions on Belarus While Migrants Storm EU Borders

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More sanctions seem to be coming Belarus' way, if European Foreign Ministers agree to them.

The most significant limitation is prohibiting EU companies from leasing jets to the Belarusian airline Belavia. This means that Minsk's national airline would have no airplanes to fly passengers, it is a significant step.

The EU has accused the government of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko of facilitating migration into the bloc in retaliation for EU sanctions.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/19.10.2021_IMR_Belarus.mp4

According to the accusations, thousands of migrants have been lured to Belarus on tourist visas and encouraged to cross into Poland, Lithuania and to a lesser extent Latvia — all three of which are EU nations that border Belarus.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko denied all of this and instead blamed the West for what he says is a looming humanitarian catastrophe this winter after migrants were left stranded on the Belarusian-Polish border.

In Poland, thousands took to the streets in Warsaw, protesting against migrant pushbacks.

Demonstrators marched through the Polish capital holding signs with messages such as, “Stop torture at the border,” “Nobody is illegal,” and “How many bodies lie in the forest?”

At least seven people have died at the EU's eastern border since the uptick in migrant arrivals that began in summer, according to Polish, Lithuanian and Belarusian officials.

The United Nations refugee agency and the International Organization for Migration said they were “shocked and dismayed” by migrant deaths at the border, adding that groups of

people have become stranded for weeks, unable to access any form of assistance or asylum.

Meanwhile, officials in Minsk, Warsaw, Vilnius and Riga have continued exchanging accusations while the deaths slowly pile up.

In response to the most recent sanctions, France's ambassador was ordered out of Belarus.

France's foreign minister said that Ambassador Nicolas de Lacoste's departure was due to the "unilateral decision" of Belarusian authorities.

The Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that the departure was connected to de Lacoste's unwillingness to present his credentials to Lukashenko. Additionally, Minsk said it was recalling Belarus' ambassador to France, Igor Fisenko, for consultations over the developments.

The French foreign ministry explained that the ambassador did not present his credentials to the 67-year-old leader because it was "in line with the common European position of not recognising the legitimacy of the outcome of the August 2020 presidential election."

This diplomatic standoff between Belarus and the EU will continue, especially in view of the deepening integration between Minsk and Moscow, which Brussels also attempts to "prohibit".

It is unlikely that these attempts to stop the integration will prove fruitful and result in anything significant. The migrant crisis, however, is a "ticking time bomb" that needs to be dealt with sooner, rather than later, as people dying along the borders is a worrisome development.

This is all taking place against the concerning backdrop of Russia closing its permanent mission to NATO. The Alliance's representative office in Moscow was also shuttered. This means that all official communication mechanisms have been stopped, and the only way NATO can communicate with Moscow is through its Ambassador in Brussels.

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