



Alina Leonova @AlinaLeonovaSF

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I'm Belarusian. Seeing more and more hate against Belarusians as a result of Lukashenko's participation in Putin's atrocious war against Ukraine, I have a few things to say.

But first, disclaimers:

- I'm against the war (and so are 90% of Belarusians)
- I'm against using Belarusian territory / equipment / military etc. against Ukraine (and so are 90% of Belarusians)
- I've helped and will keep helping Ukrainian refugees in Poland where I am now

Let me remind you that Belarus is an authoritarian country. We haven't chosen this government. We've tried to overthrow it, and we failed. We paid with our lives, blood and freedom for the attempt.

It's interesting to see how in the eyes of many Europeans, we've suddenly turned from victims of the regime to accomplices of its crimes when the same instruments & structures of oppression that have been used against Belarusian people are being thrown against Ukraine.

It's interesting that some of you believe that even though we failed to overthrow the regime (to a large extent because of Putin's financial & other support), now we're suddenly capable of stopping not only the Belarusian government, but also armed Russian invaders on our land.

So let me tell you what Belarusians are doing to support Ukraine.

Those who live in Ukraine:

- have joined territorial defense forces
- stayed to keep working as doctors
- are volunteering to help those affected by the war in every possible way

Those abroad:

- are donating money & things to help refugees, the military & people in Ukraine
- are going to Ukraine to join its armed forces
- have bought & donated equipment (eg. ambulances) to Ukraine
- are volunteering and helping refugees
- invite refugees into their homes

Ppl in Belarus:

- are protesting against the war
- donating
- have sabotaged the railway to stop Russian military equipment from going to Ukraine (considered terrorism and is punishable by life in prison or death sentence)

- perform various underground acts of sabotage & resistance, including economic resistance and hacktivism

This is not a complete list. I don't know everything, but I know that Belarusians are doing what they can. You say it's not enough. So let me tell you what it's like for us.

We've lived under oppression for almost 30 years. Almost 30 years that Lukashenko has been strengthening his position and eliminating every possible threat to his rule, every public initiative & social structure.

Everyone who has any power at all has been carefully selected. There has been constant propaganda & surveillance. We haven't had a real election since 1994. Lukashenko's political opponents have been killed & imprisoned. Every protest ended in brutal crackdown.

2020 wasn't the first time we protested, but perhaps it was the first time you've noticed us. The whole society united. We've failed (so far, because it's not the end of our fight). During and after the protests, Belarusians have been killed, maimed, raped & tortured.

Over 50,000 have gone through brutal repressions. About 1000 people are currently political prisoners (add to them about 800 arrested during the latest protest against the war in Ukraine — we don't know what's happening to them).

For the last 1,5 years, the oppression has only grown worse. Every social organization has been destroyed. Not only political ones, but also those that help domestic violence victims, animals or feed the homeless. NOTHING is left.

EVERY alternative source of information has been declared 'extremist', and people have gone to prison for sharing the materials from those 'extremist' sources in PRIVATE messages. People were arrested for their HAIR COLOR.

All our independent journalists are either in prison or abroad. Arrests keep happening every day. Prison sentences go up to 20 years. Hundreds of thousands have fled the country. We're still grieving and processing the trauma. The morale is very low. The risks are extremely high.

Now go back and read again what Belarusians are doing to help Ukraine and think again if it's not enough. If you live in a democratic country, you have no right to judge us. You have no idea what it's like. You think you would be brave and protest openly?

You'd just be thrown into prison to rot and very likely tortured. If you died during torture, lost your pregnancy or became permanently disabled, no one would be held accountable. It's actually ENCOURAGED. It has happened before.

Today, Belarusians are starting to face discrimination in European countries where they've fled from the regime and where many of them are helping Ukrainian refugees and Ukrainian fight for freedom. Czechia has stopped opening visas to Belarusians.

Europeans have refused to rent apartments to Belarusians, have banned them from participating in amateur sports competitions, refused them their services. They are bullying Belarusians online and to their faces.

Immigrants already deal with grief and trauma in the aftermath of our failed protests. They worry about their families and friends who still live in Belarus (and some of whom are imprisoned). They worry about the Russian occupation of their land. They grieve for Ukraine.

But apparently, that's not enough, and now we also have to deal with hate and discrimination based on our nationality.

Without Putin, Lukashenko can't survive. Putin is the only one who supports him financially and keeps him in power. Lukashenko has sold Belarus to Putin to stay on his fucking throne. Putin knows Lukashenko has no other options, so he's using him and Belarus for this invasion.

Belarusians have nothing to do with it. We have fought and are still fighting even if you don't see it. So please, do everything to help Ukraine and stop this horror, but leave us the fuck alone. We have enough on our plate. We don't deserve this shit, and it fucking hurts.

Wow, I've never expected this thread to get so much attention 😳

If you want to help Ukraine, I think this is a pretty good list of reliable organizations you can donate to: text.npr.org/1082992947 💙💛

It's unbelievable how much support I got 💛 Thank you! I can't respond to everyone, but I'm grateful for your kindness 😊

And if you're a Russian bot, иди вслед за русским военным кораблём 🙄

Also, a lot of people have followed me, but I don't usually tweet about this stuff. You can mainly expect book nerdiness from me, so be warned 😊

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