

Foreign Policy Magazine Names Belarusian Iryna Vidanava Among the World's Top Dissidents



Foreign Policy has published a list of the World's Top Dissidents that includes a person from Belarus: Iryna Vidanava, founder and editor of the multimedia youth magazine 34. It is understood that 34 is the revived multimedia version version of *Studenckaja Dumka*, a Belarusian language youth magazine that has earlier been banned in Belarus. Mrs. Vidanava's will to revive and to continue the magazine's existence in the difficult Belarusian conditions is indeed worth the highest admiration. Repressions from the Belarusian officials force 34 to be proactive and to seek new modern forms for it.

As a result, 34 is a product of much higher quality than any of the archaic and propagandist state media and is indeed a unique phenomenon in Belarus. It is strange, however, that Foreign Policy has ignored such well-known Belarusian dissident politicians as the 2006 oppositional presidential candidates Aliaksandr Milinkievich or Aliaksandr Kazulin. Kazulin has held a 52 days long hunger strike after being unlawfully arrested and sent to prison after the elections*.

Zianon Pazniak, the exiled former leader of the Belarusian Popular Front, lives abroad since allegedly having faced murder threats in 1996. An other notable Belarusian dissident is Ales Bialiacki*, head of the Belarusian Human Rights Centre *Viasna*. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in 2006.

Iryna Vidanava: Some former Soviet republics have made modest

strides in liberalizing their political culture, but Belarus is not one of them. Minsk is infamous for its harassment and intimidation of local media and curtailing freedom of speech – both areas in which Vidanava has fought back forcefully. Vidanava is the founder and editor in chief of 34 Multimedia Magazine, a publication aimed at promoting creativity, dissent, and democratic values in Belarusian young adults.

It's tough going: After years of police harassment, in 2005 Minsk finally decided to simply shut down 34 Multimedia Magazine. Yet Vidanava perseveres. In 2007, she founded CDMAG, a multimedia youth magazine published on compact disc that won the 2007 Gerd Bucerius Prize for press freedom in Eastern Europe. Read the full [article](#) and visit the [website](#) of 34 Multimedia Magazine.

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