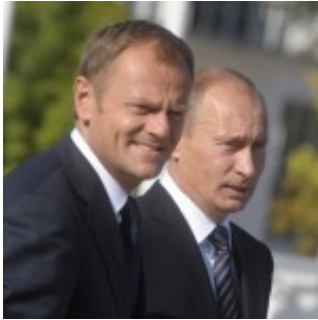


Katyn Killings Commemorated Without a Belarusian Delegation



Just as Belarus Digest had predicted, there is no news of a Belarusian delegation attending the ceremony in Katyn, commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Soviet killings of officers of the Polish army.

This even despite the fact that one of the central issues preceding the meeting of Russian and Polish prime ministers Vladimir Putin and Donald Tusk has been the so-called Belarusian List. The list contains names of officers of the Polish Army killed by the Soviets in extermination sites in Belarus (including, very likely, the infamous Kurapaty forest). Russian authorities claim they have not found it in archives. According to Radio Free Europe, Ukrainian and Russian lists have already been found and published.

Not to say about the hundreds of people from Belarus who had been killed in Katyn. In 1940 West Belarus was part of the Second Polish Republic. Many people from the region have served in the Polish army or have just been mobilized after the German invasion in 1939.

BBC Russian edition quotes Belarusian intellectual Liavon Barsceuski who draws parallels between Katyn and Kurapaty:

Here is a person from Minsk. Lieutenant Edmund Menke from Minsk, as the sign says. Overall, there are quite a few people from Belarus here: from Hrodna, from Biaroza (that's in Polesia), from the Wilno

voivodeship, most of which is now Belarus. there are also many unidentified victims, who also could be our compatriots. This memorial is also a memorial for us.

It's not Russia or Poland to blame for Belarusian authorities ignoring the memory of hundreds of Belarusians buried in Katyn. As already mentioned, Belarusian authorities do not care about organizing a decent memorial in Kurapaty near Minsk. What should one expect in relation to Belarusian graves outside the country?

Still, there is at least some good news indirectly related to Katyn. Today the Belarusian Academy of Arts has awarded Andrzej Wajda, author of the well-known film about the Katyn massacre, an honorary doctorate in recognition of his life's work. A symbolic coincidence, if not more.

Read reports by [Daily Mail](#), [BusinessWeek](#), [Der Standart](#) (in German).

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Political Repressions in Belarus Continue Despite Talks of Democratization



A story so outrageous and so boringly usual for Belarus: Ihar Slučak, a political activist, is being threatened by police because of his intentions to participate in local elections scheduled for April.

The [Belarusian State University](#) expells Taciana Šapučka, a member of the opposition organization [Malady Front](#), after she had visited a conference organized by the European Commission in Brussel (see a story [here](#)).

Human Rights Watch has issued its new report ([see p. 384](#)) naming current political prisoners in Belarus: Mikalaj Aŭtuchovič, Uladzimir Asipienka, business people; and [Arciom Dubski](#), another activist of Malady Front.

As it seems, an evolution of the Belarusian regime towards democracy, so much talked about in 2009, mostly still remains theory. Sadly, repressions against the opposition were and remain an instrument to run the country despite the government's closer ties with the EU.

Homel-based young activist Ihar Sluchak, who studies in Estonia, during his holidays in Belarus faces pressure of the authorities.

As informed by Radio Svaboda, Ihar Sluchak is set to participate in local elections in spring.

On January 18 in the evening the student of Tartu University Ihar Sluchak received a phone call from a lieutenant of the first city police department Illya Kruk. As said by Ihar Sluchak, the policeman was swaying him to come, but flatly refused to invite him by summons. A call from the police department was made after the statement by Sluchak about actions of policemen or internal troops during one of hockey games in Homel.

The young activist refused to talk without receiving a summons. In 5 minutes the head of the internal affairs department of Central district of Homel, major Shyshkou, and demanded Sluchak to arrive to the police department without a summons on January 19 at 10 a.m., and stated that Sluchak had made a mistake by sending his appeal. He also threatened to initiate a case for disobedience to demands of a policeman.

Read the full story at Spring96.org

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