

ON THE ANTI-BELARUSIAN POLICY IN LITHUANIA

Anti-Belarusian policy and anti-Belarusian propaganda carried out against the Belarusian people in Lithuania by certain forces that may relate to the government of this country and influence its policy is the matter of our concern and indignation.

Anti-Belarusian statements based on fiction are periodically published in the Lithuanian media, which leads to inciting hatred towards Belarusians. There have been cases when Belarusian cultural figures in Vilnius, who were forced to leave Belarus and for whom Lithuania has become a second homeland, begin to receive anonymous threats and insults.

In the summer of 2023, at the NATO summit in Vilnius, the President of Lithuania, G. Nauseda, treated Belarus disparagingly, calling it "another province of Russia." On February 6, 2024, the same wording was articulated by Lithuanian analyst M. Laurynovich (Laurynavichus) on the Belarusian Internet portal "Svaboda" (<https://www.svaboda.org/a/32807880.html>), Lithuania "is in a state of war", because "Russia started a war against Ukraine, the West and Lithuania". Meanwhile, "Belarus is not an independent state. This is a province of Russia. In this situation, we are dealing with citizens of a country that is unfriendly to us (!!!), so we have to check all Belarusians who are in Lithuania, because they can create associations that are unfriendly to us."

Such rhetoric not only does not correspond to reality, it is humiliating in relation to a close nation who found themselves in a situation of hybrid occupation and suffers from systematic repression, but also contributes to the formation of mutual enmity between nations, which is beneficial to the aggressor. Then. On January 17, 2024, the Lithuanian television TV-3 showed an anti-Belarusian propaganda plot: "Belarusian Liberation Army" roams the forests of Lithuania: they threaten us too tv3.lt" (**Lietuvos miškuose laksto „Baltarusijos išlaisvinimo armija“: jie kelia pavojų ir mums 2024-01-17 21:15 / šaltinis: tv3**).

In this "journalistic investigation", the authors report that the Belarusians have created a liberation army in Lithuania and are conducting trainings in the forests. That these Belarusians can be a "hybrid weapon" in the hands of Lukashenka and Putin. Supposedly, they, Belarusians, can be disguised in Lithuanian military uniforms and attack Belarus from the territory of Lithuania under the guise of Lithuanian military. This, in turn, should provoke a retaliatory strike and start the Lukashenko-Putin regime's war against Lithuania. (In reality, there is no Belarusian "liberation army". All "information" is made up.)

At the same time, TV-3 shows footage of some young people in camouflage training in the woods, while all of them are shown with open faces, which allows the Lithuanian authorities (and even the authors of the story) to identify them and provide evidence of a threat if they are Belarusians. However, no such measures were taken, and no evidence was presented that the people in the woods of Lithuania are Belarusians. Such actions contradict the principles of journalistic ethics and are nothing more than destructive political propaganda, unacceptable for a democratic country.

Furthermore, in the same story, the following conclusion is made by the chairman of the Committee on National Security and Defense, Laurinas Kaschunas: "Citizens from Belarus cannot be allowed into Lithuania anymore." (<https://www.tv3.lt/naujiena/video/lietuvos-miskuose-laksto-baltarusijos-islaisvinimo-armija-jie-kelia-pavoju-ir-mums-n1284098?fbclid=IwAR3BJhCddwGXC>)

Such "TV programs", as well as the words coming from officials (literally Laurinas Kaschunas), cause concern and surprise, because they look like an attempt to purposefully and consciously create an artificial threat and image of an enemy from Belarusians.

On February 1, 2024, this propaganda plot, shown on TV-3, was distributed by the pro-regime resource BelVestnik (about 40,000 subscribers). That resource imposed its translation and text on the TV-3

video, the essence of which is that the regime in Ukraine Lukashenka purposefully contributed to the creation of Kalinowski's regiment, that is preparing to attack Lithuania at the right moment.

Quote: "On the most popular TV channel in Lithuania there was a story where Kalinovsky's regiment and the Belarusian liberation army are simply called part of Lukashenko's and Putin's plan to attack the Republic of Lithuania.

According to a Lithuanian member of the Seimas and an expert from the Lithuanian Ministry of Defense, "today these Belarusians are training in the forests near Vilnius, and at hour X they will attack the Belarusian border" ("under Lithuanian symbols," it is emphasized in the story) therefore provoke Lukashenko and Putin to attack to Lithuania."

Watch <https://telegra.ph/Oficialnyj-Vilnyus-polk-Kalinovskogo-i-osvoboditelnaya-armiya-Belarusi-predstavlyayut-ugrozu-bezopasnosti-Litvy-01-31>

Full version: <https://rutube.ru/video/4937814d5b898be7c4e9d0a3d77ed90b/>

This information has become a great source of dissemination on the Internet inciting hatred to Belarusians. Under all parameters, this situation can be called an informational-psychalagic operation directed against Belarusians and undermining good relations between the nations.

In recent years, the ruling elites of Lithuania have taken a number of short-sighted and destructive steps, both for the economy of Belarus and for the economy of their own country:

- The supply of Belarusian potassium to the port of Klaipeda was stopped, which caused a crisis and an increase in food prices in the world ("Belkali", which was the third largest potash producer in the world, provided a significant part of the world's need for agricultural fertilizers).
- Obvious aspirations on legislative level to equate Belarusians, fleeing repression and genocide, with Russians (who attacked Ukraine and in fact occupied Belarus). At the same time, there are cases when Belarusian refugees are assessed as "dangerous for Lithuania". Belarusians who have been living in Lithuania for dozens of years suddenly have faced problems of legalization and the threat of deportation. At the same time, there are no objective facts and evidence of any hostile activity on the part of Belarusians in relation to the Lithuanian state.
- The intention to block checkpoints on the border with Belarus has become a recent dangerous initiative.

One gets the impression that Lithuanian politicians, who are now in power, have lost their sense of reality and are acting against the historical and modern interests of Lithuania. Such actions can be used by the Putin regime in order to increase tension, feelings of enmity between nations, and on this basis to create conflicts in their own interests.

Belarusians fleeing persecution and repression are not enemies of the countries where they are forced to leave. A reasonable and humane policy towards refugees is carried out by the Republic of Poland, which has received hundreds of thousands of Belarusian political emigrants and millions of Ukrainians in a friendly manner, providing them with shelters, jobs, schools, and the Ukrainian language. This is a friendly movement that strengthens Poland, friendship between nations and Polish democracy, and which should be an example for other countries.

Unfortunately, the current government in Lithuania has chosen a different approach and method of activity, which undermines its own democratic choice. In 2020, the Lithuanian government and society showed great solidarity and support for Belarusians. The country's government conducted a policy of fraternal relations worthy of all respect. For what and why, at the moment when two nations are most in

need of mutual support and solidarity, attempts are being made to push them in an information confrontation.

One gets the impression that the Lithuanian politicians currently in power do not really understand that under the current circumstances the existence of a free, independent, democratic Belarus guarantees independence and freedom to Lithuania. If Russia finally destroys Belarus and it really turns into a military appendage of Putin's Russia, then the statehood of Lithuania will face a real, not an artificial threat. Belarusians, who are currently in Lithuania, are an important resource that can and should be used in the fight against the regime of Lukashenka and Putin, but not to create an artificial threat to their own country.

Both Belarus and the Belarusian people were and are a natural, historical ally of the Republic of Lithuania. Our nations are also connected by ancient times. It goes back to the beginning, when our common state existed - the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Rus' and Samogitia. Now, respectively, — Belarus, Ukraine, Lithuania. This paradigm, which Moscow is trying to destroy, is the basis of our common, free geopolitical existence, our common power, independence and freedom.

In 2023, the "Free Belarus" movement made several attempts to establish a dialogue with the country's political leadership (deputy corps) to strengthen constructive relations, unfortunately Lithuanian politicians (conservative party) avoided these contacts.

Now, since the current policy is becoming critically dangerous for the two communities and can lead to dramatic incidents on the grounds of xenophobia, we consider it necessary to appeal first of all to the leadership of Lithuania:

- Change the policy and attitude towards Belarusians;
- Neutralize harmful information attacks;
- Contribute to the strengthening of positive relations with the Belarusian diaspora and help in the development of the national consciousness of Belarusians;
- Find democratic and non-discriminatory approaches to get out of the current situation through a joint Belarusian-Lithuanian conference on security issues;

We also consider it necessary to make this letter available to the international community and international democratic organizations, hoping for support and solidarity in solving the problem and strengthening friendship between nations.

At the same time, we hope that the current policy of the Lithuanian state, caused by a not entirely objective analysis and assessment of the situation, will stop, common sense and good relations between peoples will prevail. We are open to dialogue on common issues, ready to discuss the situation together with the ruling conservative party, the social-democratic opposition and all interested parties.

We are confident in the good future of the independent democratic Republic of Lithuania and in the free future of the democratic Republic of Belarus. The guarantee of this must be the memory of our common history and the friendship between our free nations.

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