



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

NATO abuses refugees, threatens to ignite war on Poland/Belarus border

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A refugee family stranded at the Polish/Belarus border. Photo: Minsk Pravda

Nov. 11 — The U.S. and its European allies are staging a dangerous provocation at the border between Poland and Belarus, which threatens both a humanitarian catastrophe and a military conflict that could quickly explode into a wider war.

Thousands of refugees, fleeing imperialist-fueled wars in West Asia and beyond, have gathered on the Belarusian side of the border, demanding entry into the European Union. Poland's far-right government — a NATO member, acting on behalf of Germany and other EU powers where the refugees wish to go — has responded with a massive buildup of military forces.

Polish border guards and troops have violently abused refugees who attempted to

cross into the country. In one case, on Nov. 10, [four Kurdish men](#) were found beaten by Polish security forces. They were treated by Belarusian doctors. The same day, a [young boy was pepper-sprayed](#) by Polish border guards.

The [Border Committee of Belarus stated](#): “All these people, including women and children, do not pose a threat to security and do not behave aggressively. According to the stories of the refugees themselves, they organized themselves into such a large group in order to prevent forcible displacement by the Polish side, as well as to draw the attention of the international community to the actions of Poland in terms of non-observance of human rights.

“Taking into account the statements of Polish officials about the concentration of armed forces and equipment near the border, we do not exclude provocative actions by the Polish side aimed at justifying the use of physical force and special equipment against refugees,” the statement concluded.

The government of Belarus has [called for high-level consultations](#) to defuse the situation and resolve the crisis. So far, Poland has refused — with strong backing from its powerful U.S. and European sponsors.

Meanwhile, the Biden administration, other Western governments and corporate media are spreading wild rumors about supposed Belarusian government “trafficking” of migrants and refugees, reporting this as fact.

They claim this is a plot by President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus to pressure Europe to lift brutal economic sanctions imposed by the West, rather than the all-too-predictable outcome of Western military and economic interference in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan and North Africa.



Polish riot police and coils of razor wire face off against migrants, including families with children, camped just across the border in Belarus.

Polish gov't vs. the people

While presenting a one-sided, hostile view of the Belarusian government and the refugees, these same governments and media actively cover up the behavior of the U.S. puppet regime in Poland, including its pro-fascist policies and its war on women's reproductive rights, [LGBTQ2S people](#), workers and [communists](#).

In fact, while Western media were completely focused on presenting the Polish side of the border crisis, on Nov. 6 [tens of thousands of women and supporters](#) were protesting in the streets of Poland's capital Warsaw after a woman died of

pregnancy complications as a result of the country's Draconian abortion ban, similar to the one imposed recently in Texas. Last year millions of people across Poland protested the abortion ban.

And buried amidst the anti-Belarus propaganda, the Associated Press noted that Poland's government is [supporting a fascist demonstration](#) planned in Warsaw on Nov. 11, the country's independence day — much like those held annually in the neighboring Baltic republics.

The far-right regimes of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia — also NATO members that dance to Washington's tune — claim Belarus “posed serious threats to European security by deliberately escalating its ‘hybrid attack; using migrants to retaliate for EU sanctions,” [Reuters reported Nov. 11.](#)

This latest U.S.-sponsored information war combines the crude racism of Donald Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric with the vicious smear campaigns used against so many countries that suffer brutal U.S./European sanctions, like Venezuela and Cuba, into a toxic stew meant to justify acts of racist brutality and regime change.



Minsk picket in solidarity with refugees at Polish Embassy, Nov. 9. Photo: Nadezhda Sablina

Belarus aids refugees

Estimates of the number of refugees at the border vary widely, between 3,000 and 8,000. But the number continues to grow daily.

Correspondents for Minsk Pravda have been documenting the situation with interviews and photos. On [Nov. 8, Minsk Pravda reported](#): “Most of them, the migrants said, are Kurds. ... There are many children in the crowd. They are not allowed into Poland.

“‘We are being sprayed with gas [by the Polish side]. See what happens,’ an elderly man shouts emotionally. His son was brought on an impromptu stretcher from the side of the border. In a mixture of languages, he explains: the young man’s legs are lost, he can no longer walk.

“‘Many of us are with families. I have six children. All are small. No food, no milk for them, no diapers. We have no firewood to keep warm, no tents to shelter from the rain, and we are not allowed into Europe,’ says another man. He says that he and his family have already made several unsuccessful attempts to get into the EU.”

Hard hit by Western sanctions, Belarus is ill-equipped to provide the necessary humanitarian support but is doing what it can. Border guards and soldiers are trying to maintain order and protect the refugees while attempts to negotiate with the Polish regime and the EU continue.

The government and people’s organizations, including the [Belarusian Women’s Union](#) and [Communist Party of Belarus](#), have expressed solidarity with the refugees and are helping to provide them with food, water, shelter and health care.

At a meeting of government ministers Nov. 10, Belarus declared that priority must be given to the needs of children and pregnant women at the border. [Education Minister Igor Karpenko](#) said Nov. 11 that children’s health camps and other facilities, established during Soviet times and still maintained in Belarus, would be organized to provide safe havens for them, including teachers for the children.

On Nov. 9, [dozens of people protested](#) outside the Polish Embassy in Minsk, the capital of Belarus. Signs and banners read: “Leopards [Polish tanks] against women and children?”, “Stop genocide at the border!”, and “Stop torturing women and children.”

Organized on just three hours’ notice and in bitter cold, the action included

members of the Belarusian Republican Youth Union, Belaya Rus and the Communist Party, and ordinary workers.

One woman interviewed on the picket line condemned the hypocrisy of the Western powers: “Those people who say that some human rights are being violated in the world are violating them themselves, not allowing migrants to enter the EU. We are ordinary peaceful Belarusians who came out in support of ordinary people who do not deserve such an attitude.”

West escalates tensions

A new European Union threat to ban flights between West Asia and Belarus won't just harm those countries' economies, but may force thousands of refugees to make the dangerous [journey to Europe across the Mediterranean](#), which has already cost so many lives in recent years. It is also, of course, an egregious violation of those countries' independence, just like all U.S.-EU sanctions.

Responding to the threat of a fifth round of sanctions, [President Lukashenko pointed out](#) Nov. 11 that Europe's main transnational gas pipeline, Yamal-Europe, goes through Belarus, and recently Russia has significantly increased the volume of gas transit to the West.

“We provide heat to Europe, and they are threatening us with the border closure. What if we block natural gas transit? Therefore, I would recommend the leadership of Poland, Lithuanians and others to think hard before opening their mouths. But it is up to them. They are welcome to close the border. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should warn everyone in Europe that if they impose additional sanctions, ‘indigestible’ and ‘unacceptable’ for us, we will hit back.”

Struggle-La Lucha spoke with Nadezhda Sablina, a Minsk Pravda journalist and Belarusian representative of the Anti-Imperialist Front. She explained: “We saw last

year, against the background of protests in Belarus after the presidential elections, Poland brought soldiers and military equipment to its eastern borders. The troops stood ready to 'come to the rescue' of those who intended to overthrow Lukashenko here.

"The slightest manifestation of weakness by the Belarusian authorities could serve as a signal for NATO's military invasion of Belarus," Sablina warned. "The Belarusian authorities and Belarusian military survived, including by strengthening the concentration of troops on the western border. At that time, half of the armed forces of Belarus were transferred to the west.

"Now, against the background of the growing migration crisis, Poland is again bringing its troops and armored vehicles to the border. The formal reason for this, according to the Polish side, is the protection of the Polish border. However, the number of military personnel already exceeds the number of migrants at the border by 3-4 times!

"This suggests that Poland intends to fight not with migrants," Sablina said, "but with Belarus, as well as with Russia, since we are united in the Union State and the military bloc (CSTO). It is clear that Poland does not act independently, but is subordinate to the stronger countries in the EU and the United States. So it cannot be ruled out that the imperialist forces of the West may start an armed conflict with Belarus at the hands of the Poles, staging some kind of provocation as a pretext to start an attack."

Sablina added: "Poland is suitable for a military conflict with Belarus like no other country. After the counter-revolutionary coup in the late 1980s, the Poles were actively instilled with nationalism and Russophobia. And now a lot of Poles are hostile to Russia and sincerely believe that in 1939 it took away part of their territory, which they call the East Cresses (Western Belarus). Therefore, if, for example, Poland invades Belarus and occupies its western cities (Grodno, Brest),

then ordinary Poles may well consider this step to be fair, because, in their opinion, the lands taken from them will return to them.”

Both the anti-war and immigrant rights movements need to be on full alert and get ready to take to the streets to demand: “Let them all in! No war, no repression! Hands off Belarus!”

