



Security Personnel in Green Uniforms without Insignia Appear in Minsk

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By George Barros

Security personnel wearing unmarked green uniforms appeared in Minsk for the first time on September 5. The personnel are reportedly Belarusian riot police (OMON) in new uniforms.¹ These personnel wear Russian-made Dozor body cameras – a model of cameras Russian police and interior forces as well as Belarusian OMON personnel use.² Belarusian OMON previously wore all black uniforms with identifying markings.³ It is unclear why Belarusian OMON would have changed their uniforms and removed identifying markings. They could be setting conditions for the appearance of Russian security personnel in similar unmarked uniforms.

Belarusian authorities did not try to disperse the second consecutive Saturday Women’s march in Minsk on September 5. Approximately 10,000 women marched in Minsk and gathered on Independence Square on September 5.⁴ The personnel in unmarked green uniforms and other Belarusian security forces deployed to Independence Square likely to intimidate the protesters but did not disperse or detain them.⁵ Security forces had not detained any women protesters during the August 29 women’s march either.⁶ Belarusian security forces detained at least two journalists covering protests in Minsk on September 5, however.⁷ Belarusian women will likely continue to hold weekly Saturday marches.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko continues to target student protests. The personnel in unmarked green uniforms detained student protesters in Minsk on September 5.⁸ Belarusian security forces have been detaining student protesters in Minsk since September 1.⁹ Lukashenko will likely intensify targeted detentions of student protests.

Women protesters confronted Belarusian security forces. Women protesters surrounded unmarked police detention vans and shouted at them on September 5.¹⁰ ISW observed that protesters began using swarm tactics against security forces to resist detentions on August 30.¹¹ Confrontations between protesters and security forces may escalate further – a risk ISW forecasted.¹²

Belarusian protesters began displaying foreign flags prominently for the first time. Women’s march participants displayed the flags of Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Germany, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Israel, Ireland, and Jamaica on September 5.¹³ The prominent display of foreign flags by protesters is a new phenomenon, but the red and white Belarusian flag continues to dominate the demonstrations. Lukashenko and the Kremlin will likely use the presence of foreign flags in the protests in its information operation claiming that the protests are a Western color revolution and hybrid war against Belarus.¹⁴

A factory suffered an explosion in Zhlobin, Belarus. A fire caused an explosion at an art factory in Zhlobin on September 5.¹⁵ It is unclear whether the fire was accidental or arson. Regional Belarusian authorities reported no casualties but have not provided information on the fire's causes.¹⁶ The Kremlin and/or Lukashenko may use this or similar incidents to justify a Russian intervention to "restore order" in Belarus.¹⁷ The Kremlin confirmed on August 27 the existence of a Russian law enforcement officer reserve prepared to intervene in Belarus if the situation "gets out of control."¹⁸ Russian or Belarusian framing of this explosion as an act of terrorism would indicate an increased likelihood of Russian intervention.

Opposition leader Svitlana Tikhanouskaya backed the NEXTA Telegram channel's call for large protests on September 6. Tikhanouskaya released a video on September 5 calling on Belarusians to participate in the planned September 6 unity march.¹⁹ NEXTA first directed Belarusians to hold this march in a September 3 post.²⁰ Protesters will likely hold large protests near Independence Square and Independence Avenue in Minsk at 2:00 pm local time on September 6. Lukashenko militarized his response to the last large Sunday protest on August 30 with armored vehicles and will likely do so again.²¹

ISW will continue monitoring the situation and providing updates.

¹ <https://twitter.com/HannaLiubakova/status/1302260831619624965>; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xy1A-LtmgBA&ab_channel=TUT.BY.%D0%9F%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B0; https://t.me/nexta_live/10704; https://twitter.com/vottak_tv/status/1302276885519499272

² https://twitter.com/MarQs_/status/1302199713240961027; [https://sputniknews\(.\)com/russia/201503051019109855/](https://sputniknews(.)com/russia/201503051019109855/); https://t.me/nexta_live/10704; <https://twitter.com/Dodeskaden2/status/1299752096477126656/photo/4>

³ <https://twitter.com/Dodeskaden2/status/1299752096477126656/photo/4>; [https://42.tut\(.\)by/696542](https://42.tut(.)by/696542)

⁴ [https://news.tutby\(.\)news/society/699392.html](https://news.tutby(.)news/society/699392.html); [https://meduza\(.\)jio/short/2020/09/05/v-minske-proshel-mnogotysyachnyy-zhenskiy-marsh-fotografiya](https://meduza(.)jio/short/2020/09/05/v-minske-proshel-mnogotysyachnyy-zhenskiy-marsh-fotografiya); [https://meduza\(.\)jio/feature/2020/08/29/desyat-tysyach-zhenschin-proshli-marshem-po-tsentru-minska-omon-pytalsya-im-pomeshat-no-ne-smog](https://meduza(.)jio/feature/2020/08/29/desyat-tysyach-zhenschin-proshli-marshem-po-tsentru-minska-omon-pytalsya-im-pomeshat-no-ne-smog)

⁵ <https://twitter.com/tutby/status/1302259451324489728>; [https://www.interfax\(.\)ru/world/724731](https://www.interfax(.)ru/world/724731)

⁶ <http://www.iswresearch.org/2020/08/warning-lukashenko-and-kremlin.html>

⁷ <https://twitter.com/tutby/status/1302240623966257153>

⁸ <https://twitter.com/HannaLiubakova/status/1302176936408625153>;

<https://twitter.com/HannaLiubakova/status/1302194994774716416>;

<https://twitter.com/franakviacorka/status/1302193212765937664>; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xy1A-LtmgBA&ab_channel=TUT.BY.%D0%9F%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B0

⁹ <http://www.iswresearch.org/2020/09/warning-kremlin-linked-belarusian.html>; <http://www.iswresearch.org/2020/09/warning-moscow-claims-poland-is-lead.html>

¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/HannaLiubakova/status/1302248827165048832>

¹¹ <https://www.iswresearch.org/2020/08/warning-militarization-of-lukashenkos.html>;

<https://twitter.com/BFreeTheatre/status/1302309923301339136>

¹² <https://www.iswresearch.org/2020/08/warning-militarization-of-lukashenkos.html>

¹³ <https://twitter.com/franakviacorka/status/1302230796724514816>;

https://twitter.com/izvestia_ru/status/1302255213466791936/photo/1;

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pT6YSfYPbi&ab_channel=TUT.BY.%D0%9F%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B0; <https://twitter.com/tutby/status/1302233931169910784>; <https://twitter.com/PolScorr/status/1302232401591103490>;

<https://twitter.com/PolScorr/status/1302237861236879362>; <https://twitter.com/franakviacorka/status/1302230796724514816>;

https://twitter.com/vottak_tv/status/1302245702618222597; https://twitter.com/izvestia_ru/status/1302255213466791936;

<https://twitter.com/tutby/status/1302233931169910784>; <https://twitter.com/tutby/status/1302258954945339393/photo/2>;

¹⁴ <http://www.iswresearch.org/2020/09/warning-moscow-claims-poland-is-lead.html>

¹⁵ [https://www.rbc\(.\)ua/rus/news/belarusi-proizoshel-vzryv-fabriki-1599311327.html](https://www.rbc(.)ua/rus/news/belarusi-proizoshel-vzryv-fabriki-1599311327.html)

¹⁶ [https://newsgomel\(.\)by/news/incidents/masshtabnyy-pozhar-edva-ne-unichtozhil-fabriku-v-zhlobine_53467.html](https://newsgomel(.)by/news/incidents/masshtabnyy-pozhar-edva-ne-unichtozhil-fabriku-v-zhlobine_53467.html);

[https://sputnik\(.\)by/incidents/20200905/1045624803.html](https://sputnik(.)by/incidents/20200905/1045624803.html)

¹⁷ [http://kremlin\(.\)ru/events/president/news/63951](http://kremlin(.)ru/events/president/news/63951); <https://www.iswresearch.org/2020/08/warning-kremlin-announces-reserve-force.html>

¹⁸ [http://kremlin\(\(.\)\)ru/events/president/news/63951](http://kremlin((.))ru/events/president/news/63951); <https://www.iswresearch.org/2020/08/warning-kremlin-announces-reserve-force.html>

¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/franakviacorka/status/1302289305788772352>

²⁰ <http://www.iswresearch.org/2020/09/warning-belarusian-opposition-begins.html>

²¹ <https://www.iswresearch.org/2020/08/warning-militarization-of-lukashenkos.html>