



# Belarus: Solidarity with railway workers

Martin Suchanek Wed, 06/04/2022 - 18:35

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On 19 March, railway workers from Belarus closed the railway lines to Ukraine in order to block supplies for the invading Russian troops. Even though the sources of information on these actions were difficult to verify for several days, the news was confirmed, even if the media controlled by Putin and Lukashenko remained silent about it for a long time.

For a few days now, the institutions of the Belarusian regime have in fact been confirming what opponents of the war in the country and Ukrainian sources had long made known: the heroic resistance of train drivers and technical staff on the railways against the transport of Russian war materiel.

The confirmation takes the form of reports that dozens of workers, like anti-war activists in Russia, face draconian punishments. For example, Labournet Germany ([www.labournet.de](http://www.labournet.de) [1]) quotes a tweet by the Belarusian journalist Giczan: "The purges at the Belarusian railway are in full swing. Dozens of train drivers and technical staff have been arrested this week. Today alone, more than 30 videos were published on TG channels loyal to the regime, in which arrested staff 'confess' to sabotaging Russian squadrons and committing other crimes."

The exact number of those arrested is unknown, but it is likely to be in the dozens. The accused face prison sentences of up to 15 years for "terrorist acts".

## Significance

The significance of these strikes and the sabotage of the rail network into Ukraine, carried out not only by railway workers but also by other opposition members, is difficult to overestimate. Firstly, it directly affects the supply of an already faltering Russian military machine and thus further weakens the reactionary attack. The blockade of the railways is also significant in that the Russian army's logistics rely on the railways as a means of transporting artillery and other weapons to a far greater extent than, for example, the US army.

Secondly, the actions directly hit one of the most important vassals of Putin's regime and make it more difficult for Belarus to openly enter the war, which would be another catastrophe for the working class. That this danger exists is also shown by the regime's mass conscription of men aged 18-58.

Thirdly, the fact that this blockade is taking place in Belarus and not in Russia itself is certainly no coincidence. Lukashenko's regime is clearly far less entrenched among the population than Putin's. The lies of the state-controlled Belarusian media are believed by a minority at best. The memories of the mass movement against the regime are still too vivid.

These actions are also a warning to Putin himself. They show from which side he is also threatened internally - by a working class that is fed up with his reactionary war lies, by young recruits who are being used as cannon fodder by Russian imperialism and no longer want to die for a reactionary war. The paralysis of the Russian war machine is not only helping the people of Ukraine - it is also undermining the loyalty, obedience and discipline of the rank and file in the Russian army to the point at which they could turn their guns around!

The railway workers in Belarus need the solidarity of the working class everywhere. Therefore, everyone should take

part in protest rallies at the country's embassies!

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**Source URL:** <https://fifthinternational.org/content/belarus-solidarity-railway-workers>

**Links:**

[1] <http://www.labournet.de>