

January 14-19, 2005

Edited by Sanwaree Sethi
International League for Human Rights

Note from the Editor:

On Monday, January 17, Solène Bouineau, a former intern at the International League for Human Rights, passed away.

I met Solène as a fellow summer intern and was touched by her charm and warmth. Along with all who knew her, I mourn her loss. Solène was a great asset to the organization, and her smiling face brightened up the office. She was committed to human rights and international development, and had already contributed her efforts to various organizations in Africa. We will miss her greatly.

Table of Contents

I. Domestic

1. "Orange Revolution" Far Less Likely in Belarus, But Still Realistic, Pundit Says (*Charter97*)
2. Formally Defunct Yakub Kolas Humanities Lyceum Marks 14th Anniversary (*Charter97*)
3. Belarus to Implement Global AIDS Fund Project Against AIDS Spread (*Itar-Tass*)

II. Regional

4. Ever Farther from Moscow (*Kommersant*)
5. Belarusian Ambassador Recalled from Latvia (*Prima News*)

III. International

6. Belarus Criticizes Rice for "Tyranny" Remark (*Bloomberg*)
7. Brussels Reportedly to Consider Funding Information Center for Belarus (*RFE/RL*)

IV. Human Rights & Independent Media

8. Human Rights Watch Report Paints Bleak Picture in Many Former Soviet States (*EurasieNet*)
9. Marynich Portraits Near Walls of Prison (*Zubr*)

V. Business

10. Belarus Decreases Oil Extraction by 0.8% in 2004 (*Interfax*)

DOMESTIC

1. "Orange Revolution" Far Less Likely in Belarus, But Still Realistic, Pundit Says

An independent sociologist noted that the victory of pro-democracy forces in Belarus is currently far less likely than it was in Ukraine before its 'orange revolution' but the chance still exists.

Unlike Ukraine's outgoing president and his allies, the Belarusian leadership is ready to take tougher steps to remain in power and may count on more efficient support from the Kremlin, Oleg Manayev, head of the Independent Institute for Social, Economic and Political Studies, told reporters on January 14.

The pundit also stressed that Belarus' opposition forces are worse prepared for launching a successful campaign to unseat Aleksandr Lukashenko as they lack unity.

Dr. Manayev linked the situation to the lack of a single opposition leader and the absence of opposition representatives in the legislature.

The Belarusian public and ruling elite are not yet ready for a political transformation as well, he added.

The analyst welcomed what he called a change in the attitude of the European Union and the United States to Belarus, citing the Belarus Democracy Act signed into law by the US president late last year and the travel bans imposed on several top-ranking Belarusian officials.

Belarus' pro-democracy forces have continued their consolidation drive and may select a common presidential nominee this year, he said.

Dr. Manayev noted that Russia also might throw its support behind Aleksandr Lukashenko's rival in the next presidential elections.

The pundit stressed that there is a minimal chance of the Belarusian leader and his entourage liberalizing their hard-line course.

Source: Charter97; January 17, 2005; www.charter97.org

2. Formally Defunct Yakub Kolas Humanities Lyceum Marks 14th Anniversary

Students of the formally defunct Yakub Kolas National Humanities Lyceum, which was closed down by the authorities in 2003, gathered near the former building of their school in central Minsk on Saturday to mark its 14th anniversary.

Opened as a Sunday school for children and adults willing to study the Belarusian language and the humanities in Belarusian on January 15, 1991, the school has graduated a total of about 1000 persons whom it proudly calls representatives of the Belarusian intelligentsia.

Over the years of its existence, the lyceum evolved into one of the country's most prestigious educational institutions, hosting a variety of international conferences, exhibitions, performances by Belarusian artists, meetings with prominent scholars and cultural figures.

After being shut down by the authorities, the school has continued existing underground as the Belarusian Humanities Lyceum.

As Principal Vladimir Kolos said in an interview with BelaPAN, the school's students have recently returned from Vilnius where they had a winter training session. "Their stay in Vilnius caused a keen interest among the Lithuanian public and the Belarusian community," he stressed, adding that the visit had helped the Lithuanians learn more about the problems faced by the lyceum.

In addition, he said, a story about the school that has recently appeared in Poland's *Gazeta Wyborcza* has made a stir in that country. "Many Polish schools and individuals have contacted the newspaper offering support, in particular assistance in holding the lyceum's training sessions in that country," Mr. Kolos noted.

According to the principal, the administration of the school currently considers the lyceum's relocation to Vilnius where the famous Belarusian Gymnasium existed between 1919 and 1937.

Source: Charter97; January 17, 2005; www.charter97.org

3. Belarus to Implement Global AIDS Fund Project Against AIDS Spread

Belarus began implementing a project on preventive measures and AIDS treatment in the republic that is financed by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The fund will allocate 17 million dollars for the project.

According to the Belarussian office of the UN, the epidemic situation in the republic is not so dramatic as in Russia, Ukraine and Estonia, but the tendency that has been observed in the recent years shows that not only the main risk groups but also the whole population may be affected by the epidemic.

Specialists believe that the allocation of a grant to Belarus will provide necessary prerequisites for slowing down of further epidemic growth, mainly among the youth. Under the project that is designed for five years diagnostic possibilities of medical institutions are planned to be improved. A comprehensive training of medical workers on timely treatment of AIDS-infected people, creation of the national monitoring system for getting comprehensive information about the tendencies of the epidemic development and the effectiveness of measures against the epidemic are envisaged. Close attention will be given to prison inmates. Belarussian chief sanitary doctor Mikhail Rimzha is appointed national coordinator of the project.

According to official information, more than 6,000 AIDS-infected people are registered in the republic now. According to estimates of specialists, the implementation of the project will allow to reduce the price of medicines for the treatment of AIDS-infected people to 500-600 dollars a year per one patient by 2008 (AIDS treatment cost 5600 dollars last year).

□ *Source: Itar-Tass; January 19, 2005; www.itar-tass.com*

REGIONAL

4. Ever Farther from Moscow

Last year started with the presidential elections in Georgia and ended with the third round of elections in Ukraine. Moscow looked at the CIS with fixed attention all year and tried to prop up its waning influence, while the former Soviet countries came closer and closer to replacing their political elites.

Ukraine

The most important events for all of the CIS probably were those that took place in Ukraine. The opposition, headed by Viktor Yushchenko, accused the authorities of falsifying the results of the second round of the presidential election on November 21, and called out hundreds of thousands of people to the streets. The West backed the opposition's demands, as did all influential international organizations. The Ukrainian government, which had already declared its candidate, Viktor Yanukovich, the winner, was forced go to back on its word. The Supreme Court nullified the second round of elections and set a revote for December 26. At the moment when this went to press, the results of that vote were not yet known, but we have guessed it has opened the way for Yushchenko and marked the beginning of a change in that country's political elite.

The crisis in Ukraine was a serious setback for Russia's position in that country and all the CIS. Moscow had set all its hope on government candidate Yanukovich. Putin himself even came to campaign for him and had congratulated him twice on his victory. That has complicated Moscow's chances for normal relations with the new political powers in Ukraine and alarmed the elite in all the former Soviet republics.

Moldova

Russian-Moldovan relations took a heavy chill at the end of 2003 when Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin refused to sign off on the Kremlin's proposal for regulating the internal conflicts in that country. Their differences were not overcome in 2004. Voronin pointedly ignored almost all CIS activities and made efforts to improve his country's relations with the West. That course was also dictated by Voronin's attempts to withstand a quickly growing opposition that is longing for a revolution of roses along the lines of Georgia's. Voronin's westward turn has not strengthened his political position, however, and the opposition sees big opportunities in this year's parliamentary elections.

Kazakhstan

Although relations between Moscow and Astana remain superficially cheerful, Russia for the first time last year addressed lengthy criticism to its key ally. This happened during Putin's visit to Astana in January. The main complaint from Moscow was about Kazakhstan's increasingly pro-Western orientation, especially in the military and fuel realms, and the exclusion of the Russian-speaking population of Kazakhstan from political and public life. Putin made it clear to his Kazakh counterpart Nursultan Nazarbaev that relations between their countries would be seriously complicated if those problems continued.

A change of the political elite in Kazakhstan is looking ever more likely. In spite of the seemingly solid victory of the pro-presidential Otan party in September's parliamentary elections, Nazarbaev cannot feel completely secure. Western pressure to create true democratic conditions is growing, the opposition is uniting and the ruling party is divided. This last fact became glaringly obvious when speaker Zharmkhan Tuyakbay mutinied, accusing the government of falsifying the vote and becoming the leader of the opposition.

Belarus

Moscow's discontent with Aleksandr Lukashenko's Belarus is mounting as well. The discord is mainly economic. Last fall, Lukashenko publicly confirmed that there would be no common Russian-Belarusian currency, which Moscow was pushing for. Lukashenko has still not ratified documents passed by his parliament to give Russia property rights to oil pipelines crossing Belarusian territory and he hasn't been cooperative about gas lines either.

There have been talks recently to the effect that Moscow has begun examining Belarusian politicians in search of a successor to Lukashenko, one more pliable and less repulsive. So, even though Lukashenko was given the right to hold a third, fourth, fifth (and so on) term in the referendum held in October, his future is still less than rosy. This is even more so since the United States stated openly for the first time at the end of the summer that it will make efforts to remove the authoritarian Belarusian from power.

Georgia

The year 2004 began with presidential elections in Georgia, in which Mikhail Saakashvili rode the tide of change to a victory with more than 90 percent of the vote.

Relations between Moscow and the new powers in Tbilisi had overcome their initial tension by the end of the year, but remain unsatisfactory nonetheless. And they are far from any agreement on the conditions under which they can normalize their relations. In Tbilisi, they are insisting on absolute equality between partners in deciding what compromises to make about what. Moscow agrees in general that compromise should be mutual, but wants to make them with a view to the actual situation: Georgia has more problems than Russia has, it should be the more cooperative. Moscow's hope for the destabilization of the new government in Tbilisi didn't pan out. Saakashvili is holding fast.

Moscow informed Tbilisi of its views on their bilateral problems in the first half of last year. In October, Tbilisi responded, much to Moscow's displeasure. The Kremlin was especially annoyed with two points: the demand that Russia close its military bases in Georgia by January 1, 2006, and that the peacekeeping operations in South Ossetia and Abkhazia be transferred to UN or OSCE control. Those operations are now being overseen by Russia. These key issues that are holding up the signing of an agreement on relations between the two states.

Armenia

Russia has been taking advantage of Armenian President Robert Kocharyan's need for its support. After the affairs in Georgian took the course they did, the opposition in Armenia was vitiated. In April, Kocharyan faced the most serious challenge from the opposition that he has seen while in office. The government had to use force to break up protests. Even though the situation was brought under control, the president's associates are concerned that that is not the last move by the opposition.

In exchange for Russian support, Kocharyan has expressed his readiness to increase that country's economic presence in Armenia. Russia received the bigger part of the Armenian energy sector in an agreement to write off Armenian debt and now controls about 80 percent of Armenia's electricity production. Armrosgazprom, the Armenian natural gas monopoly is also controlled by Russian structures. And Russia has received stock packages in a number of Armenian defense enterprises. However, Armenia's significance as Russia's strategic ally in the Transcaucasus will be substantially diminished if Russia loses its influence in Georgia.

Azerbaijan

Moscow made efforts to establish relations with Azerbaijan's new president Ilkham Aliev last year. The Kremlin is concerned that Aliev Junior will lean further toward the West than his father had in order to make Azerbaijan a regional leader. Moscow is unhappy that Azerbaijan has avoided making a long-term on oil transit with it and will in the future send its oil down the Baky – Tbilisi – Ceyhan pipeline, that is, across Georgia to Turkey. Moscow is also concerned about the lack of progress in military and technical cooperation with Baku and suspects the new leadership of secret intentions to go over to Western armament standards. These suspicions were confirmed by Azerbaijan's announcement of its plans to step up its integration into NATO and its willingness to allow NATO military bases on its territory.

During Ilkham Aliev's visit to Moscow in February, he was offered the alternative of strengthening military ties with Russia, with close ties with Russian forces and a place in the CIS Antiterrorism Center. Baku has yet to give a firm answer. That is partially because Ilkham Aliev has yet to consolidate his forces fully within the country.

Tajikistan

Russia was able to establish satisfactory relations with this strategic CIS ally only at the end of the year. Before Putin's visit to Dushanbe in October, Tajikistani President Emomali Rakhmonov had been hinting that Russia's rent-free military base in Tajikistan was no longer acceptable and that the Russians needed to open up their wallet according to the example set by the generous Americans. Dushanbe further demanded ownership of the Nurek space tracking station, so that it could then rent it back to Russia. Moscow got the picture. Tajikistan had decided to make some money off the Russian military's presence there, and good money at that. The Kremlin reacted badly to that and began to think up strong countermeasures.

Setbacks in trade with the United States and fear of facing his American-backed opposition alone made Rakhmonov think again about relations with Moscow. During Putin's visit to Dushanbe, an agreement was signed giving the Russian military base legal status, turning Nurek over to Russia

in exchange for a debt write-off, finishing the Sangtudin Hydroelectric Plant (with Tajikistan's \$50 million state debt to Russia reinvested in the plant in the form of Russian-owned stock) and the introduction of Russian border guards into Tajikistan.

Kyrgyzstan

Russian relations with this Central Asian state, like everything else there, passed the year without strong jolts. The Kyrgyzstani opposition is preparing for the presidential elections scheduled for 2005, and Kyrgyzstani President Askar Akaev has repeatedly stated that he will not run for another term in office. During Akaev's November visit to Moscow, Akaev agreed to turn the most profitable parts of his country's military-industrial complex to Russia against its \$180-million debt to Russia. About the only stumbling block left in Russian-Kyrgyz relations is the American plan to station several American Air Force AWACs near Manas Airport. Moscow sees that as a violation of Bishkek's military and political obligations to it as part of the Collective Security Agreement Organization.

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistani President Islam Karimov was badly shaken by the major terrorist acts there in March and July 2004. He broke up his moderate, liberal opposition several years ago, only to see a radical opposition fill the vacuum. Karimov remains true to his motto, Better a hundred arrested than a thousand killed. His intelligence agents conduct mass arrests. It's either me or the terrorists, and if I go, the Islamists come in, the argument goes, although it is not too convincing. That is why his position is looking shakier.

Karimov is reserved in his relations with Moscow. He doesn't want to spoil them, although he is also playing making advance to Washington, which is interested in strengthening its position in Central Asia.

Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan, headed by Saparmurat Niyazov, is a model of stability. Two years ago, Turkmenbashi crushed the opposition. But Niyazov is still not completely calm. In February, a book appeared in the stores of Turkmenistan entitled *My Accomplices and I Are Terrorists*, written by former minister of foreign affairs Boris Shikhuradov, who has been sentenced to life imprisonment for attempting a coup d'etat. In the book, the former opposition leader tells how a bunch of renegades organized an assassination attempt on the great Turkmenbashi. Many in Ashkhabad, and in the West too, have doubts about the authenticity of the authorship of the strange confessional. Turkmenbashi has also taken steps toward liberalization. In January, exit visas were eliminated in Turkmenistan. That was seen as a gesture to Moscow, whose support he is counting on if the United States should turn up its pressure on Niyazov. Making it easier to leave the country is most of all to the advantage of the ethnic Russians living there.

Source: Kommersant; January 17, 2005; www.kommersant.com

5. Belarusian Ambassador Recalled from Latvia

The Belarusian Embassy in Latvia has denied reports on the recall of Riga Ambassador Vadim Lamkov. The Embassy has declared that the ambassador has gone on leave for an uncertain duration.

It is believed, that the event is tied to the recently reveal guilty verdict for the former ambassador to Riga, Mikhail Marinich: before the trial the Latvian government, including President Vaira Vike-Freiberg spoke in his defense. On December 30, the court in Belarus sentenced Mikhail Marynich to five years of imprisonment and confiscation of property.

[Text translated by the editor]

Source: *Prima News*; January 14, 2004; www.prima-news.com

INTERNATIONAL

6. Belarus Criticizes Rice for “Tyranny” Remark

Belarus criticized Condoleezza Rice, President George W. Bush's nominee as U.S. Secretary of State, for a comment that included the former Soviet republic on a list of “outposts of tyranny,” Interfax reported.

“The mentioning of Belarus in Rice's statement shows that her vision of the situation in Belarus is unfortunately too far from reality now,” Interfax cited Andrei Savinykh, a Foreign Ministry spokesman, as saying yesterday in Minsk. “False stereotypes and prejudices are a bad foundation for pursuing an efficient policy in the sphere of relations between countries.”

There remain “outposts of tyranny, and America stands with oppressed people on every continent: in Cuba and Burma and North Korea and Iran and Belarus and Zimbabwe,” Rice said in remarks yesterday to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee in Washington, according to a transcript.

The U.S. government last October said a referendum that approved a third term for Alexander Lukashenko as president fell short of international standards. Lukashenko has been president of Belarus, a country of 10 million people, since 1994.

Source: *Bloomberg*; January 19, 2005; www.bloomberg.com

7. Brussels Reportedly to Consider Funding Information Center for Belarus

The European Commission will consider funding a foreign-based information center that would provide unbiased coverage of the situation in Belarus, Belapan reported on 13 January, citing Bogdan Klich, a member of the European Parliament from Poland. Klich said a group of Belarusian journalists have come out with a proposal to launch a center that would run a television channel and a radio station broadcasting to Belarus, as well as several websites. Klich added that EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner has promised to study the project and look for possibilities to provide funds for such a center this year. According to Klich, the resumption of broadcasts by Radio Racja, a Polish-based radio station, could become the first stage of the project. Radio Racja, which was supported by U.S. and EU grants, broadcast to Belarus on shortwave from 1999 to 2002.

Source: *RFE/RL*; January 14, 2005; www.rferl.org

HUMAN RIGHTS & INDEPENDENT MEDIA

8. Human Rights Watch Report Paints Bleak Picture in Many Former Soviet States

The Iron Curtain fell nearly 15 years ago, but Human Rights Watch says it is mostly business as usual in much of the former Soviet Union. That's according to "World Report 2005," the annual survey conducted by Human Rights Watch.

According to the rights advocacy group, all of Russia is effectively controlled from Moscow, elections in Belarus are laughable, abuse of prisoners is the norm in Uzbekistan, while Armenia and Azerbaijan are run by authoritarian regimes as the two countries continue their standoff over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Only Ukraine shows tentative signs of becoming an open society, but democratic developments there are too recent to show a trend.

In Russia, the report says, police torture and the violent hazing of military recruits continues. And it blames the government of President Vladimir Putin for the disappearances and extrajudicial executions of opponents in Chechnya. At the same time, it criticizes Chechen rebels for similar abuses, as well as for the deadly school siege in Beslan in September.

The Human Rights Watch survey also points out that Putin has drawn virtually all power to himself. It points not only to the Kremlin's control of all electronic media, but also to Putin's move to have regional governors not elected locally but appointed by the president.

Rachel Denber, Human Rights Watch's acting executive director for Europe and Central Asia who oversaw the study of the countries of the former Soviet Union, said no one should be surprised at Putin's moves to centralize power in the Russian presidency, given that he has always favored a rigidly strong central government.

Denber told RFE/RL that Putin probably believes that centralizing power will help keep politicians honest. But she added that it might be just as difficult for members of the presidential administration to stay honest as it is for local governors.

"I'm sure that from the Kremlin's perspective, having governors appointed is a path toward decreasing corruption. But from another perspective, you could just look at that as moving corruption to a different place," Denber said.

Belarus, too, continues to be run as if it were a Soviet state, according to Human Rights Watch.

It points to the elections for the 110-member Chamber of Representatives in October, in which the opposition did not win a single seat. The report says this was accomplished, at least in part, because the state controls all national television stations and most radio outlets.

And it accuses the government of President Alyaksandr Lukashenka of harassing the country's media through the closing of independent newspapers and arresting journalists on libel charges.

Denber said such behavior is nothing new in Belarus. But she said the fact that Belarusians are seeing more of the same year after year makes matters worse there.

"When you see a lack of change, when you see a repetition of elections that are empty exercises and that shut out the opposition, that is tantamount to things getting worse," Denber said. "When you see the state continuing to crack down on civil society groups and on the press, it's more of the same, but it actually constitutes a worsening of the situation."

The human rights records of neighboring Armenia and Azerbaijan are also not improving, according to the report. It says the political life of Armenia, for example, continued to focus throughout 2004 on the fraud-tainted presidential elections of the previous year.

The survey says there were calls for the resignation of President Robert Kocharian, and notes that the government violently broke up protests, raided opposition offices, arrested opposition leaders and supporters, and even attacked journalists.

The political life of Azerbaijan, meanwhile, was similarly affected in 2004 by the presidential election of 2003, which also was fraudulent. Last year, the report says, Azerbaijani opposition leaders were subjected to unfair trials in which they were charged with responsibility for some of the violence that followed the election.

All of this takes place against the backdrop of the on-again, off-again conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, the predominantly Armenian exclave in Azerbaijan. Denber said the leaders of both nations have subtly used the dispute as a way to keep people's minds off each country's political shortcomings.

Another trouble spot is Ukraine. Human Rights Watch details what it calls the mostly successful efforts of the government of President Leonid Kuchma to limit political freedoms since the country achieved independence in 1991.

The document says these political abuses led to the presidential election in November, in which Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich was declared the winner, even though most outside observers found it riddled with fraud.

Supporters of opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko rallied in vast numbers in downtown Kyiv, and the country's Supreme Court eventually called for a new election a month later -- which Yushchenko won.

Denber said that, given 13 years of political corruption in Ukraine, Yushchenko's election offers real hope to the Ukrainian people because they have demonstrated their own power as engaged and educated voters. And she said their insistence on fair elections won them powerful allies in Europe.

But Denber added one caveat: "There's a huge onus now on Yushchenko precisely because there are these expectations. And it would be really sad if, instead of delivering on promises, the new government ends up not delivering and in the process perverting the rule of law. And that would make a lot of people very disillusioned."

She said a disillusioned Ukrainian electorate could lose faith in the system and eventually turn to a leader like Putin -- one who promises greater strength, but delivers less democracy.

Source: EurasiaNet; January 16, 2005; www.eurasianet.org

9. Marinich Portraits Near Walls of Prison

Today 20 activists of the Zubr movement lined up in front of the remand prison in Valadarski Street in Minsk with portraits of the Belarusian political prisoner Mikhail Marynich. The Zubr movement demanded to release former Minister of Foreign Economic Relations, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Belarus Mikhail Marynich. On December 30, 2004, the court of Minsk district sentenced the politician to 5 years of medium-security colony and confiscation of property. At the moment he is kept in the remand prison of the Minsk executive committee.

The protest lasted for about half an hour. During it the law-enforcers made an attempt to detain a cameraman of the Russian TV channel RenTV Vladimir Kostin, however after inspection of his documents the journalist was released.

Source: Zubr; January 19, 2005; www.zubr-belarus.com

BUSINESS

10. Belarus Decreases Oil Extraction by 0.8% in 2004

In 2004 the production association Belorusneft extracted 1,804,000 tons of oil, 0.8% down on 2003. Associated gas extraction totalled 245 million cubic metres, 97% as against 2003.

Belorusneft's production growth rate in 2004 corresponded with the growth rate registered in 2003. Belorusneft's output accounts for 2.61% of Belneftekhim's turnout.

Company's Director General Alexander Lyakhov told Interfax, the company planned to decrease associated gas extraction in 2004, as in 2003 the hydrocarbon stock growth rate fell. However, in 2004 Belorusneft increased oil reserves by 50.1% in comparison with 2003, bringing the total to 1,132,000 tons.

This year the company plans to extract 1,840,000 tons of oil, 1.2% up on 2004, 100% as against 2003.

The oil extraction will grow, as the company plans to explore Moskvichovskoye and Rechitskoye fields.

Belarusian geological oil deposits exceed 170 million tons mostly located in small oil fields with the capacity ranging from 100,000 tons to 1 million tons. Specialists forecast, the hard-to-obtain oil will make the feedstock basis of the company in the future.

Founded in 1964, Belorusneft performs prospecting works, oil and associated gas extraction, gas refining, and provides a wide range of exploration seismology services.

In 2003 Belorusneft extracted slightly more than 1,820,000 tons of oil or 1.1% down on 2002.

Source: Interfax; January 14, 2005; www.interfax.com

The Belarus Update is a weekly news bulletin of the Belarus Human Rights Support Project of the International League for Human Rights, www.ilhr.org. The League, now in its 62nd year, is a New York-based human rights NGO in consultative status with the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the International Labor Organization. To send letters to the Editor or to subscribe/unsubscribe please contact Sanwaree Sethi at sanwaree_ilhr.org.

For current and back issues, list of events, and more information about the League's advocacy activities in Belarus, please visit the Belarus Update website at: **www.belarusupdate.org**.

The Belarus project was established to support Belarusian citizens in making their case for the protection of civil society before the international community regarding Lukashenko's wholesale assault on human rights and the rule of law in Belarus.
