

Crime is solved. Executors of terrorist act are arrested

One day on, President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko met heads of the law-enforcement agencies, announcing that the awful crime — the terrorist act leading to the death of 13 Minskians and over 200 wounded — has been solved. The criminals have been seized. They are now giving testimonies and shall be subject to fair punishment. The words of the President addressed not only those present at the meeting but millions of Belarusians

I asked you to give me results every day. I wish to thank you for these results. Today [Wednesday — editor], the case was solved at 5am. It took our State Security Agency servicemen and police just 24 hours to detain the executors of this drastic crime, at 9pm yesterday [Tuesday — editor], conducting a brilliant operation without any shooting or commotion. Today, at 5am, they gave testimonies.

Importantly, we know who conducted this terrorist act and how. However, we still don't know the purpose, which shall soon become known. This is our primary task now. I should stress again: I'm extremely grateful to the State Security Agency, our police, staff of the Public Prosecutor's Office and all enforcement agencies for this prompt work.

Analysts, investigators and experts have built up a strict chronology of the

crime, while processing a large amount of audio and video materials. What especially pleases me is that they — figuratively speaking — have found the criminals without leaving their offices. Later, the active stage of the operation for their seizure began. This is worthy of a civilised nation, where people fight against the most serious crimes, using their brains. For me, as the President, this is very important.

Much work has been done by each specialist, in their own field. I'm expressing my special gratitude to the Emergency Ministry's staff, doctors of the emergency service and those doctors who are now standing by operating tables, fighting for the lives of our people.

We thank all Belarusians who responded to our call. We've received thousands of the most important messages, which need further processing. I'm convinced

that, while working on the investigation of this terrible crime, we'll detect hundreds and thousands of other crimes, previously conducted. As our investigators have reported, those detected have admitted not only to the terrorist act in Minsk's metro, but the terrorist acts on Independence Day and those which took place earlier in Vitebsk.

We should now — in the shortest possible time — finish all investigative actions and send the case to the court; this regards the head of the investigation group, Colonel Andrei Shved. The Interior Ministry, State Security Agency and other law-enforcement agencies should continue the enhanced regime of the service. In line with my order, given at the last meeting, we should certainly not relax. 'Mopping-up operation' must be carried out in all directions. You understand what I mean. I've



Alexander Lukashenko's meeting with heads of law-enforcement agencies

been saying it for two days now. You see how cruel and bloody the world around us is becoming. We mustn't allow this situation to develop in Belarus.

I repeat, our primary goal is to learn from this tragedy. However, these lessons must be drawn not only by law-enforcement agencies but also by executive power, legal entities and by we, ordinary people. It's horrible but these are the facts: these beasts — who perpetrated this crime — worked as a lathe operator and electrician, in ordinary companies. They talked to their numerous col-

leagues and friends, in a narrow circle. I cannot believe that those who surrounded them, including the heads of their plants, failed to suspect these criminals. Such people always have abnormalities and these should have been noticed...

Our country has long been cradled in a calm and stable situation. From today, each of us, Belarusians, must remember that we won't achieve the high goals we've set regarding the development of our country if we fail to drastically change our attitude towards ourselves, our lives, work, family and chil-

dren. The fundamentals for our further survival are the toughest order, strict organisation, co-ordination and precision. People are ready for these. Look at the actions of people during the tragedy. No panic was observed, with everyone supporting each other. People took out the wounded — as if from the battlefield; they rescued their friends and those who were just nearby. They saw no faces in the darkness but were rescuing people, although they themselves were in the most serious situation. This is another example of the character of our nation.

What lesson can be learnt from the explosion?

Yelena Fadeeva, the Chair of the Minsk City Organisation of the Belarusian Red Cross Society:

All members of my family immediately felt that the time had come to band together and demonstrate responsibility. The day after the explosion, we got up early in the morning to come to work on time, as problems with public transport were expected. It was the right decision: even before 9am, people began calling, offering their help. For example, students from two universities proposed collecting money for victims, since they'll soon need wheelchairs and artificial limbs. For me, this explosion provides a lesson regarding vigilance. It's better not to complain on seeing lots of police at a city festival, for example. It's better to take every precaution, passing through metal detectors to ensure security.

Abu-Bekir Shabanovich, Mufti of Belarus' Muslim Religious Association:

Probably, the first lesson is the awful discovery that such

horrible killers live among us — normal people. We now know and must take the information into consideration in our daily lives. When the explosion occurred on the metro, I was recording a TV programme on Belarus' religions. We were talking about the peace and mutual understanding which exist between believers in our multi-confessional state, which is a huge achievement. When filming ended, we received information about the explosion. It was such a shock. Believe me, true believers never kill anyone. As the Koran teaches us: 'whoever kills an innocent, it is as if he has killed all mankind'.

Ivan Karnilovich, Minsk designer:

As I was going to work, I noticed that people were behaving more calmly on public transport. I don't think this was from fear or suspicion, as a result of the explosion. On the contrary, we are now more attentive to each other, even kinder. Young people were giving their seats to the elderly



People still coming to the mournful place

and didn't rush out of buses, as is usual. Rather, they behaved in a civilised manner, letting people walk ahead. It was an unusual lesson for me.

Nikolai Andreichuk, a member of the Standing Committee of the House of Representatives for Legislation, Judicial and Legal Issues:

Really, this tragedy shall

unite our nation even more. I can hardly comprehend how someone who has lived among us, breathing the same air, could commit such a crime. Of course, such a monster will be deservedly punished. I think we must bring justice on all who aid terrorists, spreading panic, alongside lies and unreliable information on the Internet.

Wishing them a speedy recovery

Dozens of people are being treated at Minsk clinics, with many in a serious condition. Operations, ligatures and examinations lie ahead. Meanwhile, some patients are already preparing to leave hospital. The youngest victim is Alesha Semiletnikov, aged just 2, who has already returned home. Four patients at the 5th City Clinical Hospital are also recovering, with two young boys and two men being taken home by their relatives. Two Russian women, who have received assistance at the 3rd Clinical Hospital, have also left for Saratov by train.

Expectant mother Irina Santarovich (in the photo) — a patient at the 3rd Clinical Hospital — was waiting for a train on the platform when the explosion occurred. A granite fragment has wounded her leg. Strangers tried to stop the bleeding using a strap from a woman's handbag and helped Irina out of the metro station. However, at the time, the young girl was most worried not for herself, but for her baby — due to appear within three months. When Irina was brought to the hospital, she was promptly given an ultrasound,



which showed that everything was fine with her unborn son. Irina is being visited by her relatives and hopes to be discharged soon.

Many relatives and friends are yet to see their injured loved ones. Tatiana Gladchenko of Minsk is waiting day and night in the corridors of the 3rd hospital, where her friend, Artem Divnenko, is being treated. On that unfortunate evening, they should have met with friends in the city centre. Artem is now in the Ophthalmology Department, with eye wounds; he awaits surgery to remove fragments. Specialists are sure that he'll keep his sight in one eye, but the second is worse. Tatiana doesn't want to think about what might be; she can only wait and hope, like the others whose relatives are injured.