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Border crime in the aspect of the hybrid war between Belarus and Poland

Introduction

The aim of this article is to analyze the issue of border crime in the context of a hybrid war between Belarus and Poland. Both states were dependent on Russian influence as communist states, struggling with economic and political problems. After the Second World War, everything changed. The fates of Poland and Belarus have diverged in completely different directions. Poland became an independent state with a capitalist economy and the policy of Western Europe¹. The influx of American and Western European culture led to the adoption of new customs, celebrating foreign holidays or the popularization of American music. In addition, Poland began to be affected by phenomena commonly known in developed countries, including the particularly rapid aging of the population². The economic situation of our country has improved significantly and the membership in the European Union has further accelerated the economic development. Poland relatively quickly began to be called first a developing country, then a developed country. What is extremely important, Poland remains a democratic country, constantly developing and getting richer. As a country, however, it still struggles with problems resulting mainly from its difficult history, i.e. poor transport infrastructure or a worse economic situation in the eastern part of the country. The topic of poverty is still topical, including living in poverty in families, emigration of well-educated specialists abroad in order to obtain higher earnings, difficult access to health care or a relatively high percentage of fatal road accidents.

¹ A. Gil, T. Kapuśniak, *Polityka wschodnia Polski. Uwarunkowania – koncepcje – realizacja*, Lublin–Warszawa 2009, p. 20.

² Kancelaria Senatu, Biuro Analiz i Dokumentacji, *Starzenie się społeczeństwa polskiego i jego skutki*, Opracowania tematyczne OT-601, Warszawa 2011.

The history of Belarus is significantly different. It is a country with a rich culture that is less inspired by American or Western European cultures. The media is largely nationalized here, which also makes them politicized. Officially, Belarus remains an independent country with a republic and a semi-presidential system. The country is recognized worldwide as an authoritarian regime³. The state itself is referred to in the media as the militia state⁴. Belarus has been influenced by Russia's policy for years⁵. This is due to the fact that similar political propaganda is being conducted and the freedom of citizens is limited. This dependence is also formally sealed with the creation of the Union of Belarus and Russia (Union of Belarus and Russia). The country is one of the developing countries with a socialist-market economy. Therefore, Belarus is struggling with a difficult economic situation, low or negative GDP growth, unemployment, population emigration or insufficient health care.

Polish-Belarusian relations since the 2000s have encountered many obstacles in terms of cooperation and neighborhood. As a member of the European Union, from 2020 Poland does not recognize the leadership of President Lukashenka⁶, whose rule is considered a symbol of breaking the law and introducing the principles of an authoritarian state. Additionally, the dependence of Belarus on Russia poses a potential threat to Poland. Putin's efforts to make other countries of the former USSR dependent on himself, as well as the attempts to conquer other territories by armed forces, pose a direct threat to Poland, which has been defining its political affiliation with the European Union for many years. Additionally, Poland is an independent state, which is in opposition to Russia's plans. Belarus has become a state dependent on Russia's actions, which naturally led to a conflict. Another issue is the conflict between Russia and Ukraine⁷. Until now, involving economic blackmail, especially in terms of the supply of raw materials, this conflict has recently turned into military aggression against Ukraine by Russia. In this case, the Belarusian side supports the aggressor not only by politically supporting his actions, but also by providing assistance in the field of launching missiles from Belarus⁸.

The emergence of a conflict between Poland and Belarus in the face of the current political situation seemed to be only a matter of time. This study pro-

³ https://www.eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=Democracy0115 (accessed: 25.02.2022).

⁴ <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/komentarze-osw/2021-05-11/koszt-panstwa-milicyjnego-problemy-gospodarcze-bialorusi> (accessed: 25.02.2022).

⁵ P. Foligowski, *Białoruś. Trudna niepodległość*, Wrocław 1999, p. 14.

⁶ <https://www.rp.pl/swiat/art8813721-polska-nie-uznaje-lukaszenki-za-prezydenta-bialorusi> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁷ <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2022-02-26/rosyjski-atak-na-ukraine-drugadoba-wojny> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁸ <https://www.bankier.pl/wiadomosc/Bialorus-wystrzelila-rakiety-na-Ukraine-Lukaszenka-to-była-samoobrona-8286977.html> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

vides a better understanding of the conflict that has arisen in relation to the political situation on both sides. The research problem is getting to know the context of the conflict that has arisen and presenting the arguments of both sides. The reference of the current conflict to legal and political issues is assumed as an interpretative framework.

A comprehensive understanding of the problem of border crime in the aspect of the hybrid war between Belarus and Poland is possible only through a detailed analysis of the reasons for both sides. This subject cannot be separated from the current events taking place in Ukraine, including in particular Belarus' support for Russia in its attacks on that country. The analysis of this topic was based mainly on the articles available in the national press and information published in news services from around the world. In the preparation of this work, materials from forsal.pl, [governmental gov.pl](http://governmental.gov.pl), Polityka.pl or businessinsider.com.pl were used. Historical events have been described on the basis of many literature items, for example: *History Polish* Topolski's, *History of Belarus 1795–2000* Szybieka's or Jenkins' *Short History of Europe*. Legal acts of international law were also used during the preparation of the study. The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms was of particular importance here. The materials were also prepared with the use of the United Nations Charter adopted in 1945 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 by the UN General Assembly.

The issue of border crime in the aspect of the hybrid war between Belarus and Poland

The hybrid war between Poland and Belarus is an extremely topical topic. Numerous media reports about refugees living in extreme conditions, while in this part of Europe it is a merciless winter. Additionally, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict deepens the problem of legal and illegal migrants arriving from Eastern countries to Poland. The hybrid war between Belarus and Poland is, however, a multifaceted and complicated issue. Its causes can be traced back to Russia's aspirations, including the desire to destabilize the borders of the European Union, and even to create a threat of further aggression against other countries.

Research methodology

The aim of this study is to investigate the issue of border crime in the context of the hybrid war between Belarus and Poland in the years 2021–2022.

It is assumed as a hypothesis that this hybrid war is a tool of political and organizational destabilization of the situation of Poland as a member of the European Union by Belarus. The supporting hypothesis is that the current conflict in Ukraine is an example of Russia's efforts to change the balance of political forces in Europe and Asia.

The following research questions are:

- What are the causes of the conflict between Belarus and Poland?
- What is the political context of hybrid warfare?
- Which social group will be most affected by the conflict?
- What is the significance of a hybrid war in the face of the current political situation in Europe and East Asia?

The scope of the work is to examine the current situation of the relationship with the hybrid war in relation to the interests of Poland as a party to the conflict. The research method is the analysis of available literature and the press, websites, media reports, etc. The study of this topic is an important aspect of better understanding the occurrence of hybrid war and related messages.

History of Polish-Belarusian relations

Poland and Belarus are linked by many years of history. This one was complicated and full of changes many times. Once the territories of today's Republic of Belarus belonged to the Duchy of Poland. It happened in the times of unquestionable glory of Poland, as a result of the Union of Lublin in 1579. The borders of our country were much further back then, covering the territory of today's Ukraine and Lithuania. This state of affairs lasted until 1793. Then, as a result of the partition of Poland (1793–1795), these areas were taken over by Russia⁹. Szybieka draws attention to the beginnings of the formation of Belarusian culture and language¹⁰. The first records about him can be found in the nineteenth century. Belarusians already at that time had their ethnic and national identity, including their culture, they identified themselves through language, traditions and customs. However, they were influenced by both Polish and tsarist Russia or other neighboring countries. As Kosman writes, the cultural and linguistic richness was also related to the fact that a large diversity of nationalities lived in Belarus, including Poles, Russians, Ukrainians and Jews. It was a natural consequence of the location of the place of residence and the political and economic affiliation of these areas.

⁹ J. Topolski, *Dzieje Polski*, Poznań 2015, p. 97.

¹⁰ Z. Szybieka, *Historia Białorusi 1795–2000*, Lublin 2002, p. 63.

Political affiliation to the Duchy of Poland and the influence of neighboring countries played an important role in the history of Belarusians. In the indicated areas, after their conquest by the Russians, it was possible to identify movements supporting belonging to Poland, as well as the willingness to become independent from it. During the period of belonging to Russia, the idea of independence grew, which resulted in the creation of Belarusian literature, the publishing of newspapers and the establishment of the Belarusian Revolutionary Party (1902). Despite actions of this type, independence movements have not been effective so far. The period of the First World War (1914–1918) was a chance for Belarusians to try to create their own state¹¹. It was also related to the collapse of the tsarist regime in Russia, which significantly changed the country's political scene. At that time, the direction of socialist and communist policy was gaining momentum, and the propaganda was more and more effectively promoted by Włodzimierz Lenin. These actions ended with an armed seizure of power and the forceful suppression of the opposition by the Bolshevik government¹².

Socialist and revolutionary moods, including the armed riots of the Bolsheviks directed by Lenin's propaganda, facilitated this process. In 1918, for a short period, even the Belarusian People's Republic was established, the fate of which will be settled. However, there were changes in the balance of power in Europe, including, in particular, the withdrawal of German troops from the occupied territories. In 1919, at the very beginning of the year, the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic was established, then a month later the Lithuanian-Belarusian Soviet Republic was established. This one did not last until the end of the year and eventually collapsed. It was considered an artificial state that was overthrown by Poles immediately after Poland regained independence. The government of the Belarusian People's Republic was in exile at that time. Despite this, Poland and Belarus signed a military convention in 1920, the purpose of which was to fight the Bolshevik troops. Increased propaganda and the strong influence of Lenin led to the resurrection of the Belarusian Soviet Republic. Belarus soon became part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of the USSR (in 1922)¹³.

The USSR was a federation of Soviet republics with a communist and socialist system. The idea behind the communists was to fight capitalism and incorporate new areas into the united republic. Attempts to fight for independence, change the political system or the emergence of a political opposition to the authorities were suppressed. Therefore, the inhabitants of the conquered territories could not openly build their culture and shape themselves as

¹¹ M. Kosman, *Historia Białorusi*, Wrocław 1979, p. 13, 72.

¹² S. Jenkins, *Krótką historia Europy. Od Peryklesa do Putina*, Warszawa 2020, p. 45, 60.

¹³ Ł. Kamiński, M. Korcuć, *Przewodnik po historii Polski 966–2016*, Warszawa 2016, p. 60, 118.

a nation. This does not mean, however, that such actions did not take place. A perfect example of this were activities that practiced traditions, used language and continued the work of Polish artists after the partition, and Belarusians in the times of oppression¹⁴.

The history of Poland and Belarus is not linked again until the Soviet aggression against Poland in 1939. Aggression was also one of the first actions carried out as part of World War II, in which the Germans attacked Poland. Despite numerous attempts, the Poles failed to defend themselves, not being able to count on the support of their allies – England and France. The result of these events was another partition of Poland. The territory of the country was divided between the Germans and the USSR¹⁵. Poland as a country disappeared from the political maps of the world again. The activity of the Polish underground, the way of fighting for independence and the attempt to fight the strong occupiers led to the devastation of the country. About 20% of the country's population died as a result of the fighting¹⁶, the problem turned out to be the bad economic situation, destruction of industry, loss of goods and property by the population. Huge losses were visible in culture¹⁷. Many national works of art were stolen or destroyed during the war. After the war, Poland gained the western territories, but lost the eastern territories. This means that the Polish Lviv or the Borysławsko-Drohobyckie basin were incorporated into the USSR, which meant that Poland lost as much as 48% of the land it had during the Second Polish Republic¹⁸. In addition, the newly created Republic was finally transformed into the Polish People's Republic (PRL) characterized by a communist regime. The People's Republic of Poland was incorporated into the USSR. This meant the lack of sovereignty and full political and economic subordination to the federation¹⁹. These times were adorned with poverty, socialism, and technological and economic backwardness in relation to the West. For Poles it was in many cases a difficult time, full of struggle for basic goods (e.g. clothes, shoes, car, etc.), filled with limitations, political propaganda and dreams of Western living standards²⁰. Belonging to communist countries politically brought Poland closer to Russia, Ukraine or Belarus. One of the foreign languages taught in schools was Russian. It was possible to go mainly to the countries of the USSR for trips

¹⁴ S. Jenkins, op. cit., pp. 121–123.

¹⁵ J. Topolski, op. cit., pp. 132–134.

¹⁶ Sources here give values from about 17% of the Polish population killed in combat to as much as 22% of this indicator. The discrepancies result from different estimation methods and the lack of precise data on those who died during World War II in Poland.

¹⁷ A. Beevor, *Druga wojna światowa*, Kraków 2013, pp. 37–39.

¹⁸ A. Nowak, *Polska Wielka księga historii*, Warszawa 2018, pp. 30–32.

¹⁹ E. Mironowicz, *Historia państw świata w XX wieku. Białoruś*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 253–255.

²⁰ I. Kienzler, *Życie w PRL. I strasznie i śmiesznie*, Warszawa 2015, pp. 9–15.

abroad²¹. Polish-Ukrainian, Polish-Russian or Polish-Belarusian relations were apparently very good at that time. However, Poles' aspirations to have an independent country led to a rejection of propaganda and resentment towards other countries belonging to the USSR²².

Poland's orientation towards the policy of Western European countries took place at the turn of 1989 and 1990. It was then that the communist government in Poland collapsed and the Polish United Workers' Party ceased to rule, and a new power was elected in democratic elections²³. The end of the communist era marked a cut off from the influence of the former USSR countries and a big turn towards the West. The consequence of this was many political events. Poland joined NATO in 1999 and the European Union (EU) in 2004. These changes led to a significant cultural and political cut-off between the country and the countries of the former USSR. Poland has become a modern, European country, benefiting from EU membership in the Schengen area, including the free movement of goods and people. Poland is struggling with many internal problems, including, for example, the ineffective health service or inflation, but in the world it is considered a dynamically developing economy. So far, the increase in the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in Poland has been stable, and the economic and political situation is most threatened by limited gas and oil supplies from Russia and potential armed conflicts on the eastern borders country²⁴.

Belarusians undertook the first independence actions in the middle of 1990. The collapse of the USSR dates back to 1991, and independent states were created in its place. Belarus, Russia and Ukraine were among them²⁵. Belarus became a presidential republic. Through the rule of Alexander Lukashenka, this system is characterized by authoritarianism. The European Union countries did not recognize his authority as legal, and did not recognize him as a representative of Belarus. The government of the country is accused of numerous crimes, including, in particular, violations of human rights. Belarusian and Russian relations have deteriorated in recent years, which has had a significant impact on the condition of the country's economy. Like many Baltic countries, Belarus depends to a large extent on the supply of raw materials, including oil and gas, from Russia. In addition, the unstable political

²¹ <https://expressbydgoski.pl/turystyka-w-prl-podroz-za-jeden-kryształ-kilka-par-dzinsow-i-troche-biseptolu/ar/c15-14297327> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

²² R. Zięba, *Główne kierunki polityki zagranicznej Polski po zimnej wojnie*, Warszawa 2010, pp. 13–22.

²³ R. Kuźniar, K. Szczepanik (ed.), *Polityka zagraniczna RP 1989–2002*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 56–58.

²⁴ R. Zięba, *Polityka zagraniczna Polski w strefie euroatlantyckiej*, Warszawa 2013, pp. 10–22.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 120–122.

situation of the country and not the best economic condition led to a negative GDP growth in selected years²⁶. The deteriorating relationship with Russia led to a further weakening of the country's economic growth. The situation is not improved by the geographical location of Belarus next to politically and economically unstable Ukraine, unfavorable Russia, moving towards the economy of western Poland, and not the richest Lithuania²⁷.

Since the end of World War II, the history of Poland and Belarus has been very difficult. Even in 1945, after the Second World War, Poland regained its presence on the world maps, the losses it suffered forever changed the face of the country. In addition, the hard time of communism led to Poland's economic delay in relation to its western neighbors. The situation was similar in Belarus, which for many years was also sovereign of the USSR, taking over the political system in force. Belarusians were very negatively affected by the war, struggling with economic and political problems. The situation between Poland and Belarus was made more difficult by the fact that present-day Belarus used to be part of Poland. This resulted in displacement, but also a feeling of great loss among Poles due to the lost land and the vision of its former glory. Nevertheless, on October 10, 1991, the Polish-Belarusian "Declaration on Good Neighborhood, Mutual Understanding and Cooperation" was signed²⁸. Thus, both countries recognized themselves as equal and friendly to each other. The lack of territorial claims of both sides towards each other and the recognition of their ethnic, cultural and national differences was clearly indicated. It was in the interest of both countries to preserve peace and enable political and economic cooperation. Poland was one of the countries that quickly recognized the independence of Belarus²⁹. This happened in the last days of 1991³⁰. A year later, a treaty was signed establishing the principles of good neighborliness, including mutual respect and friendly cooperation. It is worth noting that Poland signed a similar treaty with Germany, for example, at a similar time³¹.

The political situation between Belarus and Poland did not go well after the treaty was signed. Despite the expressions of good intentions and the written commitment of both parties, there were concerns that Russia would

²⁶ R. Czachor, *Białoruś w stosunkach międzynarodowych*, I. Topolski (red.), Wydawnictwo UMCS, Lublin 2009, ss. 334, „Wschodnioznawstwo” 2010, no. 4, pp. 213–215 (review).

²⁷ I. Topolski, *Białoruś w stosunkach międzynarodowych*, Lublin 2009, pp. 215–216.

²⁸ E. Mironowicz, *Polityka zagraniczna Białorusi 1990–2010*, Białystok 2011, pp. 60–61.

²⁹ K. Malak, *Polityka zagraniczna i bezpieczeństwa Białorusi*, Warszawa 2003, p. 45.

³⁰ Traktat między Rzeczpospolitą Polską a Republiką Białoruś o dobrym sąsiedztwie i przyjaznej współpracy, podpisany w Warszawie dnia 23 czerwca 1992 r. (Journal of Laws 1993, No. 118, Item 527).

³¹ Traktat między Rzeczpospolitą Polską a Republiką Federalną Niemiec o dobrym sąsiedztwie i przyjaznej współpracy, podpisany w Bonn dnia 17 czerwca 1991 r. (Journal of Laws 1992, No. 14, Item 56).

interfere in this relationship³². Belarus has been under a very strong Russian influence since 1994³³. In the meantime, Alyaksandr Lukashenka won the presidential elections in Belarus³⁴. Belarus's dependence on Russia was sealed in 1997 with the agreement on the Union of Belarus and Russia (UBC)³⁵. Belarus's dependence on Russia is an extremely unfavorable situation for Poland. The current aspirations of Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, are often based on the armed takeover or making other countries of the former USSR dependent on each other³⁶. This means that the independence of countries such as Poland, Ukraine and Belarus is in danger. In the case of Belarus, dependence on Russia has already been formally confirmed³⁷. Ukraine was attacked by the Russians in 2014 and Crimea and Sevastopol were taken from it³⁸. For this reason, severe economic and political sanctions have been imposed on Russia. However, this did not change Moscow's attitude, which recognized Crimea as an inseparable part of its country. Such a state is not accepted by most countries of the world. Formally, Ukraine has been in conflict with Russia since then, but so far it has not manifested itself in hostilities.

Currently, numerous media reports about Putin's attack on Ukraine. A few weeks ago, this event was presented in the media as a potential political takeover, most likely not having an armed character or involving troops present only in Donetsk and its vicinity³⁹. Almost all Polish newspapers, including "Gazeta Wyborcza", "Newsweek Polska" and the "Polska Times", reported alarming leaks about the intention to attempt a coup against the Ukrainian authorities. The media reported information about the deployment of Russian troops on the border with Ukraine, but the Russian authorities assured that only exercises were taking place there⁴⁰. Speculation is coming this conflict did not stop. It soon turned out that these suspicions were fully accurate. On February 24, 2022, Russia attacked Ukraine with an armed attack from many sides. The aggression carried out was associated with a massive attack on

³² A. Eberhardt, U. Ułachowicz, *Białoruś – Polszcza. Polska – Białoruś*, Warszawa 2003, pp. 23–25.

³³ E. Mironowicz, *Polityka zagraniczna...*, pp. 120–122.

³⁴ R. Czachor, *Miejsce Republiki Białoruś w polskiej polityce wschodniej. Bilans dwudziestolecia*, Polkowice 2012, pp. 136–138.

³⁵ <https://www.rp.pl/polityka/art19077341-zwiazek-radziecki-2-0-coraz-blizej> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

³⁶ E. Mironowicz, *Polityka zagraniczna...*, pp. 37–39.

³⁷ K. Fedorowicz, *Polityka Polski wobec Rosji, Ukrainy i Białorusi w latach 1989–2010*, Poznań 2011, pp. 11–13.

³⁸ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/pl/press/press-releases/2021/06/21/russia-s-illegal-annexation-of-crimea-and-sevastopol-council-renews-sanctions-for-a-further-year> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

³⁹ <https://teleshow.wp.pl/atak-na-ukraine-polske-i-kraje-baltyckie-672886944111008a> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁴⁰ <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75399,28106033,rosja-koncentruje-wojska-na-granicy-z-ukraina-sa-nowe-zdjecia.html> (accessed: 22.02.2022).

military centers and on the civilian population. Countless photos of rockets hitting residential buildings appeared in the media, and information about the firing of trains or cars with fleeing terrified citizens of Ukraine spread all over the world. These actions were quickly called war crimes⁴¹.

The evident of another war in Europe has thus become a fact. Ukraine fiercely defends itself against a very strong invader. It has the support of many countries around the world, including all of Western Europe, including all members of the European Union. Support was also guaranteed by the United States and Great Britain⁴². This does not change the fact that Russia has much larger armed forces than Ukraine. Additionally, it had been preparing for the war for many months, planning attacks not only from Russia, but also from Belarus. Thus, Ukraine was not only surprised by the aggression, but was in fact attacked by its two neighbors.

The situation related to the conflict was made worse by the fact that the economic and political situation in Ukraine had not been good for several years. The state was weakened and struggled with internal problems. Another important factor was the ongoing SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic⁴³. The pandemic not only weakened the economic situation in Ukraine, but also led to a strain on the work of health services. For Poland, Russia's attack on Ukraine means potentially changing the political balance in Europe, including the outbreak of war on its eastern border and being on the frontline of the European Union, the United States and NATO's actions against Russia⁴⁴. The conflict also has a moral dimension. Poland, as well as other European countries, condemned the military aggression that resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of people. European countries are trying to support Ukraine by sending weapons, food and humanitarian aid. Poland is a country that intends to accept all migrants fleeing the war. Free medical assistance, free transport, accommodation and food or legal assistance were organized⁴⁵.

Attacks on Ukraine are supported by Belarus, which also borders Poland. The potential vision of Russia conquering Ukraine would lead to Poland's border with Russia or its dependent countries over a very long distance. The conflict in Ukraine made it possible to intensify the reluctance of Poles towards Belarusians and Russians in a very short time. In view of the fact that, even before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, these relations were extremely difficult,

⁴¹ <https://tvn24.pl/swiat/rosja-zaatakowala-ukraine-amnesty-international-ataki-agresorow-moga-stanowic-zbrodnie-wojenne-5614210> (accessed: 27.02.2022).

⁴² <https://www.se.pl/wiadomosci/polityka/te-kraje-wspieraja-ukraine-w-wojnie-z-rosja-i-kto-jakiej-pomocy-udzielil-aa-9RXC-zXF2-vYo9.html> (accessed: 28.02.2022).

⁴³ <https://www.gov.pl/web/koronawirus> (accessed: 20.02.2022).

⁴⁴ <https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/inwazja-na-ukraine-to-straty-dla-wszystkich-polska-jest-juz-krajem-frontowym-6728467715173216a.html> (accessed: 28.02.2022).

⁴⁵ <https://polskatimes.pl/pomoc-ukrainie-jak-i-gdzie-pomagac-informacja-aktualizowana/ar/c1-16070267> (accessed: 29.02.2022).

at present it is almost impossible to conduct them properly. Currently, Poland's activities are based on the imposition of economic and financial sanctions against both Belarus and Russia. For example, PKO BP blocked payments to eleven Russian and Ukrainian banks⁴⁶.

The dependence of Ukraine and Belarus on Russia is a very undesirable and dangerous phenomenon for Poles. Russia in no way conceals its intentions to take over the territories of the former USSR and its tendency to take military action to achieve such a state. The further dependence of Belarus and the integration of countries in terms of taxes, law and the economy are one of the important steps in achieving this goal⁴⁷. States conduct discussions on the issue of common security, which in turn creates a natural political and economic border between the West and the East⁴⁸.

Despite the political differences between Poland and Belarus, economic contacts between both countries have registered increases in recent years. In 2020, the export of Polish products to Belarus amounted to EUR 1.6 billion, and import – EUR 1.4 billion⁴⁹. Both imports and exports have increased in recent years⁵⁰. There are also several hundred companies with Polish capital in Belarus. The country imports much more goods than it exports. Despite this, trade with Poland constitutes a significant part of the Belarusian budget. This is despite the fact that Belarus conducts an anti-market economic policy, which in practice means the implementation of the communist economy. Many of the largest companies are run by the government and sometimes even by the president himself. The share of private enterprises in the state is very small⁵¹.

The recent conflicts on the Polish-Belarusian border have not changed this situation. Economic cooperation between the countries grew, which, however, made the current Polish-Belarusian conflict even more complicated. It is also worth noting that the fact of the war in Ukraine will also have a significant impact on the deterioration of relations between Belarus and Poland in a very short time. One can only speculate that the economic cooperation of the two countries will weaken in the coming months. Rebuilding good relations may be impossible for a long time.

⁴⁶ <https://businessinsider.com.pl/biznes/sankcje-przeciw-rosji-pko-bp-blokuje-platnosci-do-11-bankow-rosyjskich-i-bialoruskich/8vzhvxd> (accessed: 28.02.2022).

⁴⁷ <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2021-11-05/rosja-bialorus-pozorowane-przyspieszenie-integracji> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁴⁸ <https://forsal.pl/swiat/rosja/artykuly/7835192,forum-regionow-bialorusi-i-rosji-minsk-bezpieczenstwo-gospod-arcze-lukaszenka.html> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁴⁹ Date CSO, <https://stat.gov.pl/banki-i-bazy-danych/handel-zagraniczny> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁵⁰ <https://itro.pl/rynki-zagraniczne/bialorus> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁵¹ <https://businessinsider.com.pl/finanse/makroekonomia/gospodarka-bialorusi-skad-lukaszenko-bierze-srodki-na-armie-polska-ma-w-tym-swoj-d3shmbt> (accessed: 28.02.2022).

Hybrid war between Belarus and Poland

Hybrid War is a specific form of war. It manifests itself in maintaining the conflict by states without conducting military actions or even significant economic or political changes. This type of war is aimed at hitting the enemy's weak point in order to achieve the intended target⁵². A characteristic feature of this type of conflict is the use of modern techniques of attacking the opponent, which, however, are not related to an armed attack. Formally, both countries remain at peace, often continuing economic cooperation. A tool in a hybrid war may be unconventional instruments related to subversive activities, including political attacks, attempts to destabilize the economic situation of the enemy, for example through speculation or disinformation, etc. Exactly such activities have been carried out so far by the Belarusian side towards Poles.

When starting the analysis of the hybrid war between Belarus and Poland, it is worth understanding the intentions of each side of the conflict. The first point here is to understand who is fighting with whom. There is a reason why it is said that it is a hybrid war between Belarus and Poland, while the statement that it is a conflict between Poland and Belarus is never used. Emphasizing that the aforementioned war is declared to Poland by Belarus is an important aspect of understanding its origins. It should be recalled here that Poland represents a different system and the way of running the national economy than Belarus. Our country is democratic and capitalist. The principle of the free market is the basic tool of market self-regulation. Additionally, Poland is a country that is economically open to cooperation both in the EU and in the world. Our country is also a democratic, unitary state, belonging to the European Union, the United Nations and NATO. The borders of our country define the eastern border of the Union and NATO, which is a kind of political counterweight to socialist Russia and Belarus.

Eastern countries are characterized by a much more authoritarian way of governing⁵³. In both Russia and Belarus, the position of the president is associated with a very wide ranging power, including political and legislative decision-making. Another issue is that the Belarusian economy is heavily dependent on Russia, including the import of mineral resources and fuels, as well as the export of goods.

The political and economic differences between Belarus and Poland are undoubtedly difficult to reconcile, which creates a natural field for conflicts. However, it is worth relating this situation to Russia's aspirations, in particular to Vladimir Putin, the president of the Russian Federation, who has an

⁵² <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/pl/articles/2021/11/30/wojna-hybrydowa-nowe-zagrozenia-zlozonosc-i-zaufanie-jako-antidotum/index.html> (accessed: 20.02.2022).

⁵³ <https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/Bialorus-Gospodarka;4573790.html> (accessed: 20.02.2022).

extremely strong position. Putin has long talked in the media about the need to change the balance of power in the world. He also mentioned the desire to regain power over Ukraine, Latvia, Poland and other countries that were in the past part of the USSR or under the influence of the Russians⁵⁴. This fact puts Belarus, supporting Putin, in a natural opposition to Poland, which remains an independent country which is additionally part of the political and military forces opposing Russia – the European Union and NATO. The media has long reported on Putin's desire to destabilize the EU's borders, the tool of which were Belarus's actions against Poland, which are today called hybrid war.

Belarus' actions towards Poland as part of the hybrid war⁵⁵:

- Initiating a border crisis at border crossings with Poland by transporting thousands of refugees from Afghanistan and Iraq to the border areas,
- Undertaking attempts to politically destabilize the European Union through disinformation in the media and falsification of data and information,
- Supporting the migration crisis of refugees from war-torn countries, including Afghanistan and Iraq,
- Creating a threat to the security of the Polish State by supporting attempts to illegally cross the Polish border,
- “testing” the reaction of the European Union, including Poland, by exacerbating the border crisis (e.g. by preventing the refugee retreat deep into Belarus or by failing to provide refugees with adequate assistance),
- Defining Poland as a country oppressing refugees from countries under war or persecuted politically, culturally, religiously, etc.,
- Asking Russia for help in easing the conflict with Poland via Belarus.

The hybrid war between Belarus and Poland has its roots indirectly in the migration crisis and the conflict between Poland and Russia and Poland – Belarus. The ongoing war in Iraq and Afghanistan, among others, and the conflicts in Africa have led to a massive and uncontrolled movement of people from war-torn countries to wealthy countries, including Western Europe. So far, people have come mainly from the Western Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean routes. However, due to the escalation of conflicts, especially in Afghanistan and Syria, an increasing number of immigrants began to come to Europe from the Eastern European route.

The migration crisis was the subject disputes between countries around the world for many years. In 2021, it was used as an excuse to start a conflict between Belarus and Poland⁵⁶. This situation was started with the reports of

⁵⁴ <https://300gospodarka.pl/wywiady/wojna-na-ukrainie-dlaczego-putina-dzis-nie-interesuje-kompromis-wywiad-z-szefem-osw> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁵⁵ <https://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/kraj/artykuly/8288290,wojna-hybrydowa-granica-o-co-chodzi.html> (accessed: 25.02.2022).

⁵⁶ <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2021-12-15/granica-polsko-bialoruska-to-nie-jest-zaden-kryzys-hum-anitarny-to-jest-wojna-hybrydowa> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

a significantly increasing number of immigrants crossing the Polish border from Belarus illegally. At the beginning of August 2021, the Polish Border Guard detained about 350 immigrants, mainly from Afghanistan and Iraq. The following days saw an increase in such reports⁵⁷. Initially, illegal immigrants were either directed to centers for foreigners or returned. With time, however, it turned out that the numbers of the incoming population significantly exceeded expectations. The refugees were massively transported to Belarus (against payment) by the Lukashenka government only to be then transported to the border with Poland. As a consequence of these actions, Poland almost completely closed its eastern border. Thousands of people found themselves on the border of Poland and Belarus, which resulted in the sending of troops to this area to support the activities of the Border Guard. At that time, Poland started actions to stop the influx of people, including those preventing them from crossing the border. The immigrants made numerous attempts to cross the border illegally. Among the behaviors aimed at this were attempts to cross the border by force, attacks on troops and the Border Guard, etc.

The situation of migrants at the border quickly became very difficult. The Belarusian authorities prevented them from returning to the interior of the country, cutting off their path. In addition, an engineering dam and a fence 2.5 meters high were erected on the Polish side, and the area was monitored 24 hours a day by the military, preventing illegal border crossing⁵⁸. Especially on the Belarusian side, groups of migrants sleeping in tents or under the open sky, by fires in the forest, emerged. It is worth noting that among the population arriving at the Polish border there were both women and children⁵⁹. In many cases, these people were deprived of any help, including medical care.

In practice, migrants were imprisoned on the Polish-Belarusian border without the possibility of moving either side. Over time, the temperature began to cool down and the nomadic migrants began to fight for their lives and health. Numerous news from the border started to flow in about the ill-treatment of migrants by the guards on both sides, as well as about attacks by migrants on mainly Polish services. There were still attempts to escape. Many humanitarian organizations also provided aid, but access to migrants was limited. The Belarusian side more and more often accused Poland of not helping the victims. According to the information provided by the media, Poland sent humanitarian convoys to help the population, but they were not allowed on the Belarusian side⁶⁰.

⁵⁷ <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/aktualnosci/9350,Duze-grupy-cudzoziemcow-zatrzymane-na-polsko-bialoruskim-odcinku-granicy.html> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁵⁸ <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2021-08-23/konferencja-mariusza-blaszczaka/?ref=slider> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁵⁹ <https://forsal.pl/gospodarka/aktualnosci/artykuly/8287567,migranci-na-granicy-proba-masowego-silowego-wejscia-do-polski.html> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁶⁰ <https://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/kraj/artykuly/8231197,przydacz-polski-konwoj-humanitarny-bialorus.html> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

There is no doubt that the situation of migrants at the border was difficult. It is worth noting, however, that their presence in this area was not accidental. In the Polish media, you could hear a lot of information that migrants were being brought to the Polish border on purpose. The government of Lukashenka is accused of transferring the population by Poland⁶¹. First, they are taken by planes from the besieged countries to Belarus, where they are then transferred by land to the border with Poland⁶². All this takes place under the pretext of helping migrants and, at the same time, lack of support for this group from Poland and the European Union. However, there are reports that the smuggling is also done under the guise of tourism and that politicians are involved in this activity⁶³. In fact, bringing the migrants in was primarily a political struggle with an international dimension.

Potential reasons for the actions of Belarus⁶⁴:

- revenge for the sanctions imposed by the EU on Russia, which also affected the Belarusian economy,
- an attempt to punish Poland for supporting free elections in Belarus, which translated into supporting the anti-regime opposition,
- willingness to cause a media conflict under the pretext of humanitarian actions,
- willingness to start a war with Poland and the European Union without its formal declaration,
- an attempt to obtain financial benefits from the transport of refugees to the territory of Belarus by providing flights, organizing transport or even running a travel agency officially dealing with this practice,
- revenge for recognizing the elections held in Belarus as rigged by the current regime,
- willingness to divert attention from the gathered Russian troops on the Ukrainian border (this aspect was important before the beginning of the war between Russia and Ukraine),
- recognition of Lukashenka's rule in Belarus by forcing peace talks by European Union countries.

The situation on the border and the actions of the Belarusian authorities have been recognized by Poland as a political provocation on the part of Belarus and Russia⁶⁵. The media began to describe these events as revenge for

⁶¹ <https://www.dw.com/pl/granica-gra-%C5%82ukaszenki-i-b%C3%B3l-uciekini%C3%B3w/a-59811471> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁶² <https://www.wprost.pl/kraj/10469671/wojna-hybrydowa-lukaszynki-dotarla-do-polski-trwa-przerzut-nielegalnych-migrantow.html> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁶³ <https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/kraj/2146556,1,tropem-16-kartek-a4-znalezionych-w-lesie-jak-bialoruskie-firmy-handluja-migrantami.read> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁶⁴ <https://wsksim.edu.pl/konflikt-na-granicy-polsko-bialoruskiej> (accessed: 20.02.2022).

⁶⁵ <https://forsa.pl/gospodarka/aktualnosci/artykuly/8287567,migranci-na-granicy-probamasowego-silowego-wejscia-do-polski.html> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

Poland's support of Lukashenka's opposition in the 2020 presidential election undermining the integrity of the European Union for political purposes. Russian media began to report on plans to invade the countries of the former USSR, including Ukraine and Poland. This is consistent with Putin's recent actions, including the illegal annexation of Crimea. Russia also undertook military aggression against Ukraine. These activities have been planned for a very long time, as evidenced by reports on the transport of military equipment and the presence of approximately 100,000 troops at the border at the beginning of 2020⁶⁶. Due to the war in Ukraine, Poland has become an area where potentially military aggression could be continued in the future⁶⁷. Hence, the support for Ukraine from Poland and the EU and opposition to the policy pursued by Moscow was the beginning of a conflict between Poland and Russia, but also Poland-Belarus⁶⁸.

The situation that has arisen is commonly known as the hybrid war between Belarus and Poland⁶⁹. The actions of the Belarusian authorities led to a crisis on the border of both countries. Migrants were used as a kind of political tool, which led to a situation that threatened their life and health. In addition, the Russian and Belarusian media have been providing false information about the policies of the European Union, NATO and Poland for several years. An example of this may be the creation of conspiracy theories about the alleged plans of NATO attacks on Belarus⁷⁰, incorrect information about the ill-treatment of the Russian nationality in Ukraine or, for example, in Poland, or the treatment of the deployment of the American anti-missile system or the stationing of American troops on Polish soil for the purpose of attacking Russia⁷¹. Hostile actions are dictated here primarily by the Belarusian side, hence it is blamed for starting a hybrid war. No military operations have been carried out between Poland and Belarus, and these countries are also continuing economic cooperation. However, the conflict, including mutual accusations of its escalation, information warfare in the media or conducting a political narrative that threatens further cooperation between states, have become an indisputable fact. It is worth noting that the very fact of destabilizing the Polish border with Belarus, inciting a conflict and actions aimed at dissemi-

⁶⁶ <https://businessinsider.com.pl/wiadomosci/rosja-w-xxi-w-juz-pokazala-ze-jest-gotowa-na-wojne-obecne-okolicznosci-sa-jednak/944341p> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁶⁷ <https://forsal.pl/swiat/unia-europejska/artykuly/8295599,ekspert-na-granicy-z-bialorusia-mamy-wojne-hybrydowa-putin-chce-zniszczyc-ue.html> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁶⁸ <https://wideo.wp.pl/putin-chce-nowego-porzadku-na-swiecie-nad-europa-wisi-widmo-kolejnej-wojny-6725-921234671745v> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁶⁹ <https://tvn24.pl/swiat/ukraina-rosyjskie-wojsko-na-granicy-najbardziej-wiarygodne-scenariusze-konfliktu-5576379> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁷⁰ <https://www.gov.pl/web/sluzby-specjalne/ataki-medialne-na-polske-w-zwiazku-z-wydarzeniami-na-bialorusi> (accessed: 26.02.2022).

⁷¹ <https://spidersweb.pl/bizblog/tarcza-antyrakietowa-redzikowo> (accessed: 25.02.2022).

nating false information are also recognized as part of the war. Nevertheless, the hybrid war lost its importance in connection with the war in Ukraine.

Crime on the borders of Belarus with Poland

Crime on the borders of Belarus with Poland should be considered in several aspects. The first is the existence of “standard” smuggling or other violations of the law that took place before the hybrid war. This phenomenon is quite common at the borders of almost all countries in the world and will not be the subject of this analysis. In mid-2021, a form of another type of crime was created on the border of Poland and Belarus, which is directly related to the hybrid war. This is primarily about an attempt to cross borders illegally and about human rights violations in general. These rights are defined, inter alia, by the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms⁷² adopted by Poland⁷³ and other countries of the world.

The occurrence of a hybrid war between Belarus and Poland is related to the violation of national and international law⁷⁴:

- breaking the law related to the inviolability of Poland’s borders by Belarus,
- illegal crossing of the Polish border by refugees,
- trafficking in human beings by criminals on the Belarusian side⁷⁵,
- violations of human rights, including failure to provide adequate assistance to refugees through Belarus, potentially also through Poland,
- attacking the Border Guard by refugees in order to illegally cross the Polish border,
- attacking journalists by the Belarusian side, forcing Belarus and Russian authorities to report false information in the media⁷⁶,
- limiting access to data and the area of conflict for journalists by the Polish side⁷⁷.

Criminal activity at borders has three basic dimensions. The first is the deliberate activity of the government of Belarus and Russia leading to the

⁷² Konwencja o Ochronie Praw Człowieka i Podstawowych Wolności sporządzona w Rzymie dnia 4 listopada 1950 r., zmieniona następnie Protokołami nr 3, 5 i 8 oraz uzupełniona Protokołem nr 2 (Journal Law 1993, No. 61, Item 284).

⁷³ The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms was adopted by Poland in 1993.

⁷⁴ <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2021-12-15/granica-polsko-bialoruska-to-nie-jest-zaden-kryzys-humanitarny-to-jest-wojna-hybrydowa> (accessed: 20.02.2022).

⁷⁵ <https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/przemycaja-ludzi-grupy-przestepcze-dzialaja-przy-granicy-6706775365483264a.html> (accessed: 20.02.2022).

⁷⁶ <https://www.dw.com/pl/to-by%C5%82-push-back-dziennikarze-zatrzymani-przy-polsko-bia%C5%82oruskiej-granicy-wywiad/a-59418226> (accessed: 15.02.2022).

⁷⁷ <https://bialystok.wyborcza.pl/bialystok/7,35241,27647917,zatrzymanie-dziennikarzy-przy-polsko-bialoruskiej-granicy.html?disableRedirects=true> (accessed: 15.02.2022).

escalation of the conflict and disinformation in the media. This type of activity has the dimension of a political attack aimed primarily at Poles, but also at all European Union countries. The expected result may be the destabilization of the Polish border, looking for pretexts to launch an invasion or causing internal problems of the Union leading to a decrease in the sense of community and unity among its members⁷⁸.

Another aspect is the behavior of the population on the Polish border. Criminal activities, including storming the border, undertaking fights with the Border Guard, etc. result primarily from the helplessness of refugees related to their situation. They cannot return to their countries or go deep into Belarus. Poland does not allow refugees to cross the border illegally, which means that they find themselves in a political trap. The situation is significantly worsened by the conflict-provoking Belarusian side. The reasons for such a difficult situation of refugees can be found primarily in the attempt to escalate the problem by Belarus. Due to the fact that the refugees were transported to the border areas on purpose, their admission to Poland would be associated with flooding our country by the incoming population without legal status. This would lead to numerous internal problems. This situation would also be a form of destabilization of Poland and the European Union. On the other hand, the detention of the incoming population at the border, especially during the merciless winter, put them in an extremely difficult situation. This fact was also used by the Lukashenka regime to destabilize the political situation in Central and Western Europe.

The legal issues of the attempted mass transfer of refugees through Belarus to the Polish side are very clear from the point of view of international law. Every persecuted person has the right to asylum in accordance with the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, including the Protocols signed in Rome on November 4, 1950, and the Geneva Convention of July 28, 1951 and the Protocol of January 31, 1967 relating to the Status of Refugees. Responsibility for refugees on the selected side of the border lies with the state in which they are located. In other words, the refugees on the Polish side are subject to the jurisdiction of Poland, which is obliged to help them. Belarus is bound by similar rules. It should be noted that Poland took such actions by sending refugees to centers for foreigners located throughout the country. Belarus has also not been fully passive, providing basic food or temporary shelter after some time. However, it did not allow this social group to move for a very long time. Additionally, there is evidence of violence against refugees on the Belarusian side. However, Poland's conduct has not always been in line with international law or with human

⁷⁸ <https://www.euractiv.pl/section/bezpieczenstwo-i-obrona/news/ue-polska-bialorus-granica-migranci-kryzys-morawiecki-lukaszienka-kallas-simonyte-karins> (accessed: 15.02.2022).

rights⁷⁹. Like Belarus, the Polish Border Guard and the Army used the method of catching refugees who managed to get to Poland and transport them to the Belarusian side⁸⁰. Additionally, there have been documented cases of unsuccessful attempts to submit documents for asylum on the Polish side, despite the possession of such a right by the migrant population⁸¹. Several complaints have been filed with the European Court of Human Rights in this regard (including application no. 42120/21). Poland was found guilty of sending migrants to the side of Belarus⁸². Additionally, the Tribunal instructed Poland how to treat refugees, taking into account the provision of food, water and, if possible, temporary shelter⁸³.

The last aspect of crime on the Polish-Belarusian border was improper, unlawful conduct of the Polish Army and the Border Guard. For the most part, the services made it difficult for journalists or even humanitarian aid to access refugees on the Polish side. However, the situation improved after numerous interventions. It is also worth noting that, despite the inglorious actions, the Border Guard and the Army were also involved in helping migrants and in breaking up criminal groups that trafficked in human beings⁸⁴. Additionally, the Belarusian side was passively watching the problems of the Polish services in ensuring order and security⁸⁵.

Summary

When considering the conflict between Belarus and Poland, it should be emphasized that the states officially remain at peace with each other. Poland has been a country at peace with its neighbors since the times before the First World War. The situation and elections in Belarus are much more controversial in this respect. By advocating support for Russia, this country joined the armed conflict taking place in Ukraine, becoming an opponent not only for Ukraine, but also for the whole of Western Europe and the vast majority of countries in

⁷⁹ <https://www.rp.pl/cudzoziemcy/art18845661-migranci-w-usnarzu-polscy-prawnicy-wyslali-do-etpc-wniosek-o-zarzadzenie-tymczasowe> (accessed: 27.02.2022).

⁸⁰ <https://oko.press/smiertelna-pulapka-ludzie-z-bliskiego-wschodu-nie-wiedza-jaki-koszmar-czeka-ich-na-grani-cy> (accessed: 15.02.2022).

⁸¹ <https://amnesty.org.pl/bialorus-polska-ue-nowe-dowody-przemocy-wobec-uchodzcow-migrantow-ek> (accessed: 15.02.2022).

⁸² M. Górczyńska, J. Białas, D. Witko, *Analiza prawna sytuacji na polsko-białoruskiej granicy*, https://www.hfhr.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Analiza-prawna-sytuacji-na-polsko-bialoruskiej-granicy_9.09.2021.pdf (accessed: 15.02.2022).

⁸³ <https://www.rp.pl/cudzoziemcy/art18851461-trybunal-wskazal-polsce-jak-ma-traktowac-uchodzcow-na-granicy-z-bialorusia> (accessed: 27.02.2022).

⁸⁴ <https://wroclaw.tvp.pl/57955973/przemyt-migrantow-z-bialorusi-sluzby-rozbily-grupe-przestepcza-w-tle-miliony> (accessed: 20.02.2022).

⁸⁵ <https://www.rp.pl/sluzby/art19119181-straz-graniczna-bialorus-chce-wznowienia-ruchu-na-przejsciu-granicznym-bruzgi-kuznica> (accessed: 20.02.2022).

the world. Considering the location of Poland on the world map and the ongoing war with our eastern neighbors, the conflict between Belarus and Poland may in the future take a different form if the borders of our country are violated. This situation is very dynamic in the face of the war waged by Ukraine by Russia. At the time of writing this text, the future of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, Belarus and Ukraine, and Poland and Belarus, as well as Poland and Russia, remains unknown.

The situation of a conflict, whether in a formal or informal form, is a phenomenon that always destroys good relations between states and leads to destabilization of the political situation. Dishonest political games or conducting wide-ranging disinformation actions are aimed at a silent but effective attack on the opponent in order to gain advantage for the attacker. It often happens that the resulting conflict turns into riots in which innocent people usually become victims. Exactly such a situation could be observed from mid-2021 until the beginning 2022. This time, the victims of the political game were refugees who, through their efforts, only wanted to escape from areas of persecution or war.

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Summary

Border crime in the aspect of the hybrid war between Belarus and Poland

Keywords: law, conflict, illegal migration, Belarus, border crime.

This article analyzes the issues of border crime in the context of the hybrid war between Belarus and Poland. The work began with an explanation of its goals, hypotheses or adopted research tools. The research questions posed in the work are also discussed here. The second chapter of the article presents the history of relations between Poland and Belarus. The years before the First World War were assumed to be the starting point for the analysis. Both the time of the Duchy of Poland and the moment given by the sources as the beginning of the formation of the ethnic identity of Belarusians are considered here. The next stage was to discuss the times of the partition of Poland and the Second World War. The section ends with a description of the post-war period and the contemporary situation of Poland and Belarus. The next chapter analyzes the current events taking place on the Polish-Belarusian border. It primarily includes media reports on Belarus' activities in the field of bringing illegal immigrants, as well as conducting political activities between Poland, the European Union, Belarus, and Russia. The analysis was completed by examining the issue of crime on the border between Belarus and Poland. The study was summarized in terms of reference to the achievements of the work, including the achievement of its goals and assumptions. The main conclusion of the research is the assessment of the conflict between the two countries, which destroys mutual relations. Unfair diplomatic steps, as well as disinformation actions, silently but effectively cause an attack on the opponent for the benefit of the attacker.

Streszczenie

Przestępczość graniczna w aspekcie wojny hybrydowej Białorusi z Polską

Słowa kluczowe: prawo, konflikt, nielegalna migracja, Białoruś, przestępczość graniczna.

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest analiza problematyki przestępczości granicznej w kontekście wojny hybrydowej między Białorusią a Polską. Rozważania rozpoczęto od wyjaśnienia celów, hipotez i przyjętych narzędzi badawczych. Omówiono także pytania badawcze postawione w pracy. Druga część artykułu przedstawia historię stosunków polsko-białoruskich. Za punkt wyjścia do analizy przyjęto okres poprzedzający I wojnę światową – czas Księstwa Polskiego, jak również moment podawany przez źródła jako początek kształtowania się tożsamości etnicznej Białorusinów. Kolejnym etapem było omówienie czasów rozbiorów Polski, jak również okres II wojny światowej. Podrozdział ten kończy opis okresu powojennego oraz współczesna sytuacja Polski i Białorusi. W kolejnej części artykułu dokonano analizy bieżących wydarzeń na pograniczu polsko-białoruskim, obejmujących przede wszystkim doniesienia medialne na temat działalności Białorusi w zakresie sprowadzania nielegalnych imigrantów, a także prowadzenia działalności politycznej między Polską, Unią Europejską, Białorusią i Rosją. Omówiono problem przestępczości na pograniczu białorusko-polskim. Głównym wnioskiem z badań jest ocena konfliktu między dwoma państwami, który niszczy obustronne relacje. Nieuczciwe kroki na drodze dyplomatycznej, jak również akcje dezinformacyjne w sposób cichy, ale skuteczny powodują atak na przeciwnika w celu osiągnięcia korzyści przez atakującego.