

Herman Michiel, 27 May 2021 – European leaders are outraged by the manoeuvre with which Lukashenko handcuffed an opponent. But the selectivity of their indignation shows that they are not concerned with human rights, but with an imperial power play. (Published in Defend Democracy Press, 31/5/2021, translation of [De selectieve verontwaardiging van de EU.](#))

If the EU has one knack for pretending to be a superpower, it is the practice of selective indignation. “What happened yesterday is an international scandal,” said EU ‘president’ Charles Michel, referring to the forced landing of a passenger plane in the Belarusian capital Minsk and the arrest of Roman Protasevich, journalist and opponent of Belarusian President Lukashenko. Charles Michel is right, this is an absolutely reprehensible manoeuvre by a reprehensible regime. Only: as a representative of the European Union, Michel’s words ring as hollow as if the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un were to condemn the Catalan independentistas’ heavy prison sentences, or Netanyahu the illegal Russian occupation of the Crimea. It is not the accusations as such that must be questioned, but the credibility and intentions of those who present themselves as defenders of law and democracy.

For example, Michel called the forced landing in Minsk an ‘unprecedented’ incident. The memory of the European ‘president’ is apparently very short, because in July 2013, the plane that brought Bolivian President Evo Morales back to his country from Moscow was forced to land in Vienna, after France, Italy, Spain and Portugal had closed their airspace, according to all the evidence at Washington’s request. The irony of the story: the American intelligence services thought that there was a ... disturbing news source on board, namely Edward Snowden, who had exposed a lot of dirty business about American politics, and who was suspected of being granted asylum in Bolivia. This was not the case, but [the forced stopover in Vienna](#) and the inspection there made it all the more so. July 2013, it was not Trump but Obama who was at the helm in Washington...

But even this Vienna ‘incident’ was not unprecedented. To its credit, the [Washington Post](#) today also recalls the following episode. In October 1985, four US F14 fighter jets intercepted a charter flight from Egypt to Tunisia, forcing it to land in Sicily. On board were four members of the Palestinian Liberation Front. That was, of course, an operation among Atlantic friends, all traces of which have been erased from the European memory ...

A much more recent fact, which our media also no longer remember, is that the European Union makes sweet talk with the regime in Minsk, when it suits them. Just last year the EU [donated 15 unmanned surveillance drones](#) to Lukashenko’s police. This was within the framework of the European ‘neighbourhood programme’, and it is hoped that with this they will be able to better monitor the borders to avoid unwanted access to Fortress Europe. Brussels naturally assumes that Minsk will not misuse this generous gesture to police anti-government demonstrations.

The forced landing in Minsk was also described as ‘state terrorism’, and one cannot deny that the Lukashenko regime plays on the levers of state power to maintain itself. But how is one to describe the actions of a regime that does not force a plane to land, but sends dozens of fighter jets into the air to terrorise from the air 2 million people held prisoner on 350 km<sup>2</sup>, destroying hospitals, schools, newsrooms and thousands of homes? The fact that no European summit was held on the subject cannot be ascribed to the poor memory of the Brussels authorities, because these events took place over the

past few days; for those who did not notice, in Gaza, at the hands of the Israeli state. If the term 'state terrorism' has a meaning, then it is here in the first place, with the aggravating circumstance that the permanent Western policy of tolerance (and in the case of the United States: active support) is one of the most important obstacles to world peace. Isn't it scandalous that only one EU Member State, Ireland, has yet to declare Israeli settlement policy an 'annexation', and that only [since yesterday](#)?

Nor was there any indignation when it emerged that at least one European Member State (Poland) was supporting the US intelligence agency CIA in detaining and [torturing](#) suspects in secret places. And the day that the EU sanctions the United States for holding people in prison for 20 years without charge and under the inhuman conditions of Guantánamo, against all principles of the rule of law, that is the day that I will dress up in the European flag and sing the Ode to Joy.

There are plenty of reasons for indignation in world politics, but perhaps one of the greatest is its selectiveness.

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