

Belarusian hacktivists claim to breach country's leading state university

By Daryna Antoniuk

Published: 2023-07-05 · Archived: 2026-04-05 14:08:36 UTC

The Belarusian hacker group known as [the Cyber Partisans](#) is claiming an attack on the country's largest state-owned university.

The Belarusian State University (BSU) is located in the capital city of Minsk and has over 44,800 students. The Cyber Partisans said they have been trying to access its systems for over two months and finally succeeded this week.

"It took us time to infiltrate the network and gain a foothold there," the hackers said. "Our goal was to cause maximum damage so that BSU could not recover for a long time."

CYBERATTACK ON BELARUSIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

¼ We started working on this attack 2 months ago after BSU posted a video with a student who was humiliated & forced to apologize. Since 2020 many students were detained and staff let go for political positions pic.twitter.com/TCh6ol06LI

— Belarusian Cyber-Partisans (@cpartisans) [July 4, 2023](#)

The Cyber Partisans claimed to have accessed 3 terabytes of data from the university's system. They claim to have encrypted and wiped computers and servers, and also shut down the domain controllers responsible for managing user authentication and network security.

At this story's time of publication on Wednesday, the Belarusian State University website is still down.

The university [denied any cyberattack](#) and attributed the system's downtime to technical issues. Officials also claimed that the photos and screenshots shared by the hackers were fake and photoshopped.

Belarusian hacktivists, known for their politically motivated attacks on the regime of Belarusian dictator Alexander Lukashenko and as well as Russian targets, said they would exchange stolen data for the release of 50 prisoners detained for opposing the government.

Since 2020, when massive anti-government protests began in Belarus following a controversial presidential election believed to have been rigged by Lukashenko, BSU students have been intimidated and expelled because of their political views, according to the Cyber Partisans.

In April, BSU [posted a video](#) of a student who was forced to apologize on camera for allegedly "discrediting" the university. "When you act as oppressors, you make yourselves a target for our cyberattacks," the Cyber Partisans said.

The hackers said they had not planned to attack the university but were appalled by the video. "It was filmed in an institution that should educate, not promote violence," they said.

The Cyber Partisans said they managed to get into the system by obtaining the password of one of a student who has higher-level access. Then they accessed BSU's email and cloud services, as well as its website, ultimately infiltrating the servers and internal network.

After BSU issued its statement denying the attack, the Cyber Partisans retaliated by [sharing additional screenshots](#) from the university president's email, including excerpts from his bank account.

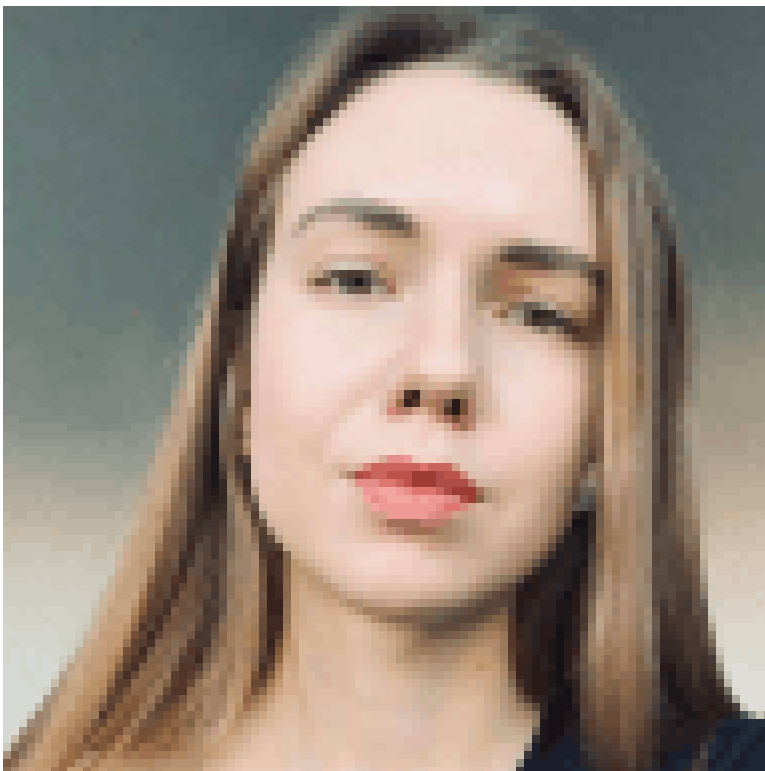
"We have over 3 terabytes of data from your servers—are you sure you want to play this game with us? You'd better beg the dictator to release political prisoners," the hackers said.

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Source: <https://therecord.media/cyber-partisans-belarusian-state-university-attack>