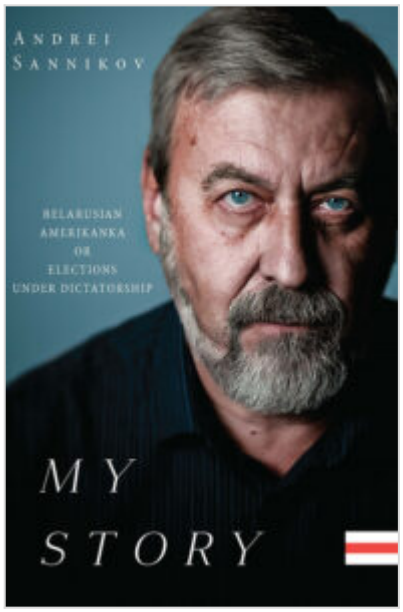
My Story

Belarusian Amerikanka or Elections Under Dictatorship



A candid and powerful memoir by Andrei Sannikov, former deputy minister of foreign affairs of Belarus and opposition politician. Here he recounts his journey from the top echelons of political power to the pro-democracy opposition movement, revisiting his prominent campaign as a presidential candidate and his experiences after finding himself behind bars on the day the election results were announced.

In *My Story*, leading Belarusian political activist and former presidential candidate Andrei Sannikov vividly details his harrowing ordeal in Belarus's criminal justice system following his arrest for participating in a peaceful protest against the outcome of the 2010 Belarusian presidential election. Sannikov tells of the interrogations, and physical and psychological abuse he suffered at the hands of the KGB and labor colony staff, as well as the government's persecution of his family and friends.

The heart of Sannikov's book is his up-close account of his subsequent interrogations, trial, and day-to-day experience in various prison colonies and labor camps after his conviction. He describes camp culture in great detail, explaining the roles of the various KGB collaborators among the prisoners who made life a living hell for him, as well as sympathetic fellow prisoners who helped him navigate camp life.

The book closes with Sannikov's release, juxtaposing first-hand accounts with international press coverage. This section also provides a bigger picture of why Sannikov decided to run for president, describing in frank terms the repressive political regime under longtime Belarusian leader Aleksandr Lukashenka, sometimes called "Europe's last dictator." My Story contains a breathtaking range of material, from personal correspondence and interviews to articles, speeches, recollections and much more. Sannikov even includes a "fairy tale" that he wrote for his young son while in prison. The book's mode of storytelling is unique in its combination of intimate personal narrative and daring political argumentation.

- **Author:** Andrei Sannikov
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