

Putin Headed to Belarus

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The  **Moscow Times**

President Vladimir Putin's first official visit as president will be to Belarus on May 31, the Kremlin officially [announced](#) Wednesday, confirming earlier media reports.

The visit was arranged during a meeting Tuesday of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, which was attended by both Putin and Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko.

Belarus Foreign Minister Sergei Martynov said Putin's visit is "a signal sent to confirm the importance of ties and processes between the countries of this region," the [Telegraf.by](#) news site reported on Wednesday.

Belarus has grown increasingly isolated following a crackdown on demonstrators protesting against the 2010 re-election of Lukashenko — who has been called Europe's last dictator — which observers said was flawed.

Earlier this month Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said Putin plans to visit Israel next month in one of his first foreign trips as president.

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