

Belarussian President Demands Russia Trade Be Carried Out in Dollars, Euros

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Alexander Lukashenko

MINSK — Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko has demanded that Belarus' transactions with Russia be settled in dollars or euros because of the slump in the value of Russia's ruble, the official news agency BelTA reported Thursday.

The Russian ruble suffered its largest intraday loss since 1998 on Tuesday and its weakness poses a threat to the economy of Belarus, a close ally whose main trading partner is Russia.

"We're going to trade not in rubles, but in dollars," BelTA quoted Lukashenko as saying. "We should have long ago demanded Russia pay us also in hard currency."

The currency plunge combined with low oil prices, looming recession and Western sanctions over the Ukraine conflict have left Russia facing a financial crisis.

The eccentric leader, who has occasionally made remarks critical of Russian policy despite the

economies of the two countries being closely intertwined, expressed concern about the turmoil on the Russian market.

"We're not going to run after Russia. This is categorically forbidden because it is not clear what's happening on the Russian market," he said.

He said Belarus would not devalue its own ruble over the weakness of the Russian currency.

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