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France 'Very Worried' Over Belarus Election Violence, Macron Tells Putin

By AFP

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The talks were the latest in a string of regular contacts between Macron and Putin. **Mikhail Klimentyev / TASS**

France is very worried by the violence in Belarus after the weekend's elections in the ex-Soviet state, French President Emmanuel Macron said in telephone talks with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Wednesday.

Macron told Putin he is "very worried about the situation in Belarus and the violence that citizens have faced during the elections," the Elysee said in a statement.

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"He emphasized the need to find again the path of dialogue."

The talks, which also touched on the coronavirus crisis and the situation in Lebanon after the

gigantic port explosion last week, were the latest in a string of regular contacts between Macron and Putin.

In a position that has sometimes put him at odds with EU allies, Macron has pursued a policy of dialogue with Russia, even on issues where the two sides disagree.

Protesters in Belarus have rallied on successive nights to contest strongman President Alexander Lukashenko's claim of having won Sunday's election in a landslide.

The EU and U.S. have strongly condemned the ensuing crackdown that has seen hundreds detained in often brutal circumstances.

Putin, along with Chinese President Xi Jinping, was one of the few key world leaders to congratulate Lukashenko after the poll.

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