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Russia Adds Belarus Opposition Leader Tikhanovskaya to Wanted List

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Svetlana Tikhanovskaya. **John MacDougall / AFP**

Russia has added Belarusian opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya to its interstate wanted list on a criminal charge, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported Wednesday.

Tikhanovskaya claimed victory against strongman leader Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus' Aug. 9 presidential election but fled to neighboring Lithuania soon after, citing pressure from the authorities.

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The Russian police database entry says Tikhanovskaya "is wanted under an article of the Criminal Code" but does not specify which article.

Russia automatically added Tikhanovskaya to the list after Belarusian authorities added her to

their own list, the state-run TASS news agency reported, citing a law enforcement source. Russia and Belarus are partially integrated under a union-state agreement.

Belarusian authorities in August opened a criminal probe into alleged attempts to "seize power" when opposition figures including Tikhanovskaya formed a Coordination Council to oversee a peaceful transition of power after the election.

Nearly all leading members of the council have been jailed as part of the criminal case or have fled the country.

Russia placed its support behind Lukashenko following the vote, while Europe refuses to recognize the election results and has drawn up sanctions against Belarusian officials it says are responsible for vote-rigging and a violent crackdown on protesters.

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