Belarusian President Demands Role in Talks on Ukraine 'War'

By [AFP](#)

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Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. **president.gov.by**

The president of Belarus, Russia's main ally, on Thursday urged for Minsk to be included in peace talks aimed at ending the "war" in Ukraine, using a term banned by Moscow.

Russia refers to a "special military operation" in Ukraine and insists that the public and media use this term, while the use of words such as "war" or "invasion" can incur heavy penalties.

Yet Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko repeatedly chose to use the word "war" Thursday at a meeting with security officials.

He complained that Minsk is not a participant in rounds of peace talks between delegations from Kyiv and Moscow, which have been held in Belarus and Istanbul.

"We are working on the basis that this war is just over the fence from our country and it affects the situation in our country in the most serious way," Lukashenko said.

"Therefore there should not be any separate agreements behind Belarus's back."

"If you dragged us into this — primarily Western countries — then Belarus's position naturally should be heard at talks."

Belarus has allowed Russian troops to use the country bordering Ukraine as a rear base and has hosted three rounds of peace talks close to the border with Ukraine.

Lukashenko complained that last month's talks in Istanbul were the result of "pressure from the west on Ukraine, not to go to Belarus at any cost."

He said that Belarus was not insisting on talks being held on its territory, however.

"Let them hold talks there. The main thing is for there to be a result. Because, I stress again, war causes great harm to Belarus."