

Putin Backs Military Training Centers with Belarus

By [AFP](#)

January 31, 2023



Joint military exercises of Belarusian and Russian troops in 2022. **Peter Kovalev / TASS**

President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday backed a plan to set up joint military training centers with Belarus, with fears mounting that Minsk could enter the Ukraine conflict to fight with Moscow.

In a decree published Tuesday, Putin tasked the defense and foreign ministers to conduct talks with Belarus and sign an agreement to establish the facilities.

The document did not specify where they would be based.

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Minsk allowed Moscow to use Belarusian territory as a launching pad for its Ukraine offensive that began on Feb. 24 last year.

Strongman leader Alexander Lukashenko has insisted that he will not send Belarusian troops into Ukraine despite increasing military cooperation with Russia.

In October, Minsk said it was establishing a joint regional force with Moscow with several thousand Russian servicemen arriving in the country.

Earlier this month Moscow and Minsk launched joint air force drills in Belarus that are scheduled to last until Feb. 1.

Original url:

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