

Belarus Blames Western 'Pressure' for Decision to Accept Nuclear Weapons

By [AFP](#)

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Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. president.gov.by

Belarus said on Tuesday that it felt compelled to host Russian nuclear weapons after "unprecedented" Western pressure, insisting their deployment did not violate international agreements.

Russian President Vladimir Putin recently announced plans to station tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus, its closest ally, which drew condemnation from the West.

"Belarus is forced to respond to strengthen its own security and defense capabilities," the Foreign Ministry in Minsk said.

The ministry added that Minsk faced "unprecedented" political and economic pressure from the United States and its allies.

Belarus stressed that it would not have control over the weapons and that their deployment

"in no way" contradicted the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

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Minsk allowed Russia to use its territory as a launchpad for its invasion of Ukraine last year.

The two countries have since held military exercises on Belarusian territory and ramped up the cooperation between their armies.

"Military cooperation between Belarus and Russia is carried out in strict accordance with international law," the Foreign Ministry in Minsk said.

Putin's plans to place nuclear weapons on the European Union's doorstep have prompted calls for fresh sanctions against Moscow.

As fears of a nuclear war rise, experts believe that any Russian strike would probably involve "tactical," small-sized battlefield weapons as opposed to "strategic," high-powered, long-range nuclear weapons.

Western countries have imposed numerous rounds of sanctions on Minsk over its suppression of domestic political dissent and its role as a springboard for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

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