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Putin Speaks to Allies in Belarus, Central Asia Amid Wagner Revolt

By AFP

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Russian President Vladimir Putin. **Gavriil Grigorov / TASS**

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday spoke to his Belarus ally, President Alexander Lukashenko, in his first international phone call since a mutiny by Wagner mercenaries inside Russia began.

"The president of Russia called the president of Belarus this morning, there was a phone conversation," Belarusian state media reported.

"Vladimir Putin informed his Belarusian colleague about the situation in Russia."

Lukashenko, who allowed Russian troops to use Belarusian territory as a launchpad for their Ukraine offensive, has remained Putin's closest ally.

The Kremlin later said Putin also spoke to the president of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, and the president of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

"The president informed them about the situation [in Russia]," Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov was quoted as saying by state news agencies.

According to Kazakh media, Tokayev told Putin that events in Russia were a "domestic affair," and Putin thanked him for his "understanding" of the situation.

Putin, who has few allies on the international stage after invading Ukraine last year, has called the Wagner mutiny a "stab in the back."

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