

Belarus Leader Says Ordered Combat Readiness During Russian Revolt

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Alexander Lukashenko. president.gov.by

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko [said](#) Tuesday he had issued "combat readiness" orders to his army during an uprising in neighbor and close ally Russia led by Wagner mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin.

"I gave all the orders to bring the army to full combat readiness," Lukashenko said in comments carried by the state news agency Belta.

"I won't hide it, it was painful to watch the events taking place in southern Russia. I'm not the only one. Many of our citizens took [these events] to heart. Because the Fatherland is one," he added, hinting at ex-Soviet Belarus' union state with Russia.

"If Russia collapses, we will be left under the rubble, all of us will die," Lukashenko said at a ceremony awarding Belarusian security service officers.

The long-serving authoritarian leader hinted that his combat readiness order was partially in

response to what he characterized as the exiled Belarusian opposition's [calls](#) for an "armed insurgency."

Related article: [Wagner Leader's Jet Lands in Belarus – Reports](#)

"Our fugitives have also started kicking up a fuss. Although, there's been a false start," said Lukashenko.

Lukashenko was credited with negotiating an end to Wagner's short-lived uprising Saturday.

The Kremlin said Wagner leader Prigozhin will be [allowed](#) to leave the country for Belarus and will not be prosecuted as part of the deal.

Prigozhin said late Monday that Lukashenko had offered Wagner the option to "work in a lawful jurisdiction," while Russian President Vladimir Putin gave Wagner fighters the choice of signing contracts with the army or leaving for Belarus.

Lukashenko said Tuesday that he had urged Putin not to kill Prigozhin during the revolt.

"I said to Putin: we could waste (Prigozhin), no problem. If not on the first try, then on the second. I told him: don't do this," Lukashenko said.

The Russian Defense Ministry [said](#) Tuesday that preparations were underway for the transfer of Wagner's heavy military equipment to units of the Russian military.

Lukashenko, who last month oversaw the [transfer](#) of Russian nuclear weapons into Belarus, described Wagner's long-standing tensions with Russia's army as an issue that got out of control.

"We missed the situation, and then we thought that it would resolve itself, but it did not resolve," he said.

"There are no heroes in this case."

AFP contributed reporting.

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