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Belarusian President Lukashenko Meets With Putin at Russian Monastery

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Vladimir Putin and Alexander Lukashenko at Valaam. **kremlin.ru**

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko traveled to Russia on Thursday for talks with close ally Vladimir Putin, state media reported.

Lukashenko's trip follows moves he has made over the past month that some observers interpret as an effort to ease tensions with the West after being hit with sanctions for allowing Russian troops to use Belarusian territory as a staging ground for the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Earlier this month, the Belarusian leader freed five political prisoners, announced the removal of additional troops from the Belarusian-Ukrainian border and introduced a 90-day visa-free regime for citizens of 35 European countries.

A video shared by the Belarusian state-run news agency Belta showed Lukashenko being greeted by St. Petersburg Governor Alexander Beglov on Thursday.

Embed:

The Belarusian leader planned to discuss “the development of bilateral relations, promoting allied projects, regional security issues and the international agenda” with Putin, Belta reported.

The Kremlin confirmed Putin was scheduled to hold talks with Putin and Russia’s state-run news agency RIA Novosti reported that the two met at Valaam Monastery in Russia's northern republic of Karelia. The Kremlin published a video of Putin talking with priests ahead of Lukashenko’s arrival.

Zvezda, a broadcaster affiliated with the Russian Defense Ministry, said Putin and Lukashenko visited a church “where monks pray for Russian soldiers who gave their lives for the faith and the homeland.”

Putin and Lukashenko previously visited the Valaam Monastery together in July 2019 and July 2023, according to reporters.

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