

## **Belarusian Leader Praises Trump, Says U.S. 'Not Ready' for Female President**

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Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko chopping wood. president.gov.by

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko on Thursday <u>praised</u> Donald Trump for his victory in the U.S. presidential election and said the president–elect would deserve a Nobel Peace Prize if he fulfills his campaign promise to end the war in Ukraine.

"If he [ends the war], we'll petition for the Nobel Prize. He'll be rewarded for doing a good deed," Lukashenko was quoted as saying by the state-run news agency Belta.

However, the Belarusian leader noted that achieving peace "is not a unilateral process" and would require involvement from other countries beyond Russia and Ukraine.

A close ally of Moscow, Belarus has allowed Russian troops to be stationed within its borders since early 2022, shortly before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

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Speaking at a woodchopping event, Lukashenko <u>called</u> Trump a "powerhouse" who managed to return to the White House after what he described as a "kind of an unsuccessful" first term between 2017 and 2021.

"They shot him, they pressured him, they wanted to put him in jail, but he bulldozed through," Lukashenko said.

Speaking on the electoral defeat of Democratic Party candidate and U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, Lukashenko said "America was ready to elect a Black president, but America is not ready to elect a woman."

In power since 1994, Lukashenko is currently serving his sixth term after winning re-election in a 2020 vote widely condemned in the West as fraudulent.

Three female opposition leaders <u>united</u> to challenge the Belarusian strongman in that election, including Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, who was forced into exile and later sentenced to 15 years in prison in absentia, and Maria Kolesnikova, who refused to flee the country and received an 11-year prison <u>sentence</u> in 2021 amid a post-election crackdown on dissent.

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