The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Putin Orders Signing of Russia-Belarus Security Deal

December 05, 2024



Vladimir Putin and the head of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko. **kremlin.ru**

President Vladimir Putin has ordered the signing of a pact offering closely guarded security guarantees between Russia and Belarus at an upcoming summit on Friday.

"The treaty is considered appropriate to sign at the highest level," Putin's decree states.

Putin is due to attend the summit in Minsk marking the 25th anniversary of the founding of the "Union State" between Russia and Belarus, which envisions a common currency, legal system and joint defense and foreign policies.

Russian media reported that Putin and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko will sign the security pact at the summit on Friday.

The contents of the bilateral security agreement remain unavailable to the public. Last month, Putin signed a decree lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons which extends Russia's nuclear umbrella to Belarus.

Last year, Belarus agreed to host Russian tactical warheads on its territory and this year the two countries carried out joint tactical nuclear weapons drills.

Belarus, Russia's closest ally, allowed Russian troops to use its territory as a staging ground for their full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

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