

# How Belarus Supported Assad – While Helping the Pentagon Arm His Opponents

December 13, 2024



Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. [president.gov.by](http://president.gov.by)

In 2015, Belarus [sent](#) 240 ATGW 9P135M Konkurs (NATO: AT-5 Spandrel) portable anti-tank missile systems and 140 AGS-17 automatic grenade launchers — [worth](#) a total of 37.9 million euros — to Bulgaria.

The same year, Sofia [transferred](#) 136 Konkurs systems to the U.S. and another 80 to Saudi Arabia. [Experts](#) say the Soviet-made Konkurs weapons were of no use to the American or the Saudi armies.

During the same period, the U.S. was [implementing](#) a program to arm the Syrian opposition.

A representative of the U.S. Special Operations Command, Lt. Com. Matthew Allen, [told](#) BuzzFeed in 2015 that the Pentagon was purchasing missiles from Belarus for its program to arm the Syrian opposition.

Email correspondence [reveals](#) military instructors from American defense company Regulus Global were [trained](#) in Belarus to use such missile systems. This emerged during an investigation into the death of one of these instructors in Bulgaria due to a training ground accident. The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) [identified](#) Regulus Global as a Pentagon contractor.

At the same time, Lukashenko has repeatedly expressed his support for Assad's regime. After [reports](#) emerged that Assad had fled to Moscow on Sunday, Lukashenko [said](#) he had "good relations" with the ousted Syrian leader.

"He is not a dictator at all. He treated people as a doctor. He never killed anyone," Lukashenko said Tuesday during a working trip to Borisov, a city near Minsk.

These were not Minsk's first words of support for Assad. In July 2019, Lukashenko [said](#): "Belarus has been on the side of the people and authorities of this country since the first days of the conflict in Syria." In response, he [received](#) the Syrian leader's gratitude for support during a difficult period.

In 2018, when the U.S., Britain and France carried out airstrikes in Syria in response to a chemical attack on Douma, the Belarusian Foreign Ministry [condemned](#) the airstrikes, questioning whether the Syrian regime had indeed used chemical weapons.

On Nov. 27, 2024, Syrian opposition armed groups [launched](#) a large-scale offensive against regime forces in Aleppo province. By the evening of Dec. 7, Assad's opponents had taken [control](#) of several major cities, including Aleppo, Deir ez-Zor, Daraa, Hama and Homs. The next day, they [arrived](#) in Damascus and Assad [resigned](#) as president of Syria.

*This article was originally [published](#) by the Belarusian Investigative Center.*

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/12/13/how-belarus-supported-assad-while-helping-the-pentag-on-arm-his-opponents-a87317>