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CSTO Warns of Rising Border Tensions Following Zelensky's Ultimatum to Belarus

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Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. **president.gov.by**

A senior official at the Collective Security Treaty Organization said Wednesday that the Moscow-led military alliance has taken note of rising tensions between Ukraine and Belarus after Kyiv last week threatened to strike military targets inside Belarusian territory.

"We've been hearing the Kyiv regime's recent statements about Belarus," Viktor Vasilyev, Chairman of the CSTO Permanent Council, said at the St. Petersburg International Legal Forum. "The situation on the border between Ukraine and Belarus is growing more tense."

His comment follows an ultimatum from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who last week said his military would strike ground stations in Belarus if it continues to allow Russia to use them. The stations, he claimed, were used in recent Russian strikes on Ukraine.

Zelensky warned that if Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko did not take down the stations, then Ukraine's military would.

"I think a week will be enough for him to do it. If he doesn't do it, we will," Zelensky said in an interview on Ukrainian television.

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Adding to the tensions are claims from Russian and Belarusian officials that a Ukrainian drone struck a bus carrying a Belarusian youth soccer team in a Russian border area last week, killing a woman and injuring six others, including four children.

Ukraine denied it targeted the bus and dismissed the allegations as a "provocation." Lukashenko, meanwhile, insisted the drone came from Ukraine, but has otherwise avoided using the incident as a pretext for retaliatory actions toward Kyiv.

At the same time, Lukashenko said earlier this month that Belarus has no intention of joining Russia in its war against Ukraine.

"We have said many times that it is absolutely unacceptable for the war between Ukraine and Russia to spill over into Belarusian territory," he said, adding that Minsk is "very vulnerable militarily."

Former and current Russian and European officials told The Wall Street Journal this week that Moscow has allegedly begun a "pressure campaign" to draw Belarus into the war with Ukraine or "operations" against its NATO neighbors.

Although Russia used Belarusian territory as a launchpad during its initial 2022 invasion, Minsk has so far avoided direct combat involvement, even as the two countries have deepened military and economic ties.

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