

# US citizens urged to leave Belarus immediately

VILNIUS, Lithuania — The Biden administration is urging U.S. citizens in Belarus to depart the country immediately and warned against travel there in a statement published Monday.

The updated travel warning comes after bordering countries Lithuania, Latvia and Poland have stepped up security along the border over concerns about Russian Wagner mercenary forces exiled in the country.

The State Department, in its warning, encouraged Americans still in Belarus to depart the country immediately and categorized the country as a Level 4 risk, the highest security warning.

Belarus's longtime leader Alexander Lukashenko, known as Europe's last dictator, has been a key facilitator of Russian President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine, and is under a catalog of U.S. sanctions for human rights abuses and political repression against Belarusian people who challenged his claim to election victory in 2020.

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