

Moscow Raps EU Sanctions on Belarus

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Russia offered support to Belarus on Tuesday after Minsk was slapped with EU and U.S. sanctions for its violent crackdown on protests after the disputed December re-election of President Alexander Lukashenko.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the EU sanctions were "counterproductive."

The Belarussian Foreign Ministry earlier threatened to respond to the EU sanctions by taking "proportional and adequate measures."

EU foreign ministers said Monday that they would organize an asset freeze and visa ban on Lukashenko and 155 other Belarussian officials in the wake of flawed Dec. 19 elections, while the United States expanded its list of Belarussian officials subject to travel restrictions and banned business with two subsidiaries of a state-owned Belarussian petroleum conglomerate.

Also Tuesday, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe said Minsk had refused to allow its media freedom chief to visit the country and continued to harass reporters.

In Poland, the Foreign Ministry said representatives from the United States, the European

Union and other countries would meet in Warsaw on Wednesday to raise money for the democratic opposition in Belarus.

(Reuters, AP)

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