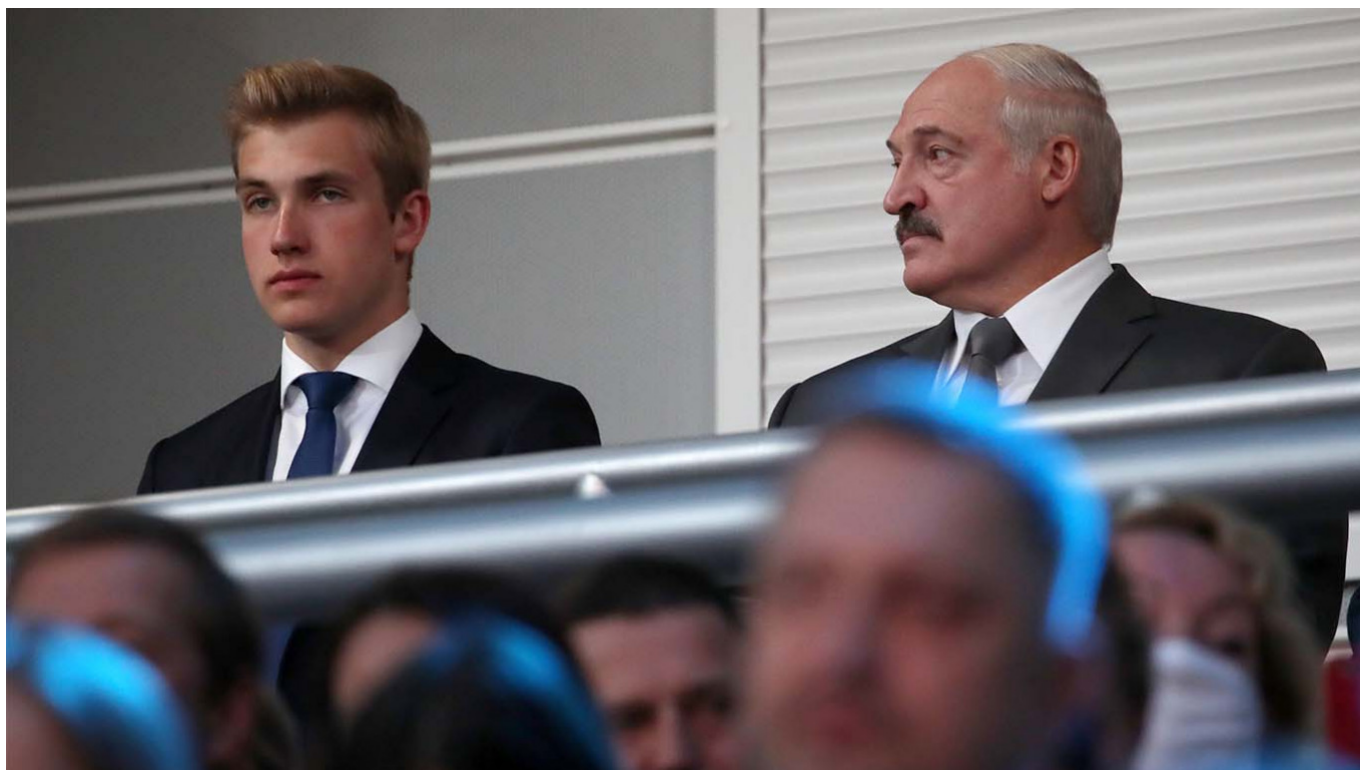


# Protest-Plagued Belarus Strongman Transfers Son to Moscow School – Reports

September 17, 2020



Alexander Lukashenko with his son Nikolai. **Natalia Fedosenko / TASS**

*Update: On Thursday evening, Nikolai [appeared](#) alongside Lukashenko's security detail in Minsk, where his father was filmed surrounded by admirers at a women's forum that he crashed to announce border closures.*

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko has transferred his youngest son to an elite boarding school in Moscow amid ongoing protests against his disputed re-election, Russian tabloids reported Thursday.

Nikolai "Kolya" Lukashenko, 16, has become a social media [sensation](#) as he has grown from a pudgy kid to an apparent "[successor](#)" to the presidency who is frequently seen at his father's side at public events. Lukashenko has [suggested](#) that Nikolai is pro-opposition, saying in an interview ahead of the disputed Aug. 9 vote that his son is "inclined to oppose power in general."

**Related article:** [Belarus' Lukashenko Brandishes Rifle During Mass Opposition Rally](#)

More recently in August, Nikolai was filmed wearing military fatigues and toting an automatic rifle next to his father as mass anti-Lukashenko protests raged outside the presidential palace in Minsk.

According to the Russian Komsomolskaya Pravda tabloid, Nikolai is in the process of transferring to a Moscow State University (MSU) boarding school and has been secretly taken to Moscow.

Nikolai had initially passed exams to enter 10th grade at the Belarus State University lyceum, but source-based reporting said he had [withdrawn](#) after journalists were unable to find him among the roster of incoming students.

“Kolya took his documents and will study in Moscow,” Alexander Voytovich, chief researcher at the Belarusian academy of sciences, was quoted as saying.

“Lukashenko’s services assessed the situation and concluded that Kolya will be very uncomfortable” at the Belarus lyceum, Voytovich said, adding that the academy’s staff condemned the violent crackdown on post-election protesters.

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An unnamed former Belarusian KGB agent told the tabloid his active-duty colleagues said that Nikolai was taken to the Russian capital under a shroud of secrecy.

“I know they first discussed sending the boy to study in Europe or the United States. But they decided Kolya would be safest in Russia after Lukashenko’s talks with the Russian president,” the alleged ex-agent was quoted as saying.

Lukashenko met President Vladimir Putin earlier Monday, where the Russian leader backed his counterpart and promised a \$1.5 billion loan in exchange for Minsk’s stronger ties with Moscow.

Nikolai, who has apparently been settled at the Belarusian Embassy in Moscow, will first attend classes remotely before switching to in-person studies, Komsomolskaya Pravda reported, quoting the alleged former agent.

The Komsomolskaya Pravda report also claimed that Nikolai would study at the MSU boarding school under an assumed name.

The MSU boarding school [told](#) the state-run RIA Novosti news agency that Nikolai is not currently studying there.

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