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Amendments to the Acts on Military Security and Defense of the Republic of Belarus

Following a series of legal changes in recent years concerning national defense, the security of the (Russia-Belarus) Union State, and Belarus's national security concept, the government began amending all laws related to military security and defense at the end of 2025. The new regulations are intended to reflect the current geopolitical environment. They will also enable rapid responses and the potential involvement of Belarusian armed forces in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Package of changes. In autumn 2025, the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus began the process of legally formalizing the country's updated military policy. On 16 September 2025, General Pavel Muraveiko – Chief of the General Staff of the Belarusian Armed Forces and First Deputy Minister of Defense – presented a draft law titled “On the amendment of the acts on military security and defense.” According to him, the proposal will update and unify Belarusian legislation relating to national security and defense.

The goal of the draft law is to align the acts “On Defense,” “On the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus,” and “On Martial Law” with the Belarusian military doctrine adopted by the All-Belarusian People's Assembly on 25 April 2024.

Among other things, the bill harmonizes terminology across these acts in line with the military doctrine and adjusts the powers of the president, the Security Council, the Ministry of Defense, and the General Staff of the Armed Forces. It also specifies the tasks of the Armed Forces and the role of the General Staff in ensuring military security and armed defense. It revises the list of military threats that justify imposing martial law, and it stipulates that any act of armed aggression by a state (or coalition of states) against the Union State should automatically be treated as grounds for imposing martial law in Belarus.

General Muraveiko argues that these changes are necessary to incorporate updated provisions of the military doctrine, eliminate duplication of regulations, and standardize terminology. The amendments to the law “On Defense” clarify how Belarus intends to protect sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and constitutional order, as defined in the military doctrine. The proposed legal changes also reflect the doctrine's revised logic, which states that in peacetime the state ensures *military security* rather than *military defense*.

New tasks of the armed forces. Significant revisions were proposed to the 3 November 1992 act “On the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus,” establishing a clear distinction between the tasks of the armed forces in peacetime and wartime. During war, the armed forces are responsible for the armed defense of Belarus – either independently or jointly with allied forces – and for defeating the enemy and creating conditions to end hostilities (concluding peace) on terms that are not contrary to Belarus's national interests.

The list of peacetime tasks is extensive. It includes maintaining combat potential, readiness, and mobilization capacity at levels that ensure military security and armed defense; helping prevent internal armed conflict and, if one occurs, helping resolve it; repelling military aggression in the event of an international armed conflict; identifying war-related threats and responding to emergency situations that involve such threats; protecting the state border; strengthening air defense as part of the Union State's unified defensive system; maintaining constant readiness to deploy assigned forces in order to prevent or contain crises that could trigger armed conflicts in Belarus or allied countries; preventing border incidents such as sabotage or provocations; and



participating – together with other forces, military units, and paramilitary organizations – in enforcing martial law or a state of emergency within Belarus.

The act “On Martial Law” of 13 January 2003 will also undergo several changes. The definition of circumstances constituting an attack on Belarus has been expanded. Under the new rules, any act of armed aggression by a state or coalition of states against the Union State or a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization is automatically treated as an attack on Belarus and serves as grounds for imposing martial law. In practice, this means that any Ukrainian strike on the Russian Federation could legally be classified as aggression against Belarus, enabling the Belarusian authorities to declare martial law. Given that such strikes occur almost daily, Belarus could, in principle, impose martial law and enter the war in Ukraine at any moment.

The draft law also acknowledges the growing importance of counteraction in the information sphere. The Belarusian armed forces will be tasked with helping create favorable conditions in the information domain to support political, economic, and other objectives aligned with national interests.

A new definition of military threat. The list of conditions that may be deemed military threats requiring countermeasures is significantly expanded. These include the formation of illegal armed groups in Belarus, their armed resistance to law-enforcement authorities, attacks on critical infrastructure, interference with the functioning of public administration, and other actions that could trigger an internal armed conflict. Additional threats include widespread draft evasion, a sharp decline in the number of military personnel in the Armed Forces and other military units, and uncontrolled emigration that weakens national military potential or fuels armed conflict between segments of Belarusian society based on ideological, political, racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic, or other divisions.

Serious military threats also include provocative armed incidents involving infiltration by illegal armed formations created abroad (especially those composed mainly of ethnic Belarusians); the regrouping or deployment of foreign armed forces near the Belarusian border; the escalation of internal armed conflicts in allied states or neighboring countries into international conflicts; and the deployment or production of long-range strategic weapons, nuclear, biological, or other weapons of mass destruction – or their components – in neighboring states whose governments pursue unfriendly policies toward Belarus.

A *direct* military threat includes the buildup near the Belarusian border of another state’s armed forces (or those of a coalition), or of armed formations of unclear affiliation, indicating a real intention to use force against the independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty, or constitutional order of Belarus, as well as mobilization efforts in another state aimed at preparing an attack on Belarus.

Conclusions. The amendments to Belarus’s military security and defense legislation define the scope, content, and timing of armed-forces actions designed to respond to threat levels and repel aggression in both peacetime and wartime. They regulate defense preparations and set out the measures intended to ensure the country’s military security.

The most important reforms concern preventing and resolving armed conflicts. They are based on lessons learned from managing the 2020 crisis. In this area, the tasks of the armed forces in ensuring military security and armed defense, as well as the powers of command structures during crisis-response operations, have been clarified. Taking into account the development of international military cooperation, the amendments also guarantee that armed defense of the state may be carried out either by Belarus’s national forces alone or jointly with allied militaries.

The proposed revisions will make it significantly easier – both in practical and legal terms – to deploy Belarusian armed forces in a potential conflict in Ukraine. Under Belarusian law, any Ukrainian attack on Russia would justify introducing martial law in Belarus and could lead to the involvement of Belarusian troops at Russia’s request.