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**THREAT OF NEW CRACKDOWN ON PROTESTERS AS EU SIGNALS SUPPORT FOR  
'PEACEFUL TRANSITION' IN BELARUS**

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EuroNews (20 August 2020)

Belarus' authoritarian leader has threatened to take tough new steps against demonstrators challenging the extension of his 26-year rule and accused the West of fomenting unrest as he sought to consolidate his grip on power amid widening protests.

President Alexander Lukashenko warned on Wednesday that opposition activists who created a council to negotiate a transition and new elections could face criminal charges, and he ordered his security agencies to restore order on the streets □ a possible harbinger of a renewed crackdown on peaceful demonstrations.

It comes as EU leaders expressed their full support for the Belarusian people who want a peaceful transition to democracy after ten days of state repression and violence against protesters.

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