



Belarus offers to help US with baby formula

Description

BELARUS: President Lukashenko said he could send it as either a commercial product or humanitarian aid

The US could get infant formula and other baby food from Belarus, the country's president, Alexander Lukashenko, said on Friday. He was commenting on the shortage of the crucial product in America and the Biden administration's operation to fly in supplies.

"We have good milk, good meat products for kids, canned food, formula, everything. If they'd like it, we could launch supplies tomorrow," he said. The Belarusian leader, who has been sanctioned by the US for alleged violations of human rights, added that he was willing to offer the food either as a commercial product or as humanitarian aid.

He insisted that he believed Americans could afford to pay for Belarusian products. The president made the remarks when talking to the press. He called on reporters to relay his offer *"to every American."*

The baby formula shortage in the US was triggered by the February shutdown of a Michigan plant operated by Abbott Laboratories over contamination concerns. The facility, which accounts for roughly 40% of the formula in the US market, recalled some of its products and shut down a manufacturing plant after four babies who had been fed formula made at the facility contracted a rare bacterial infection. Two of them later died.

US President Joe Biden acknowledged this week that he underestimated the importance of the plant for the supply. He said his administration switched into full gear after becoming aware of the situation in early April and was moving to resolve the crisis.

Washington sent military cargo planes to bring baby formula from Germany. The US is also seeking to secure more supplies from the UK and Australia as part of the so-called Operation Fly Formula.

Belarus as a nation and President Lukashenko personally have been in the crosshairs of multiple rounds of Western sanctions. The latest batch came as retaliation for the country's having allowed

Russian troops to use its territory to stage the offensive against Ukraine.

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