



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on March 21, 2023

## Justice Ministers Discuss Support for ICC After Putin Arrest Warrant

Justice ministers from more than 40 countries convened in London on Monday to discuss enhancing international support for the International Criminal Court (ICC) as it probes possible war crimes in the Ukraine conflict.

The meeting came after the ICC, based in The Hague, issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russian Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova last Friday for the "illegal deportation" of Ukrainian children following the outbreak of the Ukraine-Russia conflict in February 2022.



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The ICC said in a statement that "there are reasonable grounds to believe that each suspect bears responsibility for the war crime of unlawful deportation of population and that of unlawful transfer of population from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation."

"We are gathering in London today united by one cause, to hold war criminals to account for the atrocities committed in Ukraine during this unjust, unprovoked and unlawful invasion," British Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab said in a statement.

"Britain, alongside the international community, will continue to provide the International Criminal Court with the funding, people and expertise to ensure justice is served," he continued.

In December, ICC prosecutor Karim Khan urged the international community to increase global backing for the court.

London has already declared additional funding of nearly £400,000 to bankroll psychological support for witnesses and victims of crimes or to reinforce British specialists with the ICC.

Netherlands Justice and Security Minister Dilan Yesilgoz-Zegerius said the international community must assume responsibility for ensuring that the perpetrators of the crimes committed during the conflict in Ukraine are prosecuted.

"Together we must establish the truth, achieve justice and ensure security," she said in the statement.

"The Ukrainian people have shown more than once they will have the last word on their future. They might be angry and frustrated, but never defeated. They deserve our support in finding justice," she added.

In 2022, the Netherlands mobilized two forensic investigation teams under the banner of the ICC to garner evidence to be used in investigations into alleged crimes committed in Ukraine.

The ICC has more than 900 staff with a budget of €169 million for 2023. In July 2022, it requested €175 million for 2023.



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Its 123 member states are in charge of ensuring the court's finances. Also, the ICC also receives voluntary contributions from international groups, individuals, and corporations.

Monday's conference in London was jointly organized by the U.K. and the Netherlands.

The gathering was a "somber" one and not a moment for backslapping, Khan said.

Moscow rejects the ICC's criminal charges against Putin, slamming the move as unacceptable and responding that the warrant has no legal force in Russia, which is not an ICC member.

The ICC was set up two decades ago as an entity to investigate war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity under a 1998 treaty known as the Rome Statute.

Previously, the globalist UN Security Council had created ad hoc tribunals to tackle crimes in places such as the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

The court is based in The Hague, a Dutch city that has long been a center for international law and justice.

The U.S. government under President Joe Biden has been embroiled in discussions over whether to provide the ICC with evidence gathered by the U.S. intelligence community about supposed Russian war crimes.

Most members of the Biden administration supported transferring the evidence, based on sources familiar with the internal deliberations, but the Pentagon has been hesitant because it does not want to set a precedent that could ultimately lead to Americans being prosecuted. Like Russia, the United States does not recognize the ICC's jurisdiction.

Although the likelihood of an ICC trial while Putin remains in power appears slim as the court cannot try defendants in absentia and Russia has declared it will not surrender its officials, the warrant for Putin's arrest would further alienate him from the West. If Putin travels to a state that is a party to the ICC, that country must arrest him, based on its obligations under international law.

"This makes Putin a pariah," said Stephen Rapp, a former ambassador-at-large heading the Office of Global Criminal Justice in the U.S. State Department. "If he travels, he risks arrest. This never goes away."

Rapp added that Russia cannot gain relief from sanctions without adhering to the warrants.

"Either Putin is placed on trial in The Hague," Rapp said, or "he is increasingly isolated and dies with this hanging over his head."

Biden remarked last week that the ICC's warrant for Putin was justified.

"Well, I think it's justified. But the question is — it's not recognised internationally by us either. But I think it makes a very strong point," Biden told reporters.

The United States separately has concluded that Russian forces have committed war crimes in Ukraine and wants perpetrators of war crimes to be held accountable, a State Department spokesman said in an e-mailed statement.

"There is no doubt that Russia is committing war crimes and atrocities in Ukraine, and we have been clear that those responsible must be held accountable," the spokesman stated. "This was a decision the ICC prosecutor reached independently based on the facts before him."

On the other hand, Russian agent Maria Butina told the [BBC](#) last year that she believed Ukrainian



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President Volodymyr Zelensky is “absolutely” a Nazi, despite the premier’s Jewish roots.

Butina also claimed Russia was not bombing Ukrainian civilians, but that Ukraine’s own military is firing on cities and civilians within its borders, *The Daily Beast* reported. “Russia is not bombing citizens,” Butina told the BBC’s Nick Robinson. “Russian military troops actually are having humanitarian corridors.”

Putin has refrained from alluding to his actions in Ukraine as a “war” or “invasion.” Butina justified Putin’s decision “because of the purposes” behind Russia’s actions. She elaborated that Russia has been cautioning the world “that the Nazi mood and the Nazi actions in Ukraine” have been on the rise for “actually many years.”

Additionally, Butina said that Zelensky’s actions caused her to view him as a Nazi. When Robinson pointed out that Zelensky is Jewish, Butina remarked that “Nazism is not about just one nation.”

“It’s about killing, murdering, torturing, alienation — based on their race, their gender, their nationality, country of origin,” Butina said.

In November last year, Vyacheslav Volodin, an eminent ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, called for Zelensky to face a trial for war crimes.

Volodin, who also served as Deputy Prime Minister from 2010 to 2012, said in a Telegram post that Zelensky should be judged for what he labeled as war crimes, adding that the Ukrainian premier “should be brought before a tribunal.” Volodin’s message was broadcast to his over 650,000 subscribers.

“Everyone has seen evidence of Ukrainian Nazis shooting our soldiers lying down, without weapons. This is how the Nazis behave,” Volodin said in a statement. “The Kyiv regime deserves the most severe punishment for its atrocities,” he added.



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