

# Russia Cannot Participate in War Crimes Investigation – Justice Ministry

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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People walk near a billboard, showing President of the breakaway region of South Ossetia Leonid Tibilov during a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, in Leningori (or Akhlagori).

Russia is unable to participate in the International Criminal Court's investigation into war crimes committed during the conflict in South Ossetia in 2008, as it has not ratified the Rome Statute, the Justice Ministry said Tuesday, the Interfax news agency reported.

“As of Jan. 1, 2016, the Russian Federation's Rome Statute of the ICC has not been ratified and has not entered into force,” a court spokesperson said, Interfax reported Tuesday.

Russia signed the Rome Statute in 2000, but has not ratified it.

The ICC has launched an investigation into the military conflict in South Ossetia — a Russia-backed breakaway region in Georgia — in 2008, a statement published on the court's website on Jan. 27 revealed.

"There is a reasonable basis to believe that crimes within the ICC's jurisdiction have been committed in Georgia. Such crimes include crimes against humanity, such as murder, forcible transfer of population and persecution, and war crimes," the statement read.

Georgia's then-President Mikheil Saakashvili launched an offensive in August 2008 to reclaim the breakaway region. Russian forces were deployed in Georgia to launch a counter-offensive — ultimately winning the five-day war. South Ossetia and the breakaway Abkhazia region were then recognized by Russia as independent states.

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