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Putin Calls for Sanctions 'Moratorium' at G20 Summit

By AFP

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Russia has been chafing under numerous rounds of Western sanctions following the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its role in the Ukraine crisis. **Kremlin.ru**

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday called for sanctions relief during the coronavirus pandemic, telling G20 leaders it was a matter "of life and death."

The leader did not specify which countries should be earmarked for sanctions relief, speaking instead more broadly.

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"Ideally we should introduce a... joint moratorium on restrictions on essential goods as well as on financial transactions for their purchase," Putin said at a virtual meeting of G20 leaders

Thursday.

"I am talking about the countries that are suffering the most from this pandemic. At the end of the day, it's a question of life and death, this is a purely humanitarian issue."

"These matters should be freed of any politics," Putin added.

Russia has been chafing under numerous rounds of Western sanctions following the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its role in the Ukraine crisis.

It is also an ally of a number other countries sanctioned by the West, namely Iran and North Korea.

The Kremlin chief said it was important to establish "green corridors free of trade wars and sanctions" that would ensure supplies of medication, food, equipment and technology.

Putin also predicted the current crisis would be tougher than the financial crisis of 2008-2009 and trade conflicts and sanctions would only exacerbate it.

"We undoubtedly cannot afford to act on the principle 'every man for himself'," the Russian president said, adding that countries needed to join forces in developing vaccines and drug treatments.

The coronavirus and a steep drop in oil prices have caused a two-pronged crisis for the Russian economy, challenging Putin's promises to boost growth and raise living standards.

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