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Moscow Court Grants FSB Request to Arrest Ukrainian Ministers

By AFP

December 06, 2022



Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine Iryna Vereshchuk. **The Presidential Office of Ukraine**

Updates with court ruling, adds top three lines.

A Moscow court on Tuesday ordered the arrest in absentia of two Ukrainian ministers after they were accused of violating Russia's territorial integrity.

The decision came following a request by the FSB security service to arrest in absentia Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk and Deputy Foreign Minister Emine Dzhaparova.

"The request has been granted," Anastasia Romanova, the spokesperson for Moscow's Lefortovsky district court, told AFP.

Russia said in September it had annexed four regions in Ukraine that its forces only partially controlled after holding so-called referendums in Donetsk and Luhansk in the east and

Zaporizhzhia and Kherson in the south.

A Moscow court spokesperson told AFP that FSB investigators had "requested the arrest ... in absentia" of Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk and Deputy Foreign Minister Emine Dzhaparova.

The court did not confirm the charges to AFP, but Russian state-run news agency RIA Novosti reported that they were accused of "violating the territorial integrity of Russia."

Senior Ukrainian political figures including President Volodymyr Zelensky have traveled across the country including to the regions Moscow claimed to have annexed despite ongoing fighting.

In his latest trip, Zelensky on Tuesday visited the town of Sloviansk near the frontline in the Donbas region.

Vereshchuk, Ukraine's minister for the reintegration of the occupied territories, traveled to Kherson after Kyiv's forces recaptured the city in November.

Dzhaparova, a Crimean Tatar, promotes issues related to the ethnic minority on the Crimean peninsula, which was annexed by Russia in 2014 and has called for international support for the "de-occupation of Crimea and its return to Ukraine."

Both women have been put on Russia's wanted list, RIA Novosti reported.

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