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Ex-Russian Space Chief Sends Macron Shrapnel That Almost Killed Him

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Dmitry Rogozin **Alexander Ryumin / TASS**

The former head of Russia's space agency Dmitry Rogozin said on Wednesday that he had sent a piece of shrapnel from a French howitzer shell that injured him in the Russian-occupied city of Donetsk in eastern Ukraine last month to French President Emmanuel Macron.

Rogozin, an outspoken public figure who has also served as Russia's deputy prime minister, was injured in a December attack on a Donetsk hotel where he had reportedly been celebrating his birthday with the deputy head of the breakaway Donetsk People's Republic, among others.

Ukraine's Border Guard Service afterward said the attack, in which two people died, had been intended as a warning to other Russians not to break the law by illegally entering Ukrainian territory.

Rogozin, who remains an ardent supporter of President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine despite his recent dismissal from Roscosmos, said that he had written to France's ambassador to Moscow, Pierre Levy.

"In this envelope along with my letter you will see shrapnel from a shell fired by a French 155-mm Caesar artillery unit," Rogozin said in an open letter to Levy published on Telegram.

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"It punctured my right shoulder and lodged in the fifth cervical vertebra only a millimeter away from killing me or rendering me an invalid," he wrote.

Rogozin said the incident took place during a "work meeting" in the restaurant of a hotel in Donetsk. Russian state news channel Rossiya 24 TV reported at the time that he had been celebrating his 59th birthday.

The channel broadcast images of the hotel and restaurant with parts of the roof destroyed and debris scattered all around.

Rogozin said he had regularly stayed in this hotel during trips to the Donetsk region, which Russia claimed to have annexed in September along with three other Ukrainian regions, despite widespread condemnation from the West.

Of his two friends who were killed in the attack, Rogozin said: "All our victims are on your conscience".

"I ask that you give the shrapnel the surgeons cut out of my spine to French President Emmanuel Macron," Rogozin wrote.

"And tell him that no one will escape responsibility for war crimes," he added.

The French embassy in Moscow declined to comment on the letter.

AFP contributed reporting.

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