The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Moves to Outlaw Compliance With International Criminal Court

April 14, 2023

The International Criminal Court in The Hague. **Rick Bajornas / UN Photo**

Russian lawmakers are set to consider making it a criminal offense to comply with International Criminal Court (ICC) orders to arrest President Vladimir Putin for war crimes, the State Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament, said Thursday.

The ICC issued a shock arrest warrant for Putin and his children's rights commissioner in March for the "unlawful deportation" of Ukrainian children to Russia. The decision drew ire from Russian officials.

The Duma submitted amendments to Russia's security law Thursday granting Putin the authority to "protect citizens in the case of decisions by foreign international bodies that contradict Russian legislation."

Russia's Criminal Code is also being amended to introduce harsher penalties for aiding the execution of orders by international organizations.

Related article: ICC Issues Arrest Warrant For Putin Over Alleged Ukraine War Crimes

“This decision will allow us to protect the country from various international organizations’ illegal, unfriendly and aggressive actions,” Duma chairman Vyacheslav Volodin, one of the bill's authors, said.

The Kommersant newspaper said it had obtained drafts of the proposed legislation which, it reported, makes “assisting in the execution of decisions made by international organizations of which Russia is not a member” a criminal offense punishable by a fine of up to 1 million rubles ($12,000) or by five years imprisonment.

Criminal law experts told Kommersant that the proposed new legislation would effectively outlaw any interaction with the ICC.

“The point now is that any contact with this court by anyone is considered a criminal offense in Russia. Anyone who gives advice to the ICC and simply responds to its requests will already be committing a criminal offense from Russia's viewpoint," Leonid Golovko, who heads the Moscow State University law school’s department of criminal procedure, said.

Russia is not an ICC member, making it unclear how the Hague-based court plans to enforce its warrant for Putin's arrest.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/04/14/russia-moves-to-outlaw-compliance-with-international-criminal-court-a80824