

South African Leader Says Putin, Zelensky Agree to Receive Peace Mission

May 16, 2023



South African President Cyril Ramaphosa. **GovernmentZA / flickr**

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said his Russian and Ukrainian colleagues have agreed to host an African peace initiative aimed at resolving the nearly 15-month war, Reuters [reported](#) Tuesday.

“My discussions with the two leaders [Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky] demonstrated that they are both ready to receive the African leaders,” Ramaphosa was quoted as saying.

He said the initiative was backed by the leaders of Zambia, Senegal, Congo, Uganda, Egypt and South Africa, [according](#) to the Russian state-run news agency RIA Novosti.

Reuters cited Ramaphosa as saying that the UN Secretary General, the United States and the United Kingdom have been briefed on the African initiative.

Ramaphosa added that Washington and London expressed “cautious” support.

The African missions’ visit, which Ramaphosa said would take place “as soon as possible,” according to AFP, aims to “have a discussion on how this conflict can be brought to an end.”

“Whether that will succeed or not is going to depend on the discussions that will be held,” Ramaphosa said.

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The South African leader previously said his country was neutral in the Russian-Ukrainian war.

South Africa, a member of the International Criminal Court, has been reticent on its stance toward the ICC’s warrant to arrest Putin on war crimes charges.

Government sources cited by South African media said this month that they would have “no choice” but to arrest Putin if he attended an upcoming summit there in August.

The far-left Economic Freedom Fighters party, South Africa’s third-largest, said this week it planned to submit a bill withdrawing South Africa from the ICC. Its prospects are unclear.

The African countries’ offer of mediation skills in the biggest conflict on European soil since World War II follows a similar one by China.

Beijing’s initiative has been criticized by Kyiv and its Western allies for implicitly justifying Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Western countries have vowed to continue providing Kyiv with weapons to fight Russian forces as Ukrainian troops prepare for a high-stakes counteroffensive.

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