

Moscow Rejects S.Africa's Request Not to Send Putin to BRICS Summit

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Deputy President of South Africa Paul Mashatile. **Phill Magakoe / AFP**

Russia turned down a request by South Africa not to send President Vladimir Putin to next month's BRICS summit in Johannesburg, South Africa's deputy president [told](#) local media Friday.

Earlier, Russian officials [told](#) The Moscow Times that Putin's attendance remained uncertain in the face of an International Criminal Court (ICC) indictment over the unlawful deportation of Ukrainian children and the fallout from the Wagner mercenary group's mutiny.

South Africa is required to arrest Putin if he travels there as a signatory of the Rome Statute that governs the ICC.

"We understand we are bound by the Rome Statute but we can't invite someone and then you arrest them. You can understand our dilemma," South African Deputy President Paul Mashatile told Mail & Guardian.

“We would be happy if he [Putin] doesn’t come,” he said.

Related article: [Prigozhin Mutiny, ICC Warrant Create Dilemma for Putin Ahead of BRICS Summit](#)

South Africa’s rejected proposal was for Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to lead Russia’s delegation at the BRICS summit in Johannesburg on Aug. 22–24 instead of Putin.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has vowed to hold an in-person summit despite the ICC warrant against Putin.

Mashatile said that Brazil, India, China and South Africa opposed holding the BRICS summit virtually, while India and Brazil rejected moving the 2023 summit to China.

A Kremlin-linked official told The Moscow Times that South Africa provided “security guarantees” for Putin during Ramaphosa’s visit to St. Petersburg in June.

Moscow [said](#) Friday the format of the upcoming BRICS summit was still being worked out.

South Africa has not condemned Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine, saying it remains impartial and prefers dialogue as it spearheads an African initiative to resolve the conflict.

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