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Putin, Several African Leaders Attend Russian Naval Parade

By AFP

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President Vladimir Putin on Sunday praised Russia's Navy in an address at an annual warship parade in St. Petersburg, which he attended accompanied by several African leaders.

The military display took part as Moscow's offensive in Ukraine stretches into its second year and three Ukrainian drones were downed over Moscow early on Sunday.

The Russian Navy has played a key role in Moscow's assault on Ukraine by pummelling the Western-backed country with ship- and submarine-launched cruise missiles, among other operations.

Without mentioning Ukraine in his speech, Putin hailed "the brave crews of ships and submarines."

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"In the name of Russia, our sailors give all their strength, show true heroism and fight valiantly, like our great ancestors," Putin said.

"Today, Russia is confidently implementing major elements of its national maritime policy and is consistently building up the power of its navy," he added.

Forty-five ships, boats and submarines took part in the parade along with around 3,000 servicemen, the Kremlin said.

The former imperial capital hosted a Russia-Africa summit earlier this week.

Several leaders and representatives of African countries including Mali and Burkina Faso attended the parade on Sunday.

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