

Kremlin Hopes Armenia Joining ICC Will Not Affect Relations

By [AFP](#)

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Vladimir Putin with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. **Sergei Karpukhin, TASS / kremlin.ru**

Moscow said Thursday that it hopes Armenia joining the International Criminal Court (ICC) would not affect relations between the two countries.

Armenia, which formally joined the Hague-based court on Thursday, has gradually distanced itself from Russia in recent months.

Yerevan is now required to arrest President Vladimir Putin if he sets foot on Armenian territory, as the ICC issued an arrest warrant for the Russian leader earlier last year.

"It's important for us that such decisions do not negatively impact — de jure and de facto — our bilateral relations, which we value and which we want to develop further," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

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Peskov added that Armenia's decision to become a state party to the ICC was its "sovereign right."

But the Kremlin has previously warned Yerevan that joining the Hague-based court would be the "wrong decision."

Meanwhile, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has sought to portray the move as directed against Yerevan's foe Azerbaijan, not Moscow.

In recent months, however, he has made critical comments about Russia's role in the South Caucasus.

Yerevan has grown impatient with Russia over its failure to back Armenia in its long-standing conflict with Azerbaijan over control of the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh.

It says Russian peacekeeping forces did not act to stop Azerbaijan's lightning offensive to retake control of the region in September.

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