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Moscow Calls ICC Arrest Warrants for Military Leaders 'Absurd'

By AFP

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Sergei Shoigu and Valery Gerasimov. **kremlin.ru**

The Kremlin on Wednesday dismissed arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for ex-Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and Army Chief Valery Gerasimov, calling them "absurd" and lacking in legal force.

The Hague-based court said Tuesday it had issued arrest warrants for the pair over a barrage of Russian missile strikes against Ukrainian energy infrastructure and civilian sites that it said may constitute "war crimes."

While Russia is not a member of the ICC, the more than 120 countries that are signatories to the Rome Statute — which established the court in 2002 — would be required to arrest Shoigu and Gerasimov were they to set foot on their territory.

"We do not recognize the jurisdiction of this court, we are not a member of the relevant

statute and therefore we do not recognize these warrants," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Wednesday.

"Moreover, we consider them quite absurd, just like the last two warrants which concerned the head of state and children's ombudsman," he added.

Related article: International Criminal Court Issues Arrest Warrants for Shoigu, Gerasimov

The ICC last year issued arrest warrants for President Vladimir Putin and his children's ombudsman Maria Lvova-Belova over the alleged deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia and Russian-controlled territory.

Shoigu was sacked as defense minister last month in a major shake-up of Russia's military leadership, moving to become secretary of the Security Council.

Gerasimov, meanwhile, serves as Chief of Russia's General Staff and has overall operational command of Moscow's war against Ukraine.

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