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Senior Russian Official in Tehran To Deepen Security Ties

By AFP

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Former Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu. **kremlin.ru**

Russia's national Security Council secretary on Monday arrived for a visit to Tehran, news agencies reported, amid fears of a wider war in the region following last week's killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran.

Sergei Shoigu, Russia's ex-Defense Minister, was set to meet senior military and security officials as well as new President Masoud Pezeshkian to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation in a wide range of spheres including security, Russia's RIA Novosti news agency reported.

The visit was at the invitation of his Iranian counterpart, Ali Akbar Ahmadian, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, Iran's local Tasnim news agency reported.

It said the visit had the aim of "strengthening interactions, the examination of regional and international issues, and bilateral political security relations."

Russia has "strongly condemned" the killing of Haniyeh, the political leader of the Islamist Palestinian movement Hamas, in Tehran last month.

Pezeshkian has described Russia as a "valued strategic ally."

Shoigu was removed as Defense Minister in May in a major shake-up of Russia's military leadership, becoming secretary of the Security Council instead.

The visit to one of Russia's key political allies underlines Shoigu's continued significant role.

As defense minister, he visited Iran in September last year, while his predecessor at the Security Council Nikolai Patrushev, a longstanding ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, visited in late 2022.

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