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Putin Warns Against 'Illusory' Attempts to Defeat Russia

By AFP

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Vladimir Putin with UN chief Antonio Guterres. **Grigory Sysoev / brics-russia2024.ru**

President Vladimir Putin warned Thursday that attempts to defeat Russia on the battlefield were "illusory," remarks made ahead of his first meeting with UN chief Antonio Guterres in more than two years.

Putin was speaking in the Tatarstan capital of Kazan on the final day of the BRICS summit, a forum Moscow hopes will help forge a united front of emerging economies against "Western hegemony."

Moscow's adversaries "do not conceal their aim to deal our country a strategic defeat", Putin said at the summit. "I will say directly that these are illusory calculations, that can be made only by those who do not know Russia's history."

Also present at Thursday's meeting was Chinese President Xi Jinping, who said the world

faces "serious challenges" and expressed hope that BRICS could be a "stabilizing force for peace."

"We need to continue to push for a ceasefire in Gaza, relaunch the two-state solution and stop the spread of war in Lebanon," Xi said. "There should be no more suffering and destruction in Palestine and Lebanon."

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Putin, also weighing in on Israel's assault on Gaza, said the Middle East was "on the verge of full-scale war."

The Kremlin leader faced calls this week from his BRICS allies to end the war in Ukraine, with member countries like India and China previously attempting to broker a ceasefire between Moscow and Kyiv.

UN chief Guterres, in his turn, has repeatedly criticized the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, saying it sets a "dangerous precedent" for the world.

Putin last met with Guterres in the first weeks of the war, when the UN chief visited Moscow during Russia's siege of Mariupol in southern Ukraine.

Guterres has since been involved in peace efforts between the two sides, helping to broker a deal that allowed Kyiv to safely export grain from its ports in 2022.

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