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Russia Arrests ICC Vice President Alapini-Gansou in Absentia

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Klaus Rainer Krieger / IMAGO / TASS

A Russian court on Wednesday ordered the arrest in absentia of International Criminal Court (ICC) Judge Reine Alapini-Gansou on charges of "unlawful detention."

Moscow's Basmanny District Court ruled to place Alapini-Gansou in pre-trial detention for two months from the date of her extradition to Russia.

Alapini-Gansou is the second ICC judge in less than a week to face "unlawful detention" charges, which are punishable by up to four years in Russian prison.

The independent news outlet Mediazona reported on the arrest hours before Moscow's Basmanny District Court made the arrest announcement on Wednesday, saying the ruling was issued in "early November."

Alapini-Gansou was elected second vice president of the Hague-based court in March of this year.

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In 2023, Russia placed ICC President Judge Tomoko Akane and First Vice President Rosario Salvatore Aitala on its wanted list after the court issued an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin over war crime allegations. ICC prosecutor Karim Khan and ICC Judge Sergio Gerardo Uganda Godinez are also part of a Russian investigation into "unlawful detentions."

Russia, which is not an ICC member and does not recognize its jurisdiction, has dismissed the warrant against Putin as "absurd." Nevertheless, the Kremlin leader has cut back on his foreign travel, with a trip to Mongolia in September marking his first visit to an ICC member since the March 2023 arrest warrant.

According to Mediazona, Alapini-Gansou was among the ICC judges to issue arrest warrants for three officials in the pro-Russia breakaway republic of South Ossetia over alleged war crimes during the Russian-Georgian war in August 2008.

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