

Russia's Shoigu Visits Indonesia for Defense Talks

By [AFP](#)

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Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu and Indonesian Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin.
Tatan Syuflana / AP / TASS

Russia's top security official, Sergei Shoigu, visited Indonesia on Tuesday for talks with President Prabowo Subianto and his defense minister as Moscow and Jakarta seek to strengthen defense cooperation.

Southeast Asia's largest economy maintains a neutral foreign policy, refusing to take sides in the Ukraine war or great power competition between the United States and China.

Shoigu, Russia's former defense minister and now secretary of its Security Council, is considered a key figure in the decision to send Russian troops into Ukraine in 2022 and remains a staunch ally of President Vladimir Putin.

He was scheduled to meet Indonesian Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin for a courtesy call

in Jakarta on Tuesday morning, Indonesia's Defense Ministry said in a statement. Later in the day, Prabowo was set to receive Shoigu at the presidential palace, a palace spokesperson said, without providing further details.

Russia's state news agency RIA Novosti reported Monday that Shoigu would discuss bilateral ties with Indonesia's top leadership, including security and defense cooperation.

Prabowo, who was inaugurated as president earlier this month, has pledged to take a more assertive role on the world stage. He visited Moscow in July for talks with Putin.

In November, Indonesia and Russia conducted their first joint naval drills. Russia deployed three corvette-class warships, a medium tanker, a military helicopter and a tugboat for the exercises off Indonesia's main island of Java.

Jakarta has maintained billion-dollar trade ties with Moscow, but major arms imports have stalled in recent years following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Still, since taking over as Indonesia's defense minister in 2019, Prabowo has kept alive a \$1.1 billion deal for Russian fighter jets agreed to a year earlier, despite reported threats of U.S. sanctions.

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