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Putin Will Not Face Prosecution for War Crimes While President – Euronews

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Maxim Bogodvid / briis-russia2024.ru

President Vladimir Putin and other top Russian officials will not face prosecution while in office under a future Western tribunal for the war in Ukraine, Euronews reported Thursday, citing anonymous EU officials.

The special court, which is expected to be based in The Hague, aims to try Russia's leadership for the crime of aggression but will not hold trials in absentia — seen as a compromise among the countries involved.

The tribunal will operate under the Council of Europe, a 46-member rights body that expelled Russia after its 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Legal experts from 38 countries, known as the "Core Group," have been working since last year to create the tribunal's legal framework.

The exemption reportedly applies to Putin, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Trials in absentia could still be possible after they leave office, Euronews said.

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The EU's diplomatic service announced last week that the Core Group had finalized three key draft documents for the tribunal and submitted them for political review.

Ukraine is expected to sign an agreement establishing the court on May 9 in Kyiv. The Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly (PACE) will then vote, with a two-thirds majority likely.

Countries such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan are also expected to join to strengthen the tribunal's legitimacy.

The United States did not attend the Core Group's most recent meeting, according to Euronews, as President Donald Trump continues efforts to restore diplomatic relations with Moscow and end the war.

The tribunal is being created separately from the International Criminal Court, which in 2023 issued an arrest warrant for Putin over the illegal transfer of Ukrainian children. Russia is not a party to the ICC's founding treaty.

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