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Russia Jails ICC Judges, Prosecutor in Absentia Over Putin Arrest Warrant

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Karim Khan, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. **Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (CC BY-SA 2.0)**

A Moscow court has issued in absentia verdicts against the chief prosecutor and eight judges of the International Criminal Court over their indictment of Russian President Vladimir Putin for alleged war crimes in Ukraine, authorities said Friday.

The Hague-based ICC issued an arrest warrant for Putin and his children's rights commissioner, Maria Lvova-Belova, in March 2023, accusing them of illegally deporting Ukrainian children. Moscow dismissed the warrant as "void" and opened a criminal case into ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan and the court's judges.

Russia's Prosecutor General's Office said the Moscow City Court found the nine ICC representatives guilty of prosecuting innocent persons, illegal detention and attempted violence against persons who enjoy international protection.

"The court found that ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan unlawfully initiated criminal proceedings

against Russian citizens from February to March 2022 in The Hague," the prosecutor's office said.

"The ICC Presidency, without any legal grounds, instructed the judges of the chamber to issue knowingly unlawful arrest warrants for these individuals," it added without mentioning Putin or Lvova-Belova.

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The court sentenced Khan to 15 years in prison as soon as he is extradited to Russia.

The eight judges received prison sentences ranging from three and a half years to 15 years.

Russia's Investigative Committee, which opened the case, identified the judges as former ICC President Petr Józef Hofmański and his successor Tomoko Akane, as well as First Vice-President Rosario Salvatore Aitala and Second Vice-President Reine Alapini-Gansou, in addition to Sergio Gerardo Ugalde Godínez, Haikel Ben Mahfoud, Carranza Luz del Carmen Ibáñez and Bertram Schmitt.

All nine have been placed on an international wanted list.

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