

Putin Rejects South Africa's Request to Not Attend BRICS Summit Over ICC Arrest Warrant

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Global Research, July 18, 2023

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#), [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

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Things are getting awkward and coming to a head as BRICS countries are now just weeks away from the Aug. 22-24 major summit in Johannesburg, South Africa – and Russian President Vladimir Putin is still committed to attending in person.

South Africa had even mulled requesting that Moscow opt for Zoom instead, which would have without doubt been taken as an insult by the Russian side.

“President Putin will be asked by South Africa to attend a key summit via Zoom and not in person after Pretoria sought legal advice about its obligations to arrest the Russian leader, who has been indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court [ICC],” the [Sunday Times](#) reported in May.

Most recently, the South African government has simply politely asked Putin not to come, something which the Kremlin swiftly rejected.

The host country for the BRICS summit is under pressure as a signatory of the Rome Statute that governs the ICC. Given the arrest warrant outstanding against Putin, South African authorities are expected by the West to act.

South Africa's deputy president Paul Mashatile said in a recent [statement](#),

“We understand we are bound by the Rome Statute but we can't invite someone and then you arrest them. You can understand our dilemma.”

“We would be happy if he [Putin] doesn't come,” he followed with. A suggestion to hold the entire summit virtually has been rejected by some of the largest BRICS countries, including India and Brazil.

The Kremlin has stuck by its position that South Africa has clear obligations and has even given Putin personal [assurances](#):

A Kremlin-linked official told The Moscow Times that South Africa provided “security guarantees” for Putin during Ramaphosa’s visit to St. Petersburg in June.

The schedule and logistics are still being worked out, according to reports, but South Africa’s president has been consistent in saying it will be face to face and that Putin hasn’t wavered on his intent to attend.

“There were rumors that this too could become an online summit – no. It is going to be face to face, eyeball to eyeball,” Ramaphosa [said](#).

While Ramaphosa has been seen as sympathetic to Putin, it has been South Africa’s leading opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), which has pressured the government to arrest the Russian leader if he arrives for the summit.

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