**Russia quits International Criminal Court**

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<http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/16/world/russia-quits-international-criminal-court/index.html>

Russia says it will withdraw from the International Criminal Court (ICC) under a directive signed by President Vladimir Putin.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said the ICC had "failed to meet the expectations to become a truly independent, authoritative international tribunal," in a statement released Wednesday.

It described the ICC as "ineffective," adding that "during the 14 years of the court's work it passed only four sentences having spent over a billion dollars."

Russia also criticized the court's handling of the country's [five-day conflict with neighboring Georgia in 2008,](http://edition.cnn.com/2014/03/13/world/europe/2008-georgia-russia-conflict/)saying "we can hardly trust the ICC in such a situation."

ICC spokesman Fadi El Abdallah said in a statement that "membership of the Rome Statute is a voluntary and sovereign decision which is the prerogative of all states," adding "the ICC is respectful of each states' sovereignty."

Under Wednesday's directive, President Putin instructed his Ministry of Foreign Affairs to inform the UN Secretary General that Russia no longer intends to become a state party to the Rome Statute, the treaty that established the ICC.

Russia signed the treaty in 2000, but did not ratify it, according to the Russian Legal Information Agency. The Rome Statute has been ratified by 123 countries.

The US also previously signed the treaty, but under the Bush administration told the United Nations in 2002 it had["no intention"](http://edition.cnn.com/2002/US/05/05/international.criminal.court/) of ratifying it.

Based in the Hague, Netherlands, the ICC comprises 124 states from around the world. It is the ["court of last resort"](http://edition.cnn.com/2016/07/18/world/international-criminal-court-fast-facts/) and tries four types of crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity, crimes of aggression and war crimes.

**Russia's actions in Crimea**

The announcement comes days after the ICC published a damning verdict on Russia's actions in neighboring Crimea.

The ICC said in a [report released Monday](https://www.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/otp/161114-otp-rep-PE_ENG.pdf) that "the situation within the territory of Crimea and Sevastopol factually amounts to an ongoing state of occupation."

Russia annexed Crimea, a territory in the former Soviet republic of Ukraine, in 2014 following tensions with its neighbor.

World leaders managed to install a shaky peace deal in 2015. But violence continues in the conflict zone in eastern Ukraine, and [2016 has seen an increase in casualties.](http://edition.cnn.com/2015/02/10/europe/ukraine-war-how-we-got-here/)

### Criticism of Syrian 'war crimes'

President Putin's directive also follows suggestions from French President Francois Hollande last month that [Moscow was guilty of war crimes in Syria.](http://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/11/world/syria-aleppo-conflict/)

Putin canceled a trip to Paris after Hollande[told French TV station TF1](http://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/11/world/syria-aleppo-conflict/)that those behind the bombardment of Aleppo -- alluding to Syria and Russia -- had committed "war crimes" and should be held accountable at the International Criminal Court.

Russia has carried out airstrikes in Syria since September 2015 in coordination with President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

This year [South Africa,](http://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/21/africa/south-africa-withdraws-icc/) Gambia and Burundi also took actions to quit the International Criminal Court, according to the Russian Legal Information Agency.