# International Criminal Court Issues Arrest Warrants for Russian Officials over Ukraine Missile Strikes



### ICC Issues Arrest Warrants for Russian Officials

On June 25, 2024, the International Criminal Court (ICC), based in The Hague, announced arrest warrants for two high-ranking Russian officials: former Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff. Both are accused of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity related to the Russian military's missile strikes on Ukraine’s civilian infrastructure during the full-scale invasion.

#### Key Details:

* What: Arrest warrants for war crimes and crimes against humanity.
* Who: Sergei Shoigu (former Defense Minister) and Valery Gerasimov (Chief of the General Staff).
* When: Alleged crimes occurred between October 10, 2022, and March 9, 2023.
* Where: Ukraine, specifically targeting electric power plants and substations.

#### Background:

Shoigu, recently dismissed from his post but now a senior official in Russia's Security Council, and Gerasimov are accused of orchestrating attacks that caused significant civilian suffering and infrastructural damage. The ICC maintains it has reasonable grounds to believe these attacks were directed primarily at civilian objects, constituting war crimes under international law.

#### Court Proceedings:

The ICC stated that the suspects bear "individual criminal responsibility" for the missile strikes, which led to extensive blackouts and civilian hardship in Ukraine. The ICC has previously issued warrants against President Vladimir Putin and Children's Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova for the alleged forcible deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia.

#### Reactions:

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and other officials hailed the ICC’s decision, seeing it as a significant step towards accountability. Zelensky emphasized the importance of justice for those involved in war crimes.

#### Challenges:

Despite the warrants, bringing Shoigu and Gerasimov to trial remains uncertain due to Russia not being a party to the ICC and its public rejection of the court's authority. The ICC relies on its 124-member states to arrest and hand over individuals facing warrants if they travel within their territories.

The announcement underscores the continuing international legal scrutiny faced by Russian officials amidst the ongoing conflict.