

Russia says Brics summit to discuss expanding group

The Kremlin said on Tuesday, 1 August, that expanding the Brics group of nations would be a topic high on the agenda of the group's upcoming summit in South Africa on 22-24 August.



Source: Reuters. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov speaks during the annual end-of-year news conference of Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow, Russia 19 December, 2019.

Brics' current members are Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. South Africa said last month that more than 40 other nations had expressed interest in joining the grouping, which seeks to offset the perceived hegemony of the US-led West in global affairs.

"This is a very important topic because we see that more and more countries are making statements about their intention of joining Brics," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told a regular news briefing.

While acknowledging "nuances" within the current five-nation group about expanding its membership, Peskov said the fact that such a debate was taking place "testifies to the great potential of the association, (its) growing authority".

Russia has boosted economic, military and other ties with China, India and various African and Latin American states after Moscow's launch of full-scale military operations in Ukraine in February 2022 prompted Western economic sanctions.

Russia will be represented at the summit by Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, not by President Vladimir Putin.

South Africa would have been legally obliged to arrest Putin if he had attended, under a warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for alleged war crimes by Russia in Ukraine. South Africa is an ICC member.

Moscow has said the warrant, which accuses Putin of the war crime of wrongfully deporting children from Ukraine, is legally void as Russia is not a member of the ICC.

It has not concealed a programme under which it has brought thousands of Ukrainian children to Russia, but says it is a humanitarian campaign to protect orphans and children abandoned in the war zone.

The Kremlin has said Putin would dial into the Brics summit by video call.

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