

Putin arrives in Middle East flanked by Russian fighter jets

BY [BRAD DRESS](#) - 12/06/23

Flanked by fighter jets, Russian President Vladimir Putin touched down in the United Arab Emirates on Wednesday in the first part of his trip to the Middle East, where he will also travel to Saudi Arabia.

Putin landed at Abu Dhabi International Airport in the UAE under protection from four Su-35 Russian fighter jets, which flanked the president's plane for the entire flight, according to the Russian Defense Ministry.

The fighter jets painted the skies over Dubai with the colors of the Russian flag, according to Russian state-run media outlet TASS.

Putin was seen smiling as he walked down the ramp of his plane and was greeted by UAE officials in footage released by the Kremlin.

Putin has already concluded a one-on-one meeting with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, according to the Kremlin.

The two were expected to discuss the Israeli-Hamas war, the war in Ukraine and their shared economic interests as major oil-producing nations.

Putin is now headed to Riyadh, where he will meet later on Wednesday with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in the capital of Riyadh.

Putin last traveled to the UAE and Saudi Arabia in 2019

His visit to the Middle East is in defiance of an International Criminal Court (ICC) warrant, which seeks his arrest for the deportation of Ukrainian children from Ukraine.

Putin skipped a major economic meeting in South Africa earlier this year over concerns he may have been arrested there.

Neither the UAE nor Saudi Arabia is party to the ICC.

Before Wednesday, Putin's only international trips since the warrant was issued were to Kyrgyzstan, a former Soviet Republic, and China.

Putin's trip shows one way in which U.S. and Western allies have failed to completely isolate the Russian leader for his war in Ukraine almost two years after its start.

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