



By: TA | AP Brief

Leaders of ASEAN nations to meet with Putin at June summit in Russia



Leaders of the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations** will hold a commemorative summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Russia in June, the Philippines' top diplomat said Friday.

Philippine Foreign Secretary Theresa Lazaro said in a post on X that she and her Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, spoke on the phone about ASEAN's to be held in the Russian city of Kazan.

The Russian Embassy in Manila said that ahead of the June 17 to 18 summit, Lavrov and Lazaro discussed "the prospects of expanding Russia's strategic partnership" with ASEAN.

Aside from the Philippines, ASEAN members include Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, East Timor and Vietnam.

Most ASEAN state members voted to support a United Nations General Assembly resolution condemning Russia for its Feb. 24, 2022, invasion of Ukraine, but the regional bloc has maintained relations with Moscow as a "dialogue partner" and engaged Russian officials in annual top-level meetings.

Some of ASEAN's diverse states have been perceived to be aligned with the United States, like Washington's **treaty ally the Philippines**, which currently holds the association's yearly rotating presidency.

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Other members have heavy trade and security engagements with China and Russia. Vietnam and Laos abstained from the UN General Assembly resolution concerning the attack on Ukraine.

Several ASEAN members, including the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, have either imported or expressed interest in purchasing Russian crude oil after global fuel prices soared after the U.S. and Israel attacked

Iran in February.

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Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. will attend the summit with Putin, a Philippine government official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity for lack of authority to discuss the matter publicly.

It remains to be seen whether Singapore's leader would attend. The wealthy island nation condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and imposed sanctions.

The leader of Myanmar, which currently coordinates ASEAN's relations with Russia, will likely not be allowed to attend.

ASEAN has prohibited **Myanmar's leaders** from attending top-level meetings including annual summits with Asian and Western countries, after Myanmar's army forcibly ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's democratically elected government in 2021, sparking a civil war. Lower-level career diplomats have been allowed to attend.

ASEAN leaders proposed a five-point peace plan in 2021 demanding an immediate end to fighting and hostilities, but Myanmar's government has failed to end the violence or foster dialogue.