

Russian Defense Minister Reappears After 2-Week Absence

By [AFP](#)

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Russia's Defense Minister Shoigu chairs meeting of senior Defense Ministry officials. **TASS**

Russia's Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu reappeared on television images broadcast Saturday, after his two-week absence from view prompted questions from journalists.

The Defense Ministry published a video showing Shoigu, an ally of President Vladimir Putin, chairing a meeting on Russia's weapons budget.

No dates accompany the images on state television but Shoigu refers to a Finance Ministry meeting that Russian news agencies reported took place on Friday.

The minister said arms orders and supplies are taking place as planned "despite difficulties we are having today" from the international sanctions imposed on Russia over its military action in Ukraine.

On Thursday, the Kremlin referred to a conversation between the minister and Putin on the

occasion of a report on developments of the "special military operation" at a meeting of the Russian security council, brushing aside speculation about Shoigu's prolonged absence.

Shoigu reportedly last appeared in public on March 11 despite his leading role in Russia's military operation in Ukraine.

Some Russian media reports have speculated that he could have health problems.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov sought to quell such rumors however, telling journalists: "The defense minister has a lot to take care of at the moment. There is a special military operation going on.

"This is not the moment for media activity," he added.

The defense minister, 66, usually features regularly on state television broadcasts and has been filmed going on expeditions into the Siberian wilderness with Putin.

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