

Ex-Wagner Fighter Seeks to Testify on Russian ‘War Crimes’ at The Hague

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Igor Salikov. [myrotvorets.center](https://myrotvorets.org/)

A former officer in Russia’s mercenary outfit Wagner has arrived in the Netherlands to testify to the International Criminal Court (ICC) about Russian war crimes in Ukraine, Dutch media [reported](#) Monday.

During an interview on the news show EenVandaag, Igor Salikov, 60, claimed to have risen to the rank of colonel during his 25-year service with the Russian Armed Forces before joining Wagner.

Salikov said he took part in Russia’s 2014 annexation of Crimea, as well as the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, where he said he had witnessed Moscow’s role in stoking a separatist conflict in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, “atrocities against civilians” and child abductions.

The Kremlin has denied its role in the alleged crimes.

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Salikov further claimed that the Russian military had staged “false flag operations” disguised as deadly Ukrainian mine attacks in Donetsk to accuse Kyiv of violence against the Russian-speaking community.

He said the orders to commit those crimes came directly from Russia’s Defense Ministry, the intelligence services, and in some cases, even from President Vladimir Putin himself.

Earlier this year, the ICC called for the arrest of Putin and his children’s rights commissioner over their alleged responsibility for the unlawful deportation and transfer of children from Ukraine.

Salikov said he had decided to flee Russia for the Netherlands because he had “lost faith in the Russian cause.”

“After being there for two years, I realized that all [the Russian claims of Ukraine’s nationalist crimes] wasn't true,” he told EenVandaag.

Salikov [arrived](#) in Amsterdam with his wife and two children on Monday, saying he was ready to “plead guilty” to the charges of participating in the war, according to the Russian human rights project Gulagu.net.

“He was not welcome and not expected” at The Hague,” Gulagu.net said on the messaging app Telegram, adding that “the prosecutor and the ICC judge are not ready for the interrogation.”

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EenVandaag said it remained unclear how the ICC would respond to Salikov’s written statement.

Wagner [disbanded](#) this fall and its fighters were transferred to units under the Russian Armed Forces’ control after the death of its leader Yevgeny Prigozhin in a plane crash.

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