

# 'Angela, Forgive Me': Putin Denies Intentionally Scaring Merkel With Dog

By [AFP](#)

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Russian President Vladimir Putin (R) and then-German Chancellor Angela Merkel during a working meeting at the Bocharov Ruchei presidential residence near Sochi, January 2007. Konni, President Putin's black Labrador Retriever seen in the foreground. **Dmitry Astakhov / TASS**

Russian President Vladimir Putin apologized to former German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Thursday, saying he did not mean to scare her when he brought his pet Labrador to a meeting with her in 2007.

Merkel, who has a well-documented fear of dogs, recalled the tense encounter in her memoir released Tuesday, accusing Putin of inviting the pet as a "demonstration of power" and taking glee in her discomfort.

"I did not know that she was afraid of dogs," the Kremlin chief said Thursday at a press conference in the Kazakh capital Astana.

"I once again appeal to her via the media and say: 'Angela, please forgive me, I did not want to cause you any heartache.' On the contrary, I wanted to create a favorable atmosphere for our conversation," he added.

"If you ever — I realize it is unlikely — come again, I will not do it under any circumstances," Putin said.

Images from their 2007 meeting in the Russian city of Sochi showed Putin's black Labrador Retriever Konni sniffing around while the German leader sat in her chair, smiling nervously.

Merkel said of the 2007 encounter in her memoir: "I could tell from Putin's facial expressions that he was enjoying the situation."

Putin is known to be fond of dogs and has received them from visiting dignitaries on multiple occasions.

He received Konni as a gift from Sergei Shoigu, who later became his defense minister.

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