

International Criminal Court

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In news— The International Criminal Court has recently issued an arrest warrant for war crimes for President Vladimir Putin and a second Russian official.

What is the International Criminal Court?

- It is an intergovernmental organization and international tribunal seated in The Hague, Netherlands.
- It was created two decades ago as a **standing body to investigate war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity under a 1998 treaty known as the Rome Statute.**
- Previously, the United Nations Security Council had established ad hoc tribunals to address atrocities in places such as the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.
- Many democracies joined the International Criminal Court, including close American allies including Britain. But the United States has long kept its distance, fearing that the court might one day seek to prosecute American officials, and Russia is also not a member.
- **It investigates and, where warranted, tries individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community:** genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.
- The **ICC lacks universal territorial jurisdiction**, and may only investigate and prosecute crimes committed within member states, crimes committed by nationals of member states, or crimes in situations referred to the Court by the United Nations Security Council.
- It is the first and only permanent international court with jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for the international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression.
- It is distinct from the International Court of Justice,

an organ of the United Nations that hears disputes between states.

- **The ICC is governed by the Assembly of States Parties, which is made up of the states that are party to the Rome Statute. The Assembly elects officials of the Court, approves its budget, and adopts amendments to the Rome Statute. The Court itself, however, is composed of four organs: the Presidency, the Judicial Divisions, the Office of the Prosecutor, and the Registry**
- As of November 2019, 123 states are parties to the Statute of the Court, including all the countries of South America, nearly all of Europe, most of Oceania and roughly half of Africa.
- While at least 42 nations have neither signed the treaty nor joined the organisation.
- **India, like the US and China, is not a party to the Rome Statute.**