

Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin[c] (born 7 October 1952) is a Russian politician and former intelligence officer who is the president of Russia. Putin has held continuous positions as president or prime minister since 1999:[d] as prime minister from 1999 to 2000 and from 2008 to 2012, and as president from 2000 to 2008 and since 2012.[e][7] He is the longest-serving Russian or Soviet leader since Joseph Stalin.

Putin worked as a KGB foreign intelligence officer for 16 years, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel before resigning in 1991 to begin a political career in Saint Petersburg. In 1996, he moved to Moscow to join the administration of President Boris Yeltsin. He briefly served as the director of the Federal Security Service (FSB) and then as secretary of the Security Council of Russia before being appointed prime minister in August 1999. Following Yeltsin's resignation, Putin became acting president and, in less than four months, was elected to his first term as president. He was reelected in 2004. Due to constitutional limitations of two consecutive presidential terms, Putin served as prime minister again from 2008 to 2012 under Dmitry Medvedev. He returned to the presidency in 2012, following an election marked by allegations of fraud and protests, and was reelected in 2018.

During Putin's initial presidential tenure, the Russian economy grew on average by seven percent per year,[8] driven by economic reforms and a fivefold increase in the price of oil and gas.[9][10] Additionally, Putin led Russia in a conflict against Chechen separatists, reestablishing federal control over the region.[11][12] While serving as prime minister under Medvedev, he oversaw a military conflict with Georgia and enacted military and police reforms. In his third presidential term, Russia annexed Crimea and supported a war in eastern Ukraine through several military incursions, resulting in international sanctions and a financial crisis in Russia. He also ordered a military intervention in Syria to support his ally Bashar al-Assad during the Syrian civil war, ultimately securing permanent naval bases in the Eastern Mediterranean.[13][14][15]

In February 2022, during his fourth presidential term, Putin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which prompted international condemnation and led to expanded sanctions. In September 2022, he announced a partial mobilization and forcibly annexed four Ukrainian oblasts into Russia. In March 2023, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Putin for war crimes[16] related to his alleged criminal responsibility for illegal child abductions during the war.[17] In April 2021, after a referendum, he signed into law constitutional amendments that included one allowing him to run for reelection twice more, potentially extending his presidency to 2036.[18][19] In June 2023, he survived the Wagner Group rebellion. In March 2024, he was reelected for another term.

Under Putin's rule, the Russian political system has been transformed into an authoritarian dictatorship.[20][21][22] His rule has been marked by endemic corruption and widespread human rights violations, including the

imprisonment and suppression of political opponents, intimidation and censorship of independent media in Russia, and a lack of free and fair elections.[23][24][25] Putin's Russia has consistently received low scores on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, The Economist Democracy Index, Freedom House's Freedom in the World index, and the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index.

Early life

Putin was born on 7 October 1952 in Leningrad, Soviet Union (now Saint Petersburg, Russia),[26] the youngest of three children of Vladimir Spiridonovich Putin (1911–1999) and Maria Ivanovna Putina (née Shelomova; 1911–1998). His grandfather, Spiridon Putin (1879–1965), was a personal cook to Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin.[27][28] Putin's birth was preceded by the deaths of two brothers: Albert, born in the 1930s, died in infancy, and Viktor, born in 1940, died of diphtheria and starvation in 1942 during the Siege of Leningrad by Nazi Germany's forces in World War II.[29][30]

Putin's mother was a factory worker, and his father was a conscript in the Soviet Navy, serving in the submarine fleet in the early 1930s. During the early stage of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, his father served in the destruction battalion of the NKVD.[31][32][33] Later, he was transferred to the regular army and was severely wounded in 1942.[34] Putin's maternal grandmother was killed by the German occupiers of Tver region in 1941, and his maternal uncles disappeared on the Eastern Front during World War II.[35]