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Poland Summons Russian Ambassador Over Plane Crash Victims' Photos

By The Moscow Times

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Poland's Foreign Ministry summoned the Russian ambassador to Warsaw on Wednesday to protest the release of photographs showing mangled bodies from a 2010 plane crash that killed the Polish president and 95 others.

Several Russian websites published photographs depicting what appeared to be the body of President Lech Kaczynski and partial remains of others who died when a government plane crashed in heavy fog in western Russia.

"Deputy Minister [Jerzy] Pomianowski told the Russian ambassador that Poland expects the Russian authorities to take firm measures, promptly launch an inquiry into the matter and punish those responsible for the leaked images," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement released after the meeting with envoy Alexander Alexeyev.

The appearance of the photographs is another embarrassment for Russian and Polish

authorities after prosecutors in Warsaw last month said at least two families received and buried the wrong bodies.

That revelation has raised questions about how many other bodies were wrongly identified after the crash, which traumatized the nation and still complicates Poland's relations with neighboring Russia.

The Polish Foreign Ministry said it acknowledged that Russia, which oversaw the investigation of the catastrophe and the identification of the victims, had taken steps to block some Russian websites that posted the photographs.

One of the websites accessed by a reporter contained links to seven photographs, showing the site of the crash with scattered bodies, remains on a plastic canvas and the body of what appeared to be President Kaczynski on a metal gurney and a black coffin.

The Investigative Committee said in a statement Wednesday that it was looking into the case and seeking to establish who was behind the publication. It added that it was also aiming to withdraw the pictures from the media.

Russian investigators have blamed the crew of the Polish government's Tu-154 for the crash, while a Polish report pointed the finger at Russian ground controllers for allowing the jet to land in heavy fog at a small airport near Smolensk.

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