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German Government Rejects Petition to Remove Soviet Tanks from Brandenburg Memorial

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Two green Soviet T-34 tanks stand guard at a World War II memorial next to Berlin's Brandenburg Gate.

A petition by two German newspapers calling for the removal of Soviet tanks from a World War II memorial in Berlin has been rejected by the authorities.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel's deputy spokesman said Wednesday that Germany would continue to honor a 1990 treaty with Russia allowing two green Soviet T-34 tanks to stand guard at a World War II memorial next to Berlin's Brandenburg Gate.

"The German government complies with this commitment and honors this particular way of commemorating fallen Red Army soldiers," Georg Streiter said, German news website The Local reported.

Merkel's spokesman also said Germany would uphold its commitment to "respect, maintain

and care for" the memorial, located 200 meters away from the seat of parliament.

According to the Two Plus Four Agreement signed by the Soviet Union, France, U.S., Britain and Germany in 1990, Germany is bound by law to consult Russia before making any changes to Soviet remembrance sites.

Germany's popular newspaper Bild and Berlin tabloid B.Z.on Tuesday launched a petition to ban the tanks over Russia's annexation of the Black Sea peninsula Crimea, and its reported involvement in stirring up tensions in eastern Ukraine.

"In an era when Russian tanks are threatening a free and democratic Europe, we do not want any Russian tanks at the Brandenburg Gate," the petition said.

Berlin has two other Soviet war memorials commemorating the 80,000 soldiers who fell during the Battle of Berlin — one in the capital's Treptower Park and another in Schönholzer Heide.

Also see:

Remove Soviet Tank Memorial in Berlin, German Newspapers Say

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