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Russia Aghast at Poland's Demolition of Soviet Monument

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Russia has demanded an official apology from Poland after "blasphemous" authorities in the town of Limanowa demolished a Soviet war memorial without its permission.

Photos published Sunday on municipal website Limanowa.in showed a demolition truck advancing on the monument to Soviet soldiers who liberated the Polish town from Nazi forces during the Second World War.

A statement published Tuesday on the Russian Foreign Ministry website condemned the actions of the local authorities — which come as Russia celebrates 70 years since its victory over the Nazis — as "blasphemous," saying the monument's removal violated an inter-governmental agreement on burial sites and commemoration places for the victims of wars and repressions.

"Our Polish partners need to be reminded that lying in rest on their land are more than 600,000 Soviet soldiers who gave their lives for the liberation of Poland from the Nazi invaders," the ministry said in the statement.

The memorial is the latest in a line of Soviet monuments to have been moved, destroyed or vandalized on the territory of a former republic or satellite state.

Since the ousting of pro-Moscow Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych in February and Russia's subsequent annexation of Crimea a month later, a number of statues of the Soviet revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin have been torn down across Ukraine.

On Tuesday, masked men in the Ukrainian village of Belozerka demolished a monument to Lenin, destroying the statue's head with hammers, Lenta.ru reported, citing local news bureau Tipichny Kharson.

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