

Russia Accuses Poland of Waging 'War on Monuments'

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Russia's Foreign Ministry accused Poland of starting what it described as a "war on monuments," after the latter dismantled a monument to camaraderie between Polish and Red Army soldiers in the small Western town of Nowa Sol.

"We are outraged over the actions of the authorities of Nowa Sol, who received Warsaw's blessing, but [dismantled the monument] without consulting with Russia," said a statement released by the ministry on Saturday.

Ministry officials claimed the June 30 demolition violated a 1994 agreement between the two countries concerning war victims' memorials and burial places.

"The 'war on monuments,' which Poland has initiated, is fraught with the most negative consequences, for which its initiators will bear full responsibility," the statement concluded.

According to news site Meduza.io, Nowa Sol authorities plan to erect a monument to "heroes who fought for Poland" in the demolished monument's place. Nowa Sol mayor Wadim Tyszkiewicz wrote on his Facebook page on June 30 that the Soviet monument had been "huge, disgusting and always dirty," Meduza reported Saturday.

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There was a tremendous outcry in 2007 when Tallinn's Soviet Bronze Soldier monument was relocated from the center of the Estonian capital to a military cemetery.

The Federation Council, the upper house of Russian parliament, implored President Vladimir Putin at the time to end diplomatic relations with Estonia, and the State Duma, the lower chamber, demanded the imposition of economic and political sanctions against the country.

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