

Russia Summons Japan Envoy Over Tokyo's Comments on Disputed Island Row

By [Reuters](#)

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Sergei Lavrov and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan Taro Kono / Russian Foreign Ministry

Russia slapped down Japanese assertions that a deal was in the offing to resolve a decades-old dispute over a chain of islands, accusing Tokyo of distorting agreements struck with Moscow to break the deadlock.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is making a push towards a treaty with Russia over the islands and is due to hold talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin this month, but Moscow has shown no willingness to concede control over the islands.

Russia and Japan have been in dispute for seven decades over island territories captured by Soviet troops in the last days of World War II. They are known in Russia as the Southern Kurils and in Japan as the Northern Territories.

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Russia's Foreign Ministry said late on Wednesday it had summoned Japan's ambassador in Moscow to complain about comments made by Tokyo that it said "crudely distort the essence of agreements between Russia and Japan's leaders on accelerating the negotiation process..."

"Such statements cannot be regarded except as an attempt to artificially aggravate the atmosphere around the problem of the peace treaty, to impose one's own scenario for its resolution on the other side," it said.

The ministry also drew attention late on Wednesday to comments made by Japan about the need to reach an understanding with Russians living on the islands about their transfer to Japanese control.

The ministry also protested comments it said that Tokyo had made about Moscow refusing to pay compensation to Japan for "occupying" the islands.

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