

# Warsaw Seizes Abandoned Russian 'Spy Nest' for Ukraine

By [AFP](#)

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The building in Poland's capital was once used by Soviet diplomats, followed by the Russian embassy, but is no longer in use. **Janek Skarzynski / AFP**

The mayor of Poland's capital on Monday took control of a former Russian diplomatic site, dubbed the "spy nest" and at the center of a bilateral dispute, for Ukraine's use.

"I'm glad that in such a symbolic way we can show that Warsaw is helping our Ukrainian friends," mayor Rafal Trzaskowski told reporters.

"We've taken back the so-called 'spy nest' and want to hand it over to our Ukrainian guests," he added using a local nickname for the building, or "Szpiegowo" in Polish.

He entered the premises with a bailiff and Ukraine's ambassador to Poland. A Russian diplomat also present at the scene protested against the move.

Boasting dozens of apartments and 10 floors, the building built in the 1970s in the capital's

south was once used by Soviet diplomats, followed by the Russian embassy.

Practically abandoned since the 1990s, the site is now run down and the subject of a legal dispute between Poland and Russia, with each side claiming ownership.

The apartments were built under a land swap agreement between Poland and the Soviet Union in 1974, which saw Moscow receive nine new properties in Warsaw.

The Soviet side was supposed to provide Poland with something equivalent in Moscow but that never materialized.

In 2008, Warsaw terminated the agreement and demanded the building's return.

A Polish court ordered Russia to comply in 2016, also ruling that it must compensate Poland to the tune of 7.8 million zloty (1.7 million euros, \$1.8 million) for occupying the grounds illegally.

Moscow has refused to follow through.

Andrii Deshchytsia, Ukraine's ambassador to Poland, said the site "will certainly serve Ukraine and Ukrainians."

"There might be a school, or perhaps a kindergarten or apartments," he told reporters, adding, "We want to do it legally, not like the Russians."

"We don't want to occupy anything before it's legally transferred over."

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