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# Japan Expels Russian Consul in Tit-for-Tat Move

By AFP

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The Russian Consulate in Sapporo, Japan. **sapporo.mid.ru**

Japan has ordered a senior Russian official stationed in the country to leave in retaliation for the expulsion of a Japanese diplomat over alleged spying, the foreign ministry said Tuesday.

The tit-for-tat move came after Tokyo demanded an apology last week from Moscow for detaining a diplomat based in the eastern city of Vladivostok, accusing Russia of blindfolding and pinning the man down in "unbelievable acts."

On Tuesday, the foreign ministry said in a statement that it would expel a Russian consul in the northern city of Sapporo "as a corresponding measure to Russia's actions."

"The Japanese government declared one consul from the Russian consulate general's office in Sapporo persona non grata, and demanded that the person leave Japan in six days, which is to say by Oct. 10," it said in a statement.

The Russian ambassador has been summoned and informed of the decision, the ministry added.

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Last week, top government spokesman Hirokazu Matsuno said that Japan denied the espionage allegations and said the official had been "blindfolded, with pressure applied to both his hands and head so he was unable to move while being detained, and then he was questioned in an overbearing way."

Japan "strongly protests these unbelievable acts," he added.

Russia considers Japan to be a "hostile" country — a designation it shares with all European Union countries, the United States and its allies, including Britain and Australia.

Tokyo had complex relations with Moscow even before the invasion of Ukraine in February, and has imposed tough sanctions on Russia over the war along with its G7 allies.

The two sides have yet to sign a post-World War II peace treaty, with attempts to do so long hampered by a territorial dispute over Russian-controlled islands.

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