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Poland Seizes Russian High School Building in Warsaw

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A vehicle with a diplomatic license plate is seen entering the compound of the Russian high school which Warsaw seized. **Jaap Arriens / AFP**

Poland on Saturday said it had seized a high school building near Moscow's Embassy in Warsaw meant for the children of diplomats, a move the Russian envoy called "illegal."

The spat over the 1970s multi-story building has been going on for a year.

"This building belongs to the Warsaw City Hall," Polish foreign ministry spokesman Lukasz Jasina told AFP, adding that the move followed a bailiff's order.

The spokesman for the municipality was unavailable for comment.

Poland says there is a huge disparity in the number of diplomatic buildings each had in the other country.

"We regard this as yet another hostile act by the Polish authorities and a blatant violation of the Vienna Convention of 1961," Russia's Foreign Ministry said.

The ministry promised a "harsh reaction and consequences for Polish authorities and Poland's interests in Russia."

Moscow's envoy, Sergei Andreyev, also denounced Poland's intervention as an "illegal" intrusion on a diplomatic facility, saying teachers and staff lived on the building's grounds.

The school would continue to work in a different part of the Russian embassy's premises, he added.

"Our priority is ensuring the safety and the interests of our employees and their families."

Poland's foreign ministry issued a statement in March 2022, shortly after Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine, saying the Polish courts had ruled that Russia had to return the buildings to Polish control.

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