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Czech Leader Says Russians Abroad Should Be Monitored

By AFP

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Czech President Petr Pavel. **Pirátská strana / flickr**

Czech President Petr Pavel said Thursday that Russians living abroad in Western countries should be closely monitored by security services, given Moscow's "aggressive war" in Ukraine.

The pro-Western Czech leader said he had sympathy for Russians outside the country finding it hard to cope with the invasion.

But "when there is an ongoing war, the security measures related to Russian nationals should be stricter than in normal times," he told the Prague-based, U.S.-financed Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

"All Russians living in Western countries should be monitored much more than in the past because they are citizens of a nation that leads an aggressive war," Pavel said.

"That's simply the cost of war," added the former NATO general, who has been Czech president since March following his election win two months earlier.

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> Czech President Petr Pavel said that Russian civilians living in the West should be monitored by security services.
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> Speaking to @radiosvoboda, he said "when World War II started, all Japanese population living in the United States was under a strict monitoring regime as well." pic.twitter.com/SCRqC6717I
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> — Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (@RFERL) June 15, 2023

He said the situation was similar to World War II when more than 100,000 Japanese descendants based in the United States were under "a strict monitoring regime as well" as they were placed in local internment camps.

Pavel, who visited war-torn Ukraine in April, also said he expected the July NATO summit in Vilnius to voice clear support for Kyiv's membership of the alliance.

"I strongly believe that all the leaders will understand that having Ukraine on board — both in NATO and EU — is probably the only guarantee (of) how to ensure stability in this region, how to make both NATO and EU stronger, and how to keep Russia and its aggressive policies at bay," Pavel said.

"I see a number of countries agreeing on a long-term plan of support to Ukraine that will not be based on one-off contributions but on a carefully planned long-term procedure," he added.

A NATO and EU member of 10.8 million people, the Czech Republic has provided Kyiv with substantial humanitarian and military aid since the Russian invasion. It has also received almost half a million war refugees from Ukraine.

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