

Moscow Says Closing Finnish Consulate, Expels 9 Diplomats

By [AFP](#)

July 06, 2023



Consulate General of Finland in St. Petersburg

Russia announced Thursday that it was shuttering Finland's consulate in St. Petersburg and expelling nine of its diplomats, calling the move a response to a "confrontational anti-Russian policy" being pursued by Helsinki.

NATO's newest member Finland, which shares a long border with Russia, earlier this month expelled nine diplomats working at the Russian Embassy in Helsinki for acting in an "intelligence capacity."

"Nine employees of the Finnish Embassy in the Russian Federation and the Finnish Consulate General in St. Petersburg were declared persona non grata," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement, saying the move was a tit-for-tat response.

"As part of the response to the confrontational actions of the Finnish authorities, the Russian

side decided to withdraw from Oct. 1 its consent to the activities of the Consulate General of Finland in St. Petersburg," the statement added.

The relationship between the neighboring countries has deteriorated following Russia's large-scale military operation in Ukraine.

The hostilities prompted Finland to break with decades of military non-alignment and apply to join NATO in May 2022, formally becoming a member in April.

Original url:

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