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Russia Reduces Consular Staff in Norway

By AFP

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The Russian Embassy in Oslo. **Kjetil Ree (CC BY-SA 2.0)**

Russia will reduce its consular staff in Norway following a request from authorities in Oslo, the Russian Embassy said late Monday.

In a post on Facebook, the Russian mission in Oslo said that "only two diplomats will remain in the consular section" after a request to cut its staff numbers by October 17.

Russia's consulates in Kirkenes, near the Russian-Norwegian border in the north, and in Barentsburg, a Russian mining community in the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard, announced on social media that they would be temporarily suspending their consular services due to the staff reduction.

The Norwegian Foreign Ministry confirmed Tuesday that it had "been in dialogue with the Russian side for some time," noting that its request was "not a question of expelling

diplomats from Norway."

Neither Russia nor Norway have specified the extent of the reduction in Russian consular staff.

Related article: Norway Expels 15 Suspected Spies From Russian Embassy in Oslo

Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Norway expelled 15 Russian embassy employees it suspected of spying. In a tit-for-tat move, Russia expelled 10 Norwegian diplomats from Moscow.

Norway, which closed its consulate in Murmansk in northwestern Russia, now has only a limited diplomatic presence in the country, with a reduced embassy in Moscow and a consulate in Saint Petersburg.

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