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Poland Shutters Consulate in St. Petersburg on Russian Order

By AFP

January 08, 2025



Olga Maltseva / AFP

Poland announced Wednesday it had shut its consulate in the Russian city of St. Petersburg after Russia ordered the closure in a tit-for-tat move.

Russia ordered the closure in December after Poland said in October it was closing Russia's consulate in the Polish city of Poznan, accusing Moscow of "sabotage" attempts against Poland and its allies.

"The Polish Consulate General in St. Petersburg was shut down upon Russia's withdrawal of its consent to the activity of the Polish post," Poland's foreign ministry said in a statement Wednesday.

"It is in retaliation for a decision of the Polish foreign minister to close down Russia's Consulate General in Poznan in the aftermath of acts of sabotage committed on Polish

territory and linked to Russian authorities."

After Russia ordered the closure, Poland responded that it would close all the Russian consulates on its soil if the "terrorism" it blamed on Moscow continued.

Tensions between Russia and NATO member Poland have escalated since Moscow began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, with both sides expelling dozens of diplomats.

Poland is a staunch ally of Kyiv and has been a key transit point for Western arms heading to the embattled country since the conflict began.

In one of the largest espionage trials, Poland in 2023 convicted 14 citizens of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine of sabotage on behalf of Moscow as part of a spy ring.

They were found guilty of preparing to derail trains carrying aid to Ukraine, as well as monitoring military facilities and critical infrastructure in the country.

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