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Moscow Accuses Lithuania of Provoking Territorial Dispute Over Kaliningrad

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Flags of Lithuania and Ukraine on the Lithuanian-Russian border in the Kalinigrad region. **MT**

The Kremlin on Friday accused Lithuania of provoking a territorial dispute over the Kaliningrad region after the Lithuanian president criticized a local museum's decision to rename one of its locations dedicated to an 18th-century Lithuanian poet.

The Kaliningrad Regional Museum of History and Arts renamed its Kristijonas Donelaitis Memorial Museum to the Museum of Literature at Chistye Prudy. The museum houses a Lutheran church and the home where Donelaitis lived and worked in the mid-1700s.

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nauseda took to social media to slam the museum's new name as "yet another unacceptable attempt at rewriting history."

"Even though the old inhabitants of Lithuania Minor, now part of the so-called Kaliningrad [region], are long gone, the last signs of Lithuanian culture there must be safeguarded," Nauseda wrote on X on Wednesday.

Lithuania Minor is a term used by historians and ethnographers to describe areas of modern-day Lithuania, Poland and the Kaliningrad region when they were still parts of Prussia. Kaliningrad takes its name from Mikhail Kalinin, a Bolshevik revolutionary who served as the head of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and later of the Soviet Union.

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"No matter how hard Russia tries, Karaliaucius will never become Kaliningrad!" he added, using the Lithuanian name for the city, which Soviet troops captured from Nazi Germany during World War II.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov cast Nauseda's comments as part of a wider territorial dispute by Lithuania, a member of both the European Union and NATO which supports Ukraine in its efforts to defend against Russia's invasion.

"Lithuania is an unfriendly and hostile state toward our country. It turns out to have territorial claims among other things," Peskov told reporters. "This justifies our deep concerns and all current and future measures to ensure the security of our state."

Earlier on Friday, Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova called Nauseda a "cardboard fool with wet historical fantasies."

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