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Japan's Foreign Minister Calls Russian Entry Ban 'Unacceptable'

By AFP

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Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya. **AP / TASS**

Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya said Tuesday that Russia's entry ban on him and eight other Japanese citizens was "unacceptable."

The comments came a day after Russia's Foreign Ministry banned Iwaya, the ambassador of Japan to Ukraine and seven other Japanese nationals from entering the country in retaliation to Tokyo's sanctions.

Iwaya told reporters that "our measures have been taken as a result of Russia's aggression against Ukraine."

"It is completely unacceptable to shift the blame to Japan," he said.

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Iwaya added that the decision is "truly regrettable" because the two countries need to communicate to resolve "many pending issues."

Japan has sided with other Western countries in supporting Ukraine in its defense against Russia, supplying the war-torn country with financial and material support, as well as sanctioning Russian individuals and organizations.

Japan's pacifist constitution restricts it from exporting weapons, but in December, Tokyo loosened arms export controls to enable it to sell domestically made Patriot missiles to the United States.

The move was aimed at replenishing U.S. inventories of the air defense missile systems that have run low because of supplies sent to Ukraine.

In 2022, Russia prohibited former Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and his successor, Shigeru Ishiba, from entering the country.

And last year, the country put the head of Toyota and 12 other senior Japanese business figures on its entry ban list.

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