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Japan to Close All Business Training Centers in Russia

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Mikhail Tereschenko / TASS

Japan announced Wednesday that it would close all six of its business education centers in Russia amid worsening bilateral relations.

Known as Japanese Centers, the state-backed facilities have operated in six Russian cities, including Moscow and Vladivostok, since 1994. The nonprofit centers offered management and business training to Russian executives and entrepreneurs, aiming to support economic reform in the post-Soviet era.

Japan and Russia formalized the centers' legal status through intergovernmental agreements in 2000 and 2003. In January, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin ordered their closure, prompting Tokyo to signal a potential response.

"The decision has been made to cease the operation of all six Japanese Centers," Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said at a press briefing, citing "the situation inside Russia," according to the state-run news agency TASS.

Russian authorities had carried out two inspections at the Vladivostok center on July 30 and Aug. 26, the Japanese newspaper Sankei Shimbun reported. Tokyo had asked Moscow to ensure the safety of its staff amid those inspections.

After the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Japan joined other Western countries in sanctioning Russia. Tokyo said last month that it is prepared to join Western security guarantees for Ukraine under a potential peace agreement with Russia.

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