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Russia Urges Poland to Reopen Belarus Border

By AFP

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Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency

Russia on Thursday urged Poland to reopen its border with Belarus, Moscow's close ally, calling the closure "destructive" and warning of consequences.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk announced Tuesday the closure of the border with Belarus from 12:00 a.m. on Sept. 12 (10 p.m. GMT on Sept. 11), in response to the upcoming joint Russian-Belarusian war games.

"We urge Warsaw to consider the consequences of such destructive steps and to review its decision as soon as possible," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said in a statement.

The border closure was to "justify a policy of further escalating tensions in the center of Europe," she added.

Related article: Poland to Close Border With Belarus Ahead of Zapad-2025 Military Drills

NATO's eastern flank members Poland, Lithuania and Latvia are on high alert due to the massive drills, which according to Tusk are designed to simulate occupation of the Suwalki corridor, a strategically important area in Poland.

Usually held every four years, the 2025 iteration of Zapad is the first during the war in Ukraine, and is due to run until Sept. 16.

Belarus had said in January that 13,000 troops would be involved in the drills, but in May it said the number was to be reduced by around half.

Zakharova said Warsaw had "demonstratively" ignored the "goodwill" gestures by Moscow and Minsk to move the exercise away from the Polish border and to reduce the number of military personnel participating.

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