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Russia Summons Polish Envoy Over Archaeologist Detention

By AFP

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A vehicle of Polish envoy to Russia outside the offices of the Russian Foreign Ministry. **Alexander Shcherbak / TASS**

Russia has summoned Poland's ambassador to protest Warsaw's detention of a Russian archaeologist on a Ukrainian arrest warrant, Moscow's foreign ministry said Tuesday.

Alexander Butyagin, a top archaeologist from Russia's prestigious Hermitage Museum, was arrested by Polish special services in December after Kyiv accused him of carrying out unauthorized excavations in occupied Crimea.

He will face an extradition hearing on Thursday and could be jailed for up to 10 years if found guilty in Ukraine.

"On January 12, the Polish Ambassador to the Russian Federation, Krzysztof Krajewski, was summoned to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs," Russia's foreign ministry said.

“It was pointed out to Krajewski that the Kyiv regime's accusations are absurd and connected with Butyagin's scientific work at the Myrmekion archaeological expedition in Crimea — an inalienable part of Russia,” the ministry said.

Butyagin has led archaeological work at Myrmekion, the ruins of an ancient Greek city on Crimea's eastern coast, since 1999.

Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and has since administered it as Russian.

The arrest of Butyagin, a classical scholar who worked in Crimea before its 2014 annexation, has drawn criticism from both the Kremlin and elements of Russia's liberal opposition.

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