The Moscow Times
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Russia Orders Expulsion of British Diplomat Accused of Espionage

By Mack Tubridy

January 15, 2026



The British Embassy in Moscow. **Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency**

Russia's FSB security service on Thursday accused an employee of the British Embassy in Moscow of being an undercover spy and ordered him to leave the country within two weeks.

According to the FSB, the employee, identified as 45-year-old Gareth Samuel Davies, was sent to Russia under the diplomatic cover of second secretary of the administrative section at the British Embassy in Moscow.

Since 2024, Russia has expelled at least nine British diplomats accused of espionage. The British government has dismissed the allegations against its diplomatic staff in each instance and vowed to "respond appropriately."

The British Embassy in Moscow called the latest expulsion of one of its diplomats "baseless."

"This is not the first time the Kremlin has made malicious and baseless accusations against

our staff," an embassy spokesperson told The Moscow Times. "Their targeting of British diplomats comes out of desperation."

"We are carefully considering our options in response," the spokesperson added.

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Russia's Foreign Ministry said Thursday that it summoned Britain's charge d'affaires to issue a "strong protest" in connection with the spy allegations.

"Moscow will not tolerate the activities of undeclared British intelligence officers on Russian territory," the ministry said in a statement.

It warned that Moscow would issue a "decisive tit-for-tat response should London choose to escalate the situation."

Both the Foreign Ministry and the FSB claimed the diplomat's accreditation was revoked in accordance with the 1961 Vienna Convention and that he was ordered to leave Russia.

Relations between the United Kingdom and Russia soured before President Vladimir Putin ordered the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, with a slew of espionage and interference scandals, including the 2018 poisoning of former Russian spy Sergei Skripal in Britain.

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