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U.K. Expels Russian Diplomat in Tit-for-Tat Move

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Maxim Shipenkov / EPA / TASS

The British government on Monday revoked the accreditation of a Russian diplomat and ordered his expulsion from the country in retaliation for a similar move by Moscow last month.

"We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked and unjustified decision to expel a British diplomat last month and its baseless accusations against our staff," a spokesperson for the British Foreign Office said in a statement.

"The U.K. will not stand for intimidation of British Embassy staff and so we are taking reciprocal action today, revoking the accreditation of a Russian diplomat," the spokesperson said. "Any further action taken by Russia will be considered an escalation and responded to accordingly."

Neither the identity nor the rank of the Russian diplomat was mentioned in the statement.

The Moscow Times contacted Russia's Embassy in London for comment.

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

The British Embassy in Moscow called the accusations "baseless" in a statement shared with The Moscow Times. "Their targeting of British diplomats comes out of desperation," the statement read.

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."

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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