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Russia Expels German Diplomat in Tit-for-Tat Move

By AFP

February 05, 2026



The German Embassy in Moscow. **Anton Kardashov / Moskva News Agency**

Russia's Foreign Ministry said Thursday it was expelling a German diplomat in retaliation for a similar move by authorities in Berlin last month.

The Foreign Ministry said it had issued a note declaring a staff member of the German Embassy in Moscow persona non grata, calling the decision a "symmetrical response."

In January, Germany summoned Russia's ambassador and expelled a Russian diplomat it said had overseen the activities of a woman later arrested on espionage charges. Moscow has rejected the allegations as "baseless" and accused Berlin of stoking "spy mania."

German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul on Thursday called Russia's decision to expel the German diplomat "completely unacceptable."

"While our diplomats abide by the law, Russia relies on escalation and espionage under the

guise of diplomacy," Wadephul said during a visit to Brunei.

He added that Russia's "unfriendly act" showed it prioritized retaliation over diplomacy and said Berlin reserved the right to take further action.

Wadephul said the expelled German official was part of the embassy's military attaché staff.

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