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Russia Summons German Ambassador Over CDU Lawmaker's Meeting With Exiled Chechen Separatist Leader

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German Ambassador to Russia Alexander Graf Lambsdorff. **Artyom Geodakyan / TASS**

Russia's Foreign Ministry said Monday that it summoned German Ambassador Alexander Graf Lambsdorff to protest a recent meeting between a German lawmaker and the fugitive head of an exiled Chechen separatist group.

Politician Roderich Kiesewetter, a member of the Christian Democratic Union, was accused of expressing support for the self-proclaimed Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, which was recently designated as a "terrorist" organization in Russia.

The group represents an unrecognized separatist state that existed de facto between 1991 and 2000 during the first and second Chechen wars. It has been led by Akhmed Zakayev since 2007.

Russian law enforcement has long sought the arrest of Zakayev on terrorism and murder

charges. He has lived in the United Kingdom since 2002, where he was granted political asylum.

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At a meeting with Zakayev in Kyiv earlier this month, Kiesewetter lauded him for "resisting Russia's colonial and imperial hegemony."

"We're absolutely confident the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria will regain its independence in the near future," the German lawmaker said. "We need partners who do not believe in Russia's colonial and imperial future."

Russia's Foreign Ministry argued the meeting amounted to the "recruitment" of Russian expatriates in Germany to "destabilize the social and political situation in Russia."

The ministry stressed that Zakayev is subject to an arrest warrant and the group's members have been "actively involved in sabotage operations" in southwestern Russia's Belgorod and Kursk regions near the border with Ukraine.

The Foreign Ministry claimed the meeting served as "irrefutable evidence that German authorities are intent on interfering in Russia's internal affairs and creating threats to its national security."

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