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Germany Shutters Russian Consulate, Berlin Culture Center After Blaming Moscow for Airport Drone Attack

By Reuters

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A police officer in protective clothing walks next to an explosive-disarming robot at Leipzig/Halle Airport in Schkeuditz, Germany. **REUTERS / Axel Schmidt**

The German government said on Tuesday that it had concluded that Russia was responsible for an attempted drone attack at Leipzig/Halle Airport last month and ordered a series of measures in response, including the closure of a consulate and a Russian cultural center in Berlin.

German Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt said intelligence findings indicated that individuals involved in the attack were acting on behalf of Russian state agencies.

"Taken together, police investigations, patterns of the offenses and intelligence findings establish Russian responsibility for the attempted attack at Leipzig Airport," he said.

Standing alongside Dobrindt, Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul said Germany did not view Leipzig as an isolated incident.

"It fits into a broader pattern of Russian hybrid operations in Europe," he said.

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Wadephul said Germany's response would include closing Russia's consulate general in Bonn and terminating its agreement with the Russian House cultural center in Berlin.

"Germany remains secure, and Germany will defend itself against adversaries who seek to create insecurity," Wadephul said. "We will not allow Russia's attacks to divide or intimidate us in our social cohesion."

Russia's ambassador to Germany was summoned on Tuesday.

Responding to Germany's announcement, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Moscow would respond to what she called Berlin's "anti-Russian action," according to Interfax news agency. She did not elaborate.

The Russian Embassy in Berlin had previously dismissed such accusations as "fabricated provocation" and as "a new wave of anti-Russian hysteria in Germany."

"If such serious accusations are being made, they should be supported by evidence. To my knowledge, none has been presented," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters in Kyrgyzstan.

"It is clear that Germany is pursuing a path of further escalation," Peskov added.

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