

News | Politics

Iran summons Russia's envoy again over islands dispute

This is the second time the Russian envoy to Tehran is being summoned over the same issue.



Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, seen here speaking at an event in Moscow earlier this month, led the Russian delegation to Morocco and signed the joint statement [Yuri Kochetkov/Pool via AP]

By Maziar Motamedi

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Tehran, Iran – Iran has once more summoned the Russian envoy to Tehran after Moscow signed another joint statement with Arab nations calling for negotiations over three disputed islands that the United Arab Emirates claims as its own.

The Russian envoy was summoned to the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to receive Tehran's "strong protest" over the statement, the state-run IRNA news website said late on Saturday.

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At the Foreign Ministry, the Russian envoy was reportedly told that respect for the territorial integrity of nations is a fundamental tenet in relations between any two countries. IRNA also said the official was told the three disputed islands "forever belong to Iran" which renders any [outside claims](#) unacceptable.

The islands in the strategic Strait of Hormuz, namely the Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, have been governed by Iran since 1971 when its navy took control of them after British troops withdrew from what is today the UAE.

The UAE claims them as part of its territory as well and has recently received increasing support on them from Russia and China, which Tehran also counts among its allies.

MIDDLE EAST

Disputed islands in the Strait of Hormuz

Iran and the UAE have for decades disputed the ownership of three islands in the Strait of Hormuz - Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa. The islands have been governed by Iran since 1971 and are claimed by the UAE as part of its territory.



Iran had summoned the [Chinese envoy](#) to Tehran over a similar joint statement with Arab nations of the region in December 2022 and had also summoned the [Russian ambassador](#) in July over an almost identical joint statement.

Russia's joint statement this week, signed during the sixth edition of the Russian-Arab Cooperation Forum in Morocco, supported "peaceful solutions and initiatives aiming to resolve the conflict through bilateral negotiations or the International Court of Justice, according to international law and the UN Charter".

The Foreign Ministry spokesman, Nasser Kanaani, had condemned it earlier this week, and Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian raised the issue with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, who had led the delegation to Morocco.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said Lavrov told Amirabdollahian that Russia has always respected Iran's territorial integrity and "this official policy by Moscow must never be doubted".

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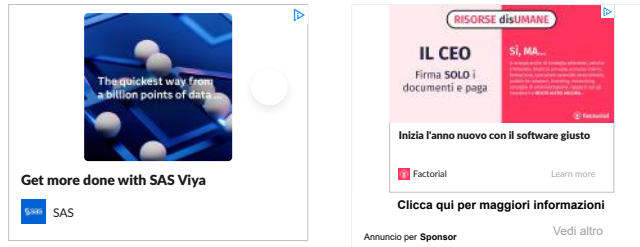
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The joint statement also irked some Iranian lawmakers, who took to social media to try to make it clear that the issue is non-negotiable.

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran's parliament speaker, wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter, that increasingly [warming ties](#) with Russia are based on mutual respect and any claims that threaten Iran's territorial integrity will be met with a "serious response".

"Russia must be careful about the West taking advantage of its mistakes," he wrote.

Ghalibaf also pointed out that Iran has not remained idle on the islands, and has been undertaking a variety of efforts to [populate and develop](#) them. He promised that the parliament would legally back efforts to develop the islands.

Other lawmakers had harsher words for both Moscow and Abu Dhabi.

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"It looks like the language of kindness must change, at least with the UAE," Hadi Beiginejad wrote on X.

Another MP, Ebrahim Rezaei, said "if they suggest negotiations, then we also invite the Russians to negotiate with Japan over the Kuril Islands", in reference to a dispute over four islands between Russia and Japan.



SOURCE: AL JAZEERA