

# Canada Expels 9 Russian Soldiers Over Crimea Crisis

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Canada has expelled nine Russian soldiers who were participating in joint-military exchange programs in the country following its prime minister's vow to get tough with Russia over its occupation of Crimea.

Six of the Russians were in the Quebec city of Saint-Jean, where they were busy studying English and French, two were taking part in a training program at a Canadian military base, and another was teaching Russian to Canadian soldiers in Gatineau, CTV news reported Friday.

On Thursday, the Canadian government told the Russian soldiers that they had 24 hours to leave the country.

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper earlier announced that all planned bilateral engagements between the Canadian Armed Forces and the Russian military had been

suspended.

Harper described Russia's incursion into Crimea as an "illegal military occupation" and "an act of aggression, a clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and of international law."

One of the programs to have been cut was a North American Aerospace Defense Command exercise called Vigilant Eagle — a planned counterterrorism exercise involving the Russian, Canadian, and U.S. air forces.

The move reflects Canadian solidarity with the U.S. military, which earlier this week suspended all engagements with the Russia "in light of recent events in Ukraine," a Pentagon spokesman said.

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