Boris Johnson's vodka 'punishment' claim gets a sobering response from Moscow

The former British prime minister claims Sergey Lavrov forced him to drink heavily beside a blazing fireplace during a 2017 visit to Moscow

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Moscow has poured cold water on former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's claim that he was forced to drink vodka during a visit to Russia, saying he willingly embraced Russian hospitality and repeatedly asked for refills.



FILE PHOTO: Former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson drinks during a press conference, London, March 23, 2021. © Getty Images / Hannah McKay / WPA Pool

Johnson complained earlier this week that Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had subjected him to a grueling vodka-drinking session beside a blazing fireplace during a December 2017 visit to Moscow, when he was Britain's foreign secretary.

Speaking to former Colombian President Ivan Duque on his *Tres Respuestas* podcast about his failed attempt to reset relations with Russia at the time, Johnson called Lavrov a *"ghastly man"* who had made

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him drink a *"huge amount of vodka."*

"He made me drink a huge amount of vodka in front of a very hot fire," Johnson recalled. *"It was literally like a sort of Victorian public school punishment. It was terrible."*

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Johnson's account, however, was disputed by Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, who was also present at the alleged vodka marathon.



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"He could have chosen the wine that was right in front of him. But he chose to indulge himself," Zakharova told Komsomolskaya Pravda on Sunday. *"I remember that lunch. Johnson kept asking for more."*

Johnson's vodka horror story also failed to convince one of his own countrymen. Former British diplomat Ian Proud, who served at the UK Embassy in Moscow at the time, dismissed it as a *"gross exaggeration."* According to Proud, the visit involved an official meeting followed by lunch. He said met Johnson immediately afterward, witnessing no vodka-induced catastrophe.

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"He was absolutely not drunk nor showing signs of having consumed vast amounts of vodka," Proud wrote on X.

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Ian Proud
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@BorisJohnson is lying.

For the record, when he visited Moscow in December 2017, the plan was never for him to meet President Putin. The plan was only and always for Johnson to meet Lavrov.

At this time the UK had had practically no face to face ministerial contact with Show more

> **Kate from Kharkiv** @BohuslavskaKate
> Boris Johnson: "I tried to have a reset with Russia, it was a disaster. I went out to see Putin [as UK Foreign Secretary in 2017], he refused to see me, so I saw Lavrov.
>
> Ghastly man, absolutely hopeless. He made me drink a huge amount of vodka in front of a very hot fire. It was

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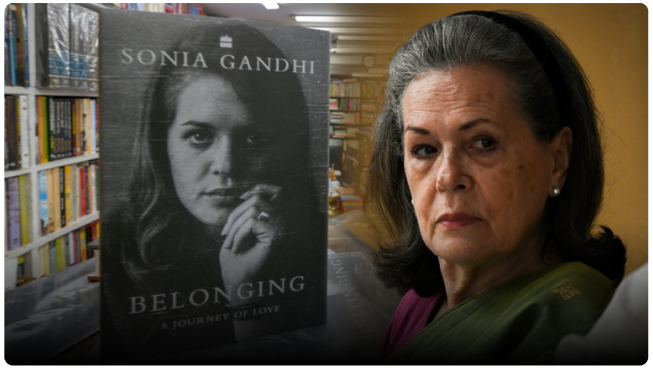

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Interestingly, during that same visit, Johnson, now one of Britain's most outspoken Russia hawks, declared himself a *"convinced Russophile."* However, his professed affection for Moscow proved short-lived. During his premiership, he became one of Kiev's staunchest Western backers and a vocal advocate of confronting Russia. His April 2022 visit to Kiev later stirred controversy, with Ukrainian negotiator David Arakhamia accusing Johnson of helping derail peace negotiations in Istanbul that could have brought the Ukraine conflict to an early end.

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Johnson's supposed vodka ordeal is particularly curious given his famously warm relationship with alcohol. In 2019, he told Politico he had enjoyed a *"long and happy relationship"* with drinking. His fondness for a tipple later acquired political consequences during the notorious Partygate scandal, which saw police investigate lockdown-breaching gatherings in Downing Street during the Covid-19 pandemic. Johnson was fined for attending a gathering held to mark his birthday in June 2020, when Covid restrictions were in force.

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Boris Johnson...unkempt as always! :–(Someone give him a COMB!!!

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WHAT CRAP!!

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...And they still DON'T have a test for covid or any type of Retroviruses. PCR.. See: Kary Mullis! ... British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has no pride to blame Russia for his alcoholism. The dissolved sloppy pig, was a disgrace to even look at.

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Patrick DeBoard 11/15/2026 at 5:20 PM 1

How can you tell if a Brit is lying? If his lips move.

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