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Netherlands Halts Visas at Moscow Embassy After Diplomat Expulsions

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The Embassy of the Netherlands in Moscow. **Moskva News Agency**

The Netherlands said it has stopped issuing visas to Russian nationals from Wednesday following a slew of tit-for-tat diplomatic expulsions during Russia's war in Ukraine.

The Dutch Embassy in Moscow told Russian media it still plans to issue humanitarian visas and temporary residence permits. The Netherlands is a member of the European Union and the Schengen visa area.

Dutch Ambassador to Russia Gilles Beschoor Plug on Tuesday said the embassy made the "tough and sad decision" to halt visa services after its entire visa section was expelled.

"I'm convinced that traveling, learning and understanding the other's perspective is so important to solve the crisis," he tweeted.

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Russia last week expelled 14 Dutch embassy employees from Moscow and one Dutch consulate employee from St. Petersburg.

Moscow said it acted in retaliation to The Hague's expulsion of 17 Russian diplomats considered "secretly active" as intelligence officers in late March.

Russia's Foreign Ministry estimates that 28 Western countries have expelled some 400 Russian diplomats since Moscow invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Russia has vowed to respond to diplomatic expulsions with "reciprocity."

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