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Russia Expels 14 Bulgarian Diplomats

By AFP

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Bulgarian Embassy in Moscow. **Denghu (CC BY 3.0)**

Russia said Friday it was expelling 14 Bulgarian consular and embassy staff in response to Sofia's "unmotivated" decision to expel Russian diplomatic personnel as tensions rage over Moscow's offensive in Ukraine.

Multiple European countries have expelled Russian diplomats after Moscow sent troops to Ukraine on Feb. 24, with Russia responding in kind.

Bulgaria in June said it was expelling 70 Russian diplomatic staff, the biggest number ordered out in one-go from the Balkan nation.

Sofia also announced the temporary closure of Russia's consulate general in Ruse in northern Bulgaria.

"We would like to emphasize that the responsibility for the consequences of these counterproductive steps rests entirely with the government of Bulgaria," the Russian Foreign

Ministry said.

"We believe that such actions not only cause significant damage to traditional ties between our countries... but also testify to the further degradation of the collective West, which is ready to sacrifice the interests of partners in order to harm Russia," it added.

It said that the "unconditional adherence" of Bulgaria "to this destructive line is regrettable."

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