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U.S., EU Ambassadors Leave Russia as Tenures End

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EU Ambassador Markus Ederer (L) and U.S. Ambassador John Sullivan (R). **Mikhail Metzel/Valery Sharifulin/TASS**

The ambassadors of the United States and the European Union in Russia have left Moscow after ending their diplomatic tenures as Russia's invasion of Ukraine plunged relations to their lowest point since the Cold War.

John Sullivan, 62, left Russia on Sunday and will retire from four decades of public service under five U.S. presidents, the embassy said in a statement. Sullivan was appointed ambassador to Moscow in December 2019.

Sullivan was assistant secretary of state under the presidency of Donald Trump, and held several senior positions in the justice, defense and commerce ministries throughout his career.

"Elizabeth Rood will assume duties as Charge d'Affaires at U.S. Embassy Moscow until Ambassador Sullivan's successor arrives," the embassy said.

EU Ambassador Markus Ederer has also departed Russia, according to an unnamed diplomatic source in Brussels quoted by Russia's state-run TASS news agency Sunday.

French Ambassador to Malaysia Roland Galharague will replace Ederer as part of a "planned change" in the near future, the report said.

"The EU adheres to the need to keep open diplomatic chanels of communication with Moscow" despite the crisis in relations with Russia, the diplomatic source added.

Since the launch of the Russian offensive in Ukraine at the end of February, the West has imposed sweeping economic sanctions against Moscow and provided substantial military aid to Kyiv.

The U.S. embassy has also been trying to secure the release of its citizens detained in Russia in recent weeks, including basketball superstar Brittney Griner who was sentenced last month to nine years in jail by a Moscow court on a drug charge.

AFP contributed reporting.

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