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Moscow Gives Latvian Ambassador Two Weeks to Leave Russia

By AFP

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The Latvian embassy in Moscow. **Anton Novoderezhkin / TASS**

Moscow said on Friday that Latvia's ambassador had been given two weeks to leave Russia, accusing the Baltic state and EU member of "total Russophobia."

The latest expulsion comes after Russia on Monday downgraded diplomatic relations with Estonia and ordered its ambassador to leave the country, having made the same accusation against Tallinn.

Estonia retaliated, asking the Russian ambassador to leave Tallinn, and in solidarity, Latvia on Monday also ordered the Russian ambassador to leave and said it was downgrading diplomatic ties.

"Latvia's ambassador Maris Riekstins was ordered to leave the Russian Federation within two weeks," the Foreign Ministry in Moscow said in a statement Friday.

Latvia's decision to downgrade ties would "have consequences," the ministry added.

Moscow accused both Baltic countries of "total Russophobia" and taking "hostile steps against Russia".

Tensions between Russia and its European neighbors have spiked after President Vladimir Putin sent Russian troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24 last year.

Fellow Baltic state Lithuania downgraded its diplomatic relations with Russia back in April in response to the atrocities carried out by the occupying Russian troops in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha.

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