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Moldova Expels 45 Russian Diplomats, Embassy Staff

By AFP

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The Russian Embassy in Chisinau, Moldova. **Valery Sharifulin / TASS**

Moldova has ordered 45 Russian diplomats and embassy staff to leave the country "over numerous unfriendly actions," officials said Wednesday, as tensions between the two countries reach an all-time high.

"This decision comes as a result of numerous unfriendly actions towards the Republic of Moldova... as well as attempts to destabilise the internal situation in our country," the Moldovian Foreign Ministry said, adding that Russia's ambassador to Chisinau had been summoned.

Moldova's pro-EU government has condemned Russia's invasion of neighboring Ukraine and accused Moscow of a plot to overthrow the current government.

An investigation by Moldovan media outlet Jurnal TV and The Insider published this week

claimed that there are 28 antennas on Russia's embassy in Chisinau and an adjacent building that could be used for spying.

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"Forty-five diplomats and technical staff will have to leave before August 15th," Foreign Ministry spokesman Igor Zaharov said.

Following Wednesday's explusion, "there will be fewer individuals who are trying to destabilize the situation in our country," Foreign Minister Nicu Popescu said at the start of a cabinet meeting.

Russia's diplomatic corps will consist of 10 diplomatic positions and 15 administrative, technical and service positions "based on the principle of parity," the foreign ministry said.

Moldova had already expelled two Russian diplomats since the outbreak of war in Ukraine, according to foreign ministry spokesperson Zaharov.

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