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Russia Summons Armenian Ambassador Over 'Unfriendly Steps'

By AFP

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Armenian Embassy in central Moscow. **AKfounder (CC BY-SA 4.0)**

Russia on Friday summoned the ambassador of Armenia over "unfriendly steps," as Yerevan announced drills with the U.S. military and has grown increasingly critical of Moscow's role in the Nagorno-Karabakh standoff.

The move followed warnings by the Kremlin against conducting drills with the U.S. and mounting tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed territory.

Yerevan, a traditional ally of Russia, has become more vocal in its criticism of Moscow's peacekeeping mission in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that "the Armenian leadership had in recent days taken a series of unfriendly steps."

These included "U.S. military drills on Armenian territory," a trip to Kyiv by the Armenian Prime Minister's wife and Yerevan's decision to join the International Criminal Court, it added.

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The Foreign Ministry said the Armenian ambassador was given a "tough talk" but did not provide further details.

Despite the summoning, the Foreign Ministry stressed that Russia and Armenia "remain allies and all agreements on strengthening the partnership will be fulfilled."

Moscow also said it was "concerned" by the detention of an Armenian blogger and news commentator employed by its Sputnik media outlet. Yerevan later said it released the blogger.

Russia deployed peacekeepers to Karabakh as part of a Moscow-brokered deal to end the 2020 war between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Many of Russia's traditional allies in the former Soviet space have questioned Moscow's role after its full-scale Ukraine offensive.

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