

Russia Says Intends to Continue Nuclear Test Moratorium

By [AFP](#)

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Russian Foreign Ministry. **MT**

Russia intends to stick to a nuclear test ban moratorium despite withdrawing its ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the Foreign Ministry said Friday.

"We intend to keep the moratorium that was introduced more than 30 years ago in place," said a ministry statement.

But any nuclear tests by the United States would "force us to do the same," it added.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday signed off on a law revoking Russia's ratification of the treaty.

The 1996 treaty outlaws all nuclear explosions, including live tests of nuclear weapons, though it never came into force because some key countries — including the United States

and China — never ratified it.

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The West has accused Russia of using reckless nuclear rhetoric since it launched its offensive on Ukraine last February.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken criticized Putin's announcement on Thursday, and called on Moscow to commit to not carry out testing.

"Unfortunately, it represents a significant step in the wrong direction, taking us further from, not closer to, entry into force" of the treaty, Blinken said in a statement.

"This continues Moscow's disturbing and misguided effort to heighten nuclear risks and raise tensions as it pursues its illegal war against Ukraine," he said.

Putin last week oversaw ballistic missile drills in what Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said was practice for a "massive" retaliatory nuclear strike against an unnamed enemy.

Putin also said last month he was "not ready to say" whether Russia would carry out live nuclear tests.

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) has urged Russia to continue its commitment to the treaty, including the use of monitoring stations capable of detecting the slightest explosion in real-time.

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