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Latvian Minister Says Russians 'Essentially Support' Invasion By Voting

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Latvian Minister of Justice Inese Libinja-Egnere. **Saeima (BY-SA 2.0)**

Latvia's Justice Minister said that Russian citizens who live in the Baltic country and plan to vote in Russia's upcoming presidential election "essentially support" Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

"We can't prevent Russian citizens from entering the embassy. What they do there and why they do it is their own business with the state of which they are citizens," Justice Minister Inese Libina-Egnere told the local broadcaster TV3 on Tuesday.

But she also implied that Russians could face criminal liability for justifying the war under Latvian law if they cast their votes at the Russian embassy in Riga, where two polling stations are expected to open for the March 15-17 election.

"We have in essence notified that order will be ensured outside the embassy, but those people entering also support the war," the minister added.

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Since Russia will also hold voting in parts of occupied Ukraine, Libina-Egnere said Latvia had drafted a letter condemning Moscow's actions.

Latvia and its Baltic neighbors Lithuania and Estonia have been some of Ukraine's staunchest supporters since Russia launched its full-scale invasion more than two years ago.

Russia's Foreign Ministry has warned that "a number of states in Europe and America" have ramped up calls to "disrupt" the voting process at Russian embassies abroad.

Libina-Egnere is among several Latvian cabinet members under an arrest warrant by Russia's Interior Ministry on accusations of overseeing the dismantling of Soviet monuments.

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