

Kremlin Denies Meddling in Moldova's Upcoming Election

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Daniel Mihailescu / AFP

The Kremlin [said](#) Monday it “categorically rejects” accusations from authorities in Moldova that it is interfering in the country’s upcoming presidential election and a referendum on joining the European Union.

“There are still many people in Moldova who support having good relations with our country,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

“These people are being denied the right to have their own political representation, the media is restricted from covering the electoral process and politicians are barred from expressing support for having relations [with Russia],” Peskov added.

Voters in Moldova will head to the polls on Sunday to choose the country’s next president. The candidates include pro-EU incumbent President Maia Sandu, former prosecutor Alexandr Stoianoglo — who is backed by the pro-Russia Socialist Party — and nine other contenders.

On the same day, a referendum will ask voters whether Moldova's constitution should be amended to make joining the EU an official aspiration of the country, similar to [changes](#) made to Georgia's constitution in 2017.

Related article: [Moldova Uncovers 'Unprecedented' Pro-Russia Vote Rigging](#)

Earlier this month, Moldovan police [said](#) they had uncovered a large vote-buying scheme involving \$15 million allegedly funneled from Russia by individuals linked to fugitive businessman and former politician Ilan Shor.

Shor, who currently lives in Russia and was convicted of fraud in absentia last year, claimed the payments were legal and accused Moldovan authorities of turning the country into a "police state."

In response to the alleged Russian interference, the European Union approved sanctions on five individuals and one entity ahead of Moldova's elections.

A former Soviet republic, Moldova has for decades been divided between forging closer ties with the European Union and maintaining amicable relations with Moscow.

Sandu, who defeated former president Igor Dodon in 2020, initially promised to balance relations between the West and Russia. However, ties with Moscow have worsened since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, with Sandu accusing the Kremlin of meddling in Moldovan politics.

The EU, which granted Moldova candidate status in June 2022, last week [announced](#) a record 1.8 billion euros (\$2 billion) in financial support for the country.

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