

Moldova Says Russia Planning to Illegally Bus In Voters to Moscow Polling Stations

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A line outside the Moldovan embassy in Moscow during the 2014 elections. **Moskva News Agency**

Moldova [claimed](#) Wednesday that authorities in Russia were planning to undermine the country's upcoming presidential election and a referendum on joining the EU by bussing in voters to polling stations at the Moldovan Embassy in Moscow.

Moldova's Foreign Ministry said it was alarmed by reports of Russia allegedly preparing to "artificially create the impression of overcrowding" this Sunday at the [two polling](#) stations in Moscow.

"[Moldova] calls on the Russian authorities and other parties to refrain from actions that could disrupt the electoral process through illegal means or artificially create the appearance of crowds at the polling stations," the ministry said in a statement.

There was no immediate comment from the Russian authorities.

Voters in Moldova and its diplomatic missions abroad will head to the polls on Sunday to choose the country's next president and vote on whether Moldova's constitution should be amended to make joining the EU an official aspiration. Pro-European incumbent President Maia Sandu is the clear favorite against 10 other candidates.

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The run-up to the election has been plagued by allegations of a large vote-buying scheme funneled from Russia and linked to fugitive businessman and former politician Ilan Shor, who lives in Russia and was convicted of fraud in absentia last year.

The EU imposed sanctions on five people and one entity in response to the alleged Russian interference, which the Kremlin denied this week. The EU, which granted Moldova candidate status after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, also announced a record 1.8 billion euros (\$2 billion) in financial support for Moldova last week.

The White House said Tuesday that Moscow has spent "millions of dollars" to finance its preferred parties and spreading disinformation on social media.

Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova [criticized](#) the Moldovan authorities earlier Wednesday for allegedly printing out only 10,000 ballots for 500,000 Moldovans who live and work in Russia and are eligible to vote.

She did not indicate how many of the Russia-based Moldovans were registered to vote this Sunday.

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