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Serbia Doesn't Endorse Russian Emigres' Anti-Kremlin Protests, Says Deputy PM

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Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia Aleksandar Vulin. **Kirill Zykov / brics-russia2024.ru**

Serbia's Deputy Prime Minister said Thursday that his government does not endorse Russian emigres living in the country who stage protests against the Kremlin.

Tens of thousands of Russians fled to Serbia after President Vladimir Putin ordered the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and then a partial mobilization of troops later that year. An estimated 150,000 Russians currently reside in Serbia, where they do not need a visa to enter.

"Among the Russians in Serbia, there are people who, I can say, do not take advantage of our hospitality as they should," Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandar Vulin told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency in an interview.

"They are involved in political activities and have even participated in some protests against the [Russian] government," he said. "Many of them believe that they have the right to use Serbian soil to speak negatively about the Russian government or state."

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Vulin, who was speaking on the sidelines of this week's BRICS summit, said Serbia remains "friendly" to Russia and the Kremlin, adding that his country would not allow itself "to be used as a tool against President Putin or the Russian government."

"Please, come, work, live, do whatever you think is necessary. But leave politics aside," the official added, noting that Serbia still welcomed "any Russian citizens."

Vulin spoke a week after Serbian authorities reportedly ordered an anti-Kremlin activist Anton Bobryshev to leave the country over national security risks. Bobryshev, who has lived in Serbia for eight years on a residency permit, said he believes the decision was political.

Serbia condemned Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic has sought to limit contact with the Kremlin. The EU has warned Serbia that keeping strong ties with Russia was "incompatible" with its aspiration to join the bloc.

Vulin represented Serbia at the BRICS summit in Kazan after Vucic said a scheduling conflict would prevent him from attending the annual event.

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