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Moldova Expels Russian Diplomats Over Alleged Role in MP's Escape

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The Russian Embassy in Chisinau. **facebook.com/rusembmoldova**

Moldova expelled three Russian diplomats on Monday after its security service accused the Russian Embassy in Chisinau of helping a pro-Kremlin lawmaker flee from custody.

"The decision is based on clear evidence that [the three Russian diplomats] carried out activities contrary to their diplomatic status," Moldova's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The ministry did not name the diplomats or specify when they were expected to leave.

Russia's Foreign Ministry vowed to respond "accordingly," state media reported Monday afternoon.

Earlier on Monday, Moldova's Security and Intelligence Service released video footage, claiming it showed Moldovan lawmaker Alexander Nesterovschi entering the Russian Embassy in Chisinau on March 18.

The following day, the agency said, Nesterovschi was driven in a car with diplomatic license plates to the pro-Russian breakaway region of Transnistria — just as a Moldovan court sentenced him in absentia to 12 years in prison for illegal political funding.

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The Russian Embassy in Chisinau denied any involvement, calling the accusations "unfounded and unacceptable."

"We call on Moldova to refrain from provocative speculation and look forward to returning to a pragmatic dialogue," the embassy said.

Nesterovschi was convicted of funneling Russian money to the now-banned pro-Russian Shor Party. The party's exiled leader, Ilan Shor, has been accused of receiving Russian funding in order to destabilize the political system in Moldova.

Another Moldovan lawmaker, Irina Lozovan, is wanted on similar charges and is currently in hiding. Meanwhile, Evghenia Gutul, the head of Moldova's semi-autonomous region of Gagauzia, was arrested last Tuesday on the same allegations.

All three politicians claim the charges against them are politically motivated.

Moldova has expelled dozens of Russian diplomats and embassy staff since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, often citing alleged interference in its domestic affairs.

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