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Russia Expels Moldovan Diplomats in Tit-for-Tat Move

By AFP

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Russia on Friday expelled three Moldovan diplomats in a tit-for-tat move after Chisinau kicked out Russian embassy officials accused of helping a pro-Moscow lawmaker flee the country.

Earlier this week, Moldovan authorities ordered the expulsion of three Russian diplomats after they accused the Russian embassy of helping lawmaker Alexandr Nesterovschi — who was facing prison time — flee to the pro-Moscow breakaway region of Transnistria.

Authorities in Russia rejected the claims and said Friday that they would expel three Moldovan diplomats in retaliation.

"Any attempts to accuse the Russian diplomatic mission of interfering in the internal affairs of the Republic of Moldova have no grounds whatsoever," Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a

statement.

Nesterovschi vanished just before a Moldovan court sentenced him to 12 years in prison for corruption and illegal funding of a party linked to fugitive businessman Ilan Shor, who is currently residing in Russia.

Russia and Moldova have expelled dozens of diplomats in recent years, with relations further strained as Moldova seeks to join the European Union and since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

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