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Russia Scolds Ally Armenia for Hosting Zelensky

By AFP

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Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova gives a press briefing. **Peter Kovalev / TASS**

Russia said Thursday it was "incomprehensible" that its ally Armenia had hosted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky for a European summit this week, and warned Yerevan against pursuing closer ties with the European Union.

"Russian society, with deep indignation and bewilderment, not only saw but remembered that Armenia, which we are used to considering a friendly, brotherly country, served as a platform. For whom? For a terrorist," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said at a weekly briefing.

Since launching its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Russian officials have repeatedly denounced Zelensky and described Kyiv as a "terrorist state," accusations Ukraine rejects as baseless wartime propaganda.

“The current, illegitimate Kyiv regime has been issuing threats to strike Moscow during the annual parade on May 9, a day sacred to our peoples. … And no one in Armenia’s current leadership rebuked Zelensky. So whose side of history are you on?” she asked.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told reporters on Thursday: “Back in 2022-2023 I already stated that, on the issue of Ukraine, we are not an ally of Russia.”

He later said he would not attend Moscow’s Victory Day parade on Saturday, citing the need to prepare for parliamentary elections scheduled for June 7.

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Zakharova also criticized a joint declaration adopted by Armenia and the European Union at their summit on Tuesday, which recognizes Yerevan’s aspiration to join the bloc and deepens cooperation on economic and security matters.

“Such a course by the Armenian authorities will sooner or later lead to Yerevan’s irreversible involvement in Brussels’ anti-Russian line, with all the ensuing political and economic consequences for Armenia,” she said.

Ties between Yerevan and Moscow have frayed in recent years.

The South Caucasus nation of 3 million people effectively froze its participation in the Russian-led CSTO military alliance in 2024, accusing Russia of failing to protect ethnic Armenians during Azerbaijan’s 2023 takeover of Nagorno-Karabakh the previous year.

Yerevan then passed a law last year formally declaring its intention to apply for EU membership, angering the Kremlin.

Russian President Vladimir Putin warned Pashinyan in April that Armenia could not be a member of both the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union, the Russian-led customs bloc.

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