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# Moscow urges foreign missions to evacuate diplomats, citizens from Kiev

## Russia will respond if Kiev goes ahead with its "terrorist plans" to disrupt the upcoming Victory Day celebrations

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Moscow has formally warned all diplomatic missions and international organizations about a potential large-scale retaliatory strike on Kiev, urging them to leave the Ukrainian capital immediately, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova has said.

Earlier this week, the Russian Defense Ministry announced a two-day ceasefire on May 8-9 to mark the



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end of World War II in Europe, urging Kiev to follow suit and warning of a potential large-scale retaliatory strike

on Kiev. The ministry pointed to comments made by Ukrainian leader Vladimir Zelensky earlier in the day, which it said contained threats to target Moscow during the Victory Day celebrations.

FILE PHOTO. The Russian Foreign Ministry, Moscow. © Getty Images / Anadolu / Sefa Karacan

Moscow's warning must be taken with the utmost seriousness, Zakharova said in a statement on Wednesday. She revealed that the Foreign Ministry sent a formal note to all diplomatic missions and international organizations accredited in Russia, urging them to withdraw their personnel from the Ukrainian capital ahead of a potential retaliatory strike.

*"The Foreign Ministry urgently calls on the government of your country/the leadership of your organization to treat this statement with the utmost seriousness and to ensure the timely evacuation from the city of Kiev of the personnel of diplomatic and other missions, as well as civilians, in view of the inevitable retaliatory strike by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation on Kiev, including against decision-making centers" should Ukraine proceed with its "criminal terrorist plans," the note reads, as quoted by Zakharova.*



Russia is aware of the Western attitude toward Victory Day and the efforts to "rewrite history" and "systematically destroy Soviet memorial heritage," Zakharova stated. "As they continue to supply Ukraine with weapons, they are acting as accomplices in the criminal plans hatched by the Kiev regime. However, the instinct for self-preservation should not fail them."

It still remains unclear whether Kiev will heed Moscow's call and observe the May 8-9 ceasefire. After the Russian Defense Ministry's announcement, Zelensky called the truce "unfair" and claimed that "no one officially suggested anything" to Kiev. Hours later, he unilaterally declared a ceasefire starting at midnight on the night of May 5-6, adding that Kiev would "act reciprocally" to Moscow's actions.

Russia did not provide an official response to Zelensky's announcement. While media reports suggest that the intensity of long-range strikes launched by both sides has waned, the hostilities continue. Despite the lack of confirmation from Russia regarding its adherence to the Zelensky-proposed truce, the Ukrainian leader accused it of violating the supposed ceasefire nearly 2,000 times throughout Wednesday and choosing "an obvious spurning... of saving lives."

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