

From: Todd Webster
Sent: Wednesday, December 20, 2017 10:13 AM
To: Molly Lazio
Cc: Sarah Whitney
Subject: News alert: Moldova's dispute with Russia escalates
Attachments: Non paper RU (en) 18 dec 17.doc

Dear Molly:

You may have seen the news that Moldova has recalled its Ambassador from Russia, amid escalating harassment, intimidation, and interference in Moldova's internal affairs. Links to several news articles are below.

Attached, please also find a brief about the pressure being exerted by the Russians on the Republic of Moldova.

Please let me know if you have any questions. And thank you again for your interest.

Have a wonderful holiday!
Todd

Moldova recalls ambassador from Moscow as dispute escalates. Moldova recalled its ambassador to Russia for consultations in response to the harassment and intimidation by Russian authorities of Moldovan politicians and officials, the Moldovan foreign ministry said on Monday:

- <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-moldova-russia-diplomacy/moldova-recalls-ambassador-from-moscow-as-dispute-escalates-idUSKBN1EC1ZR>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2017/12/18/world/europe/18reuters-moldova-russia-diplomacy.html>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2017/12/18/world/europe/18reuters-moldova-russia-diplomacy.html>
- <http://uk.businessinsider.com/r-moldova-recalls-ambassador-from-moscow-for-consultations-2017-12>
- <https://www.yahoo.com/news/moldova-recalls-ambassador-moscow-dispute-escalates-160140377.html>
- <https://www.kyivpost.com/russia/112-ua-moldova-indefinitely-recalls-ambassador-russia.html>
- <https://www.kyivpost.com/russia/moldova-recalls-ambassador-russia.html>
- <https://news.am/eng/news/427107.html>
- <http://newsagencyltd.com/2017/12/18/moldova-recalls-ambassador-from-moscow-as-dispute-escalates/>
- <http://www.dailymagazine.news/moldova-recalls-ambassador-from-moscow-as-dispute-escalates-nid-526151.html>
- <http://www.todayonline.com/world/moldova-recalls-ambassador-moscow-consultations>
- <http://www.scmp.com/news/world/russia-central-asia/article/2124904/moldova-recalls-ambassador-russia-over-intimidation>
- <http://tass.com/world/981693>
- <http://tass.com/world/981687>
- https://www.reddit.com/r/TheNewsFeed/comments/7klzaj/oann_moldova_recalls_ambassador_from_moscow_for/
- <http://worldnews.easybranches.com/regions/china/moldova-recalls-ambassador-to-russia-over-intimidation-as-diplomatic-tensions-rumble-on-538862>

- <https://www.longroom.com/discussion/814686/moldova-recalls-ambassador-from-moscow-for-consultations>
- <https://112.international/politics/moldova-indefinitely-recalls-its-ambassador-from-russia-23768.html>
- <http://www.cetusnews.com/news/Moldova-recalls-ambassador-from-Moscow-for-consultations.HJmOJGvBzz.html>
- <https://www.rferl.org/a/moldova-recalls-ambassador-russia-neguta/28925119.html>
- http://en.publika.md/conflicts-between-russia-moldova-and-reasons-to-recall-ambassador-andrei-negruta_2643254.html
- <http://vectornews.eu/news/politics/61632-moldova-indefinitely-recalls-its-ambassador-from-russia.html>
- <https://rutwi.info/article/325766>
- <http://today.news.itthon.ma/news/moldova-recalls-ambassador-from-moscow-for-consultations>
- <http://news2night.com/en/news/breaking-news-moldavija-otozvala-svoego-posla-iz-rossii>
- <http://qwiket.com/m/context/topic/moldova-recalls-ambassador-from-moscow-for-consultations>
- <https://news.yam.md/ro/story/6803371>
- <http://singapore.shafaqna.com/EN/SG/201067>
- <http://dailynews24.online/news/moldova-recalls-ambassador-from-moscow-as-dispute-escalates>

This material is distributed by Cornerstone Government Affairs, Inc. on behalf of the Democratic Party of Moldova. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

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NON-PAPER

THE PRESSURE EXERTED BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

During **2016 and 2017**, the Russian Federation, through various state institutions including intelligence services, has **exerted illegal pressure** on the Republic of Moldova, as well as on Moldovan citizens and Moldovan high-level officials.

The exerted pressure took different forms, with growing intensity: **it started** with the intimidation of officials affiliated to the Governing Coalition, including high-level exponents, and with the heads of various governmental structures; **further on, barriers** on Moldova's trade with the Russian Federation and other CIS states were introduced. The tensions triggered by these actions were then increased through the conduct of military exercises of the Operational Group of Russian Troops (OGRT) in the Transnistrean region, media campaigns, and cyber-attacks. Russian high-level officials have offended and threatened Moldovan citizens and the Republic of Moldova. Additionally, the intensification of Russian propaganda via Russian TV channels broadcast in Moldova has affected directly the informational security of our country.

The major reasons behind these persecutions are **the following**:

- the efforts of Moldovan law enforcement authorities for investigating, ceasing and prosecuting the organizers and executors of the massive money laundering scheme in the Republic of Moldova - the so-called "Russian Laundromat" - initiated or carried out by persons affiliated to the Russian intelligence services who took control over the Moldovan banking system; the "Laundromat" was one of the most complex and extensive such operations, considering the fraudulent mass of money - about \$23 billion USD laundered via Republic of Moldova and another approximately \$50 billion via other countries;
- the Moldovan government's determination in promoting European integration policies, as these policies became more and more popular, leading to decreased popularity of the Russian Federation and of the **Eurasian Union project** among the citizens of Moldova; as a result, the Russian influence over the Republic of Moldova decreased, which caused concerns in Moscow and triggered Moscow's reaction;
- the Moldovan government has declared deputy prime-minister of Russian Federation, D. Rogozin, as *persona non grata* after he had severely insulted Moldovans and the Republic of Moldova and has issued explicit threats, some of them reminding of the military aggressions our country has been subject to in the past;
- the diplomatic efforts of the Moldovan government to trigger the withdrawal of Russian troops from its territory (the Republic of Moldova even tried to promote a UN resolution asking for such an outcome) and to reach the economic, social and political reunification of people from both banks of the Dniester - **last month's positive evolutions in the Transnistrean conflict have also been recognized at the OSCE Ministerial Council**;
- joint check points have been set up at the border between Moldova and Ukraine, on the Ukrainian territory, thus the Eastern border was taken under control; **Russia is visibly concerned for the enhanced bilateral cooperation with Ukraine, respectively Romania, with consequences on the status of Transnistria and on the reduction of Moldova's dependency on the Russian Federation, especially in terms of energy resources**;

- the decreased efficiency of the tools of influence and interest promotion the Russian Federation employs in Moldova - due to the fight against Russian propaganda, ban on the access of agents of Russian intelligence services to the Republic of Moldova and Transnistria, decreased popularity of the main pro-Russian political forces, e.g. Party of Socialists of Moldova;
- an anti-propaganda law was promoted and passed by the Parliament; the law will exclude the manipulative content and disinformation promoted by certain Russian TV outlets broadcast in Moldova.

In view of these evolutions, the Russian Federation considered that the way the Republic of Moldova defends its sovereignty, rights and dignity represents a challenge to its interests and, consequently, it began harassing and blackmailing Moldovan officials.

One of the most frequently used measures of intimidation is the initiation of criminal cases against high-level officials or political leaders of the Governing Coalition of the Republic of Moldova (including Members of the Parliament), as well as against people close to them. The typical actions contain attempts to declare these persons wanted at international level and even to request for their arrest internationally.

On 6 June 2017, the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) made a firm decision and declared the persecutions of Moldovan political representatives by Russian Federation unfounded, tendentious, and politically motivated, and ordered to delete the existing information and block publication of new information on the individuals mentioned in the police international communication systems.

On several occasions, the Republic of Moldova sought to initiate a dialogue with the Russian authorities, for clarifying the situation and for maintaining a mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries and their citizens.

Having exhausted a broad range of actions, the Government of Moldova took a number of proportionate, yet low-intensity diplomatic response measures, but the Russian authorities refused to provide an answer.

The growing intensity of the repressive measures taken by the Russian authorities against the Republic of Moldova, the lack of a clear reaction to the requests and response actions of the Moldovan authorities, **as well as the most recent hostile actions** have determined us to recall our Ambassador, Mr. Andrei Neguta for further consultations. He will not return to Moscow to resume the responsibilities of the ambassadorial position until clear signs are visible that the tensions between the two countries, triggered by the behaviour of the Russian Federation, will have the chance to be clarified and settled.

The Republic of Moldova is also examining other measures in order to bring to the attention of the Russian political leadership the abuses committed by some of its institutions against the Republic of Moldova and against Moldovan representatives.

The Republic of Moldova seeks a constructive, respect-based relationship with the Russian Federation and has taken several measures to ensure such an outcome. Unfortunately, the Russian response to our openness has involved more and more abuse and attempts to curb our European aspirations and to intimidate our leaders.