

Moscow asks UK to further reduce its diplomatic personnel in Russia



Moscow, March 31 (RHC)-- Moscow has told Britain it must cut more of its diplomatic and technical staff in Russia, asking for parity of staff diplomatic missions in both countries, the Russian Foreign Ministry said on Saturday.

Russia had already reciprocated the ejection of 23 Russian diplomats, which London justified asserting, without providing evidence, that Moscow was responsible for the poisoning of Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia.

Russia has flatly denied that allegation and has describe it as an elaborate Western plot to undermine East-West relations

On Friday, the Russian Foreign Ministry summoned British Ambassador Laurie Bristow and told him London had one month to further cut its diplomatic contingent in Russia to the same size as the Russian mission in Britain.

Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told Reuters the demand meant Britain would have to cut "a little over 50" more of its diplomatic and technical staff on top of the 23 diplomats who have already gone home.

“We asked for parity. The Brits have 50 diplomats more than the Russians,” Zakharova said on Saturday. Moscow also demanded an official explanation for the search of a Russian passenger plane in London on Thursday and said it could reserve the right to take similar action against British airlines in Russia.

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