

Diplomatic tension flares as Algeria expels 12 French officials

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Algiers, April 15 (RHC)-- Diplomatic tension has risen between Algeria and France as the former colony calls on 12 French diplomats to leave the country within 48 hours.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot reported on Monday that Algeria has demanded the French diplomats leave the country following the arrest of three Algerian nationals in France.

For decades, ties between Algeria and France have gone through several diplomatic upheavals, and Monday's announcement comes at a sensitive time in relations and shows difficulties in repairing ties.

"I am asking Algerian authorities to abandon these expulsion measures," Barrot said, adding: "If the decision to send back our officials is maintained, we will have no other choice but to respond immediately."

The French foreign minister visited the former African colony earlier this month in an attempt to mend diplomatic issues that brought the two countries to the brink of a diplomatic breakdown. After a meeting with Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, Barrot said that both countries wanted to "rebuild a partnership of equals."

On Friday, French prosecutors indicted three Algerians, including a consular official, on suspicion of involvement in the 2024 abduction of an opponent of the Algerian government, Amir Boukhors, in a Paris suburb.

The three Algerian citizens, who are also being prosecuted for "terrorism" and "conspiracy," have been placed under pre-trial detention.

The French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs said on Monday that should Algiers follow through with its order, it would be the first expulsion of French diplomats since Algeria gained independence in 1962.

[SOURCE: AFP and NEWS AGENCIES]

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