

Negotiations On Crimea Subject to Conditions, Russian Official Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

March 04, 2014

The  Moscow Times

Russia is willing to negotiate an exit from the Crimean crisis with Western countries, subject to the enactment of an agreement signed before former President Viktor Yanukovich was ousted from power, a Foreign Ministry official has said.

The unidentified official stated that an EU-brokered agreement signed Feb. 21 between Ukraine's then-President Yanukovich and the opposition leaders must be fulfilled, and all political sides in Ukraine have to participate in the negotiations process, RIA Novosti reported.

The Feb. 21 agreement calls for adoption of the 2004 constitution that limits presidential powers and widens the parliament's authority. The agreement also states that a national unity government has to be formed before September, and presidential elections held before December.

Kremlin ally, Yanukovich was ousted from power before the agreement — also signed

by three EU foreign ministers — could be enacted. At the time, a Russian representative refrained from signing the document.

Opposition member Oleksander Turchynov has since been named interim president, and presidential elections have been called for May 25.

In response to the formation of a pro-Western government in Ukraine, Russia last week began military operations around the Crimea — where it maintains a Black Sea naval base — ostensibly to protect the interests of Russians and Russian-speakers on the peninsula.

However, the move has further escalated tensions in the ethnically divided Crimea, home to ethnic Russians seeking secession and Tatars who support the new government in Kiev.

The U.S. and the EU have condemned Russia's actions, accusing it of violation of international law, and have threatened punitive actions.

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