

Ukrainian Ambassador to Russia Recalled

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Ukraine has recalled its ambassador to Russia.

Ukraine has recalled its ambassador to Russia for consultations, the country's foreign ministry said in a statement Monday.

The statement said that the withdrawal of ambassador Volodymyr Yelchenko was made "in connection with the situation around the autonomous republic of Crimea and the need to discuss some of its international aspects."

On Sunday more than 95 percent of voters in a Crimean referendum cast their ballots for Russia to annex the southern Ukrainian peninsula. The region had seen a rise in pro-Russian separatism after a pro-Western government took power in Kiev following the departure of Kremlin ally and former President Viktor Yanukovich.

The ambassador's return to Ukraine comes the same day that the Ukrainian parliament voted to mobilize 40,000 reservists in response to Russia's "blatant aggression" and a deputy registered a bill about severing diplomatic ties with Moscow and instituting a visa regime

for Russians traveling to Ukraine.

Authorities in Kiev and many Western countries have said that the Crimean referendum was illegitimate, with EU members and the U.S. implementing sanctions against officials from both the previous Ukrainian government and Russia, whose troops were believed to have taken control of the peninsula in advance of Sunday's vote.

Canada and Lithuania had both previously recalled their ambassadors in Russia after President Vladimir Putin asked for and received approval from the Federation Council to use military forces in Ukraine.

Yelchenko has served in the Ukrainian diplomatic service since 1981 and was named as the country's ambassador in Moscow in 2010, during the presidency of Yanukovich.

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