

Canada Sanctions Russian Officials Over Crimea

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Canada on Tuesday joined the U.S. and EU in announcing sanctions against 10 top Russian and Ukrainian officials following a referendum Sunday in Ukraine's Crimea that saw voters overwhelmingly support reunification with Russia.

The sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes, targeted officials close to President Vladimir Putin, including Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, Crimea's pro-Moscow leader Sergei Aksyonov and former Ukrainian presidential chief of staff Viktor Medvedchuk.

"The individuals targeted are responsible for undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and for facilitating Russian military action against Ukraine," the Canadian government said Monday in a statement emphasizing that sanctions will serve to further isolate Moscow from the international community.

The move came a day after the U.S. and EU announced a raft of sanctions against Russian and Ukrainian officials.

Canada suspended military cooperation with Russia earlier this month in reaction to the situation in Ukraine, as well as halting participation in an intergovernmental economic commission.

Responding to Canada's sanctions, Russian defense industry chief Rogozin, who has also been slapped with sanctions by the U.S. and EU, said on his Twitter feed "They are likely searching for my accounts and villas. Keep dreaming."

Other Russian officials targeted by the Western sanctions have also denied they have assets abroad. The speaker of Russia's upper house, Valentina Matviyenko, slammed the U.S. move as political blackmail.

President Vladimir Putin warned earlier this month that sanctions against Russia threatened to cause mutual damage in the modern, integrated global economy.

On Tuesday, Russian lawmakers are to consider imposing reciprocal sanctions against the US and EU.

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