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# Putin To Deliver First Remarks After Crimean Referendum

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President Vladimir Putin is scheduled to deliver his first remarks on Crimea following Sunday's referendum in which the Black Sea peninsula expressed its desire to secede from Ukraine and join Russia.

On Tuesday morning Putin formally notified the Federation Council, the State Duma and the government of Crimea's desire to join Russia and approved a draft bill for the region's annexation.

The Crimean Supreme Council and the Legislative Assembly of Sevastopol, home of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, have reached out to Putin with a proposal to secede from Ukraine, a statement on the Kremlin website said Tuesday.

The move is the latest step in the possible secession of the Black Sea peninsula from Ukraine.

On Sunday, more than 96 percent of Crimeans voted in favor of joining Russia in a referendum organized by the region's new pro-Moscow authorities.

Both the new Ukrainian government in Kiev and its supporters in the West refused to recognize the legitimacy of what they have called an unconstitutional referendum. However, Putin on Monday said Crimea should be recognized "as a sovereign and independent state."

Putin will be speaking on the Crimea from 3 p.m. Tuesday. The Moscow Times will be providing live coverage of the conference.

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