

Crimea to Block Kiev Officials Visiting Peninsula

March 19, 2014

The  **Moscow Times**

Crimean Prime Minister Sergei Aksyonov said Wednesday that senior Ukrainian officials will be barred from entering the region and sent back to Kiev.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk earlier Wednesday dispatched his first deputy, Vitaly Yarema, and acting Defense Minister Ihor Tenyukh to Crimea to "resolve the situation and prevent the escalation of the conflict and its transformation into a military conflict," said Ukrainian Cabinet member Ostap Semerak, Interfax reported.

Upon their arrival, Aksyonov said that the officials from Kiev would not be allowed to enter Crimea, which is now controlled by Russia.

"They are not welcome in Crimea," Aksyonov said. "No one will let them into Crimea, they will be sent back."

On Tuesday, Russia and Crimea signed a treaty to bring the peninsula under Moscow's control. A Ukrainian soldier and a member of a militia were later killed at a military base

in Crimea, heightening concerns that the conflict could escalate.

Crimean militiamen on Wednesday stormed the Ukrainian naval base in Sevastopol, taking it without any resistance and raising a Russian flag, The Associated Press reported.

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