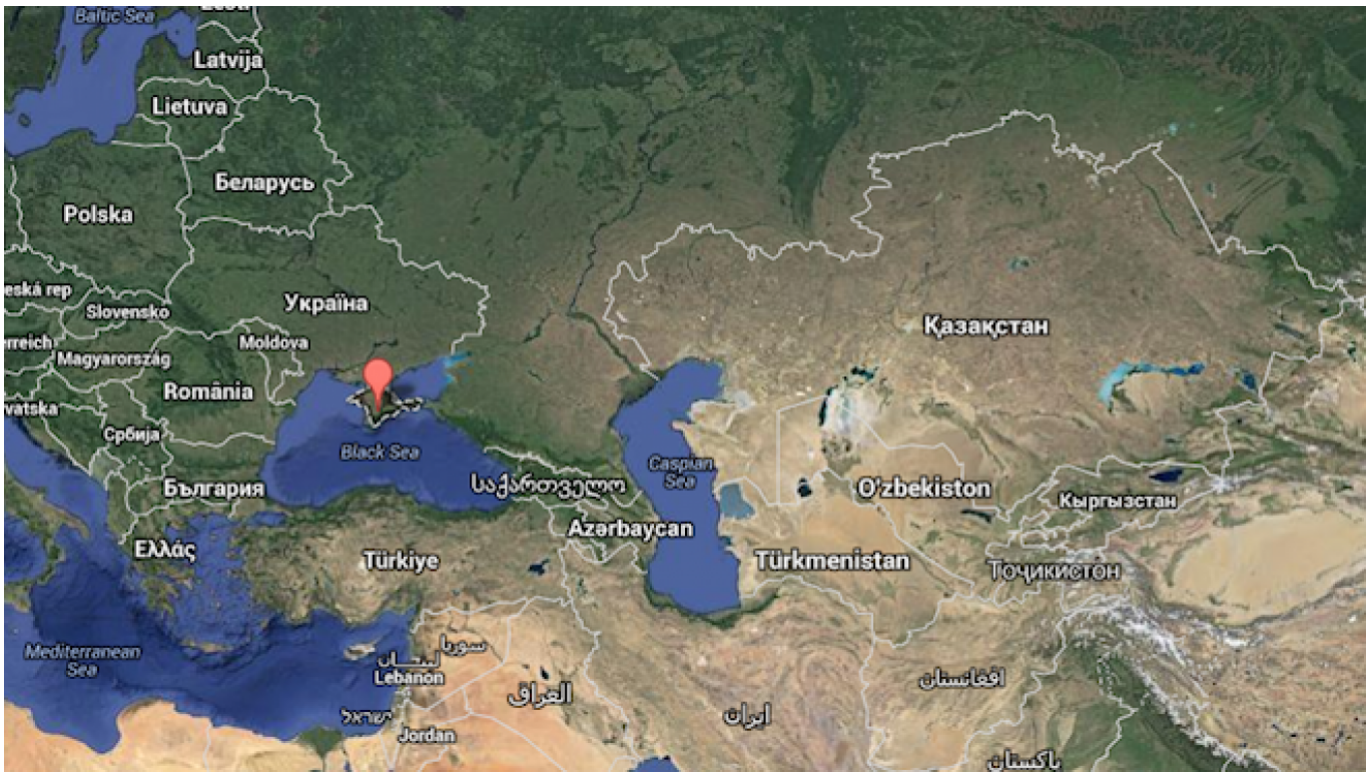
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National Geographic to Make Crimea Part of Russia in World Map

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National Geographic cartographers have agreed to temporarily indicate Crimea on maps as Ukrainian territory.

Experts at the Washington-based National Geographic Society have announced plans to redraw the world map to show Crimea as part of Russia after the Ukrainian breakaway region's reunification with Moscow is finalized.

The U.S. magazine's editorial, legal and cartographic leadership met Tuesday to discuss how to map Crimea's political status, shortly after Russian President Vladimir Putin and Crimea's leaders signed a treaty on Russia absorbing the Black Sea peninsula.

The historic reunification treaty is expected to be approved by Russia's constitutional court and then ratified by parliament later this week.

Juan Jose Valdes, the organization's geographer, told U.S. News & World Report that National Geographic maps "the world as it is, not as people would like it to be."

"As you can only surmise, sometimes our maps are not received in a positive light by some individuals who want to see the world in a different light," Valdes said.

National Geographic cartographers have agreed to temporarily indicate Crimea on maps as Ukrainian territory with a shading to indicate a special status, similar to how the contested territories of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are shown.

But following the ratification of the reunification treaty by the Russian parliament the organization plans to include the region as part of Russia, Valdes said.

Crimea, previously an autonomous republic within Ukraine, refused to recognize the legitimacy of the government in Kiev that came to power amid often violent protests last month and sought reunification with Russia instead. The move has sparked the most serious geopolitical showdown between Russia and the West since the end of the Cold War.

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