

# U.S. Congress Passes Ukraine Aid, Sanctions

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**The  Moscow Times**

A woman looking at portraits of people killed in recent clashes hanging on a tent at the Euromaidan protest camp on Kiev's Independence Square late Monday, April 1.

The U.S. House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly on Tuesday for a package of aid and sanctions in response to Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region, and sent the measure to the White House for President Barack Obama to sign into law.

The 378-34 vote backed a package that was overwhelmingly approved last week by the U.S. Senate, a rare show of bipartisanship after weeks of haggling between Democrats and Republicans over how best to respond to the crisis.

The legislation backs a \$1 billion loan guarantee for the Kiev government, provides \$150 million in aid to Ukraine and surrounding countries and requires the U.S. State and Justice Departments to help the Kiev government recover assets amassed by corrupt Ukrainian officials.

It also imposes mandatory sanctions, including visa bans and asset freezes, against Russians and Ukrainians determined to have engaged in violence or human rights abuses in Ukraine, who undermined Ukraine's sovereignty or participated in "significant" corruption in Ukraine.

"This legislation is central to our effort to counter Russian aggression and support the democratic development of Ukraine," said California Republican Representative Ed Royce, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

The measure does not include International Monetary Fund reforms sought by the White House and resisted by many Republicans in a dispute that had delayed the bill, frustrating lawmakers who wanted a swift response to the Ukraine crisis.

With many Republicans insisting that the IMF reforms were unrelated to helping Ukraine, Senate Democrats agreed to drop them from the legislation last week to pass it quickly.

U.S. Senator Bob Corker, the top Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had supported the IMF reforms. He said Tuesday's vote was an important show of unity.

"Passage of this bill allows Congress to speak with one voice in support of the Ukrainian people and against Russian aggression," he said in a statement.

The White House said Obama welcomed Congress' finalization of a Ukraine assistance package. In a statement, it also reiterated the administration's backing for the IMF measures "to ensure the IMF has the resources it needs to fulfill its mission and expand the tools available for Ukraine and other countries."

Several lawmakers said they wanted Obama to do more to punish Russia and discourage further intervention in Ukraine or elsewhere in eastern Europe, including imposing additional economic sanctions and targeting Russia's energy industry.

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