

Accusations of Separatism Get Ukraine Communists Expelled From Parliament

By [The Moscow Times](#)

May 07, 2014



Ukrainian lawmakers reportedly accused the Communist faction of separatism and expelled it from a closed-door parliamentary hearing on Tuesday, a move that the Communists say is an attempt to stifle dissent.

Neither side has provided a detailed account of what happened Tuesday behind closed doors, but the conflicting reports have underscored a stark feature of the crisis in Ukraine that supporters of all political stripes have lamented: the dearth of reliable information.

"There was no possibility whatsoever to find out what happened at the parliamentary discussion," Ukrainian television station TSN said on its website Wednesday, adding that there was not even access to the Internet during the "secret session" of the Rada, in which lawmakers reportedly heard from the nation's security chiefs.

Communist leader and Ukrainian presidential candidate Petro Symonenko told RBK Ukraine that his faction had called for a public debate but was overpowered. He denounced the booting

from the hearing as having "put a thick period to parliamentary democracy."

The Communists also called for a review of the violent clashes in Odessa on Friday that killed dozens of pro-Russian demonstrators, and demanded information about the killings of "peaceful civilians who advocate for Russian as a second official language and for a referendum" on possible secession, Symonenko said.

Fatherland faction lawmaker Oleksandr Bryhynets, said on his Facebook page that the grounds for expelling Communist lawmakers were "separatist statements by Symonenko," but did not elaborate.

Radical Party lawmaker Oleh Lyashko also took to Facebook to say that he had initiated the motion to remove Communist lawmakers from the chamber, and expressed the hope that Ukraine "will soon ban that treacherous party." He praised the expulsion as a "historic event," but also did not elaborate.

During the Tuesday hearing, the Party of Regions demanded the resignations of Ukraine's acting president, parliament speaker and top security officials over the Odessa tragedy, the faction's lawmaker Mykola Levchenko said, UNIAN reported. There were no reports of attempts to banish the Party of Regions from the parliamentary session.

Bryhynets said that the Rada also discussed, and defeated, a proposal to hold a referendum on regional autonomy during the May 25 presidential election.

"A referendum cannot be held under the barrels of automatic rifles," he said on his Facebook page.

"Terrorists would not put down their weapons and FSB [Russian security service] agents would not go back to Russia based on the results of a referendum."

Ukrainian and Western officials have argued that Russian troops from elite units are orchestrating the separatist violence that has engulfed parts of the country. Moscow denies any involvement.

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