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Ukraine Prime Minister Warns of Violence by Russian Saboteurs

By The Moscow Times

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Ukraine's prime minister has urged Ukrainians to celebrate Victory Day at home, warning of supposed plots by "Russian saboteurs" to target street parades.

"The country's leadership has received information about dark plans by Russian saboteurs and their mercenaries," Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk said in a televised appearance.

Though he said the government was doing "everything possible to ensure safety," Yatsenyuk urged Ukrainians to "stay away from any large gatherings," and to "not yield to provocations."

He also urged Ukrainians of all political stripes to show "tolerance to flags, slogans, and different views."

The May 9 holiday, commemorating the victory of the Soviet Union over Nazi Germany in World War II, is a treasured occasion for many Russians and Ukrainians, but Moscow's

annexation of Crimea in March and recent violence in eastern Ukraine has put a strain on the celebrations.

Many Ukrainians this year have replaced Russia's orange and black ribbon of St. George, which has long symbolized military valor in both countries but is now being associated with pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine, for the European symbol for war victims, the scarlet poppy.

See also:

Kiev to Abandon St. George Ribbons on Victory Day

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