

Crimean Prosecutors Seize 10 Million Square Meters of Land

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A total of more than \$1 billion in real estate and other assets has been seized by the new Crimean government since the annexation last year, the New York Times reported in January.

Crimean prosecutors have seized nearly 10 million square meters of land that they claim was illegally privatized before Russia annexed the territory from Ukraine last year, the region's chief prosecutor said.

"More than 960 hectares [9.6 million square meters] of land that was illegally given away has been returned to the government," Crimean Prosecutor Natalya Poklonskaya said late last week, news agency RIA Novosti reported.

Property ownership has long been contentious in Crimea, a region riddled with corruption since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The new authorities claim their actions were necessary in order to undo the damage done over decades by corrupt Ukrainian politicians and oligarchs.

But some of those whose land has been seized tell a different story. An investigation by the Associated Press late last year found that thousands of businesses and agencies had lost property to the new authorities, often with little legal justification and at times by force.

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