

Ukrainian Parliament Declares Russia's State Duma 'Illegitimate'

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A Ukrainian national flag flies over the Verkhovna Rada in central Kiev, Ukraine. **Valentyn Ogirenko / Reuters**

The Ukrainian parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, has declared that it will not recognize the Russian State Duma as a legitimate government. ☒

The decision was supported by 264 of the Rada's 450 members, Ukraine's 112.ua news site reported. The resolution, which was originally submitted by politician Maxim Bourbaki from the nationalist-leaning People's Front party, stated that the Rada would “not recognize the legitimacy of the State Duma elections,” or any of the Duma's “powers, acts and decisions.”

The Rada declared that Russia violated international law by holding elections in the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia annexed in 2014. It also appealed to the UN Security Council and General Assembly not to recognize the new parliament.

The Ukrainian Prosecutor's Office of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea has since opened criminal proceedings against election officials.

"Such actions indicate an attempt to legitimize the Crimea by incorporating illegally elected MPs into the Russian parliament," the Prosecutor's Office said in a statement.

The State Duma elections on Sunday, Sept. 18, saw a landslide victory for the ruling United Russia party, who now hold a super-majority in Russia's lower house of parliament. Four deputies were elected from the Crimean peninsula, including the Crimean Prosecutor General, United Russia's Natalya Poklonskaya. United Russia secured 53.78 percent of the vote in the Crimean city of Sevastopol and 68.58 percent in the region's capital of Simferopol.

A number of nations, including Poland, Lithuania and the United States, have already announced their refusal to recognize the Crimean elections. Ukraine remains the only country to condemn the State Duma in its entirety.

"The United States does not recognize the legitimacy, and will not recognize the outcome, of the Russian Duma elections planned for Russian-occupied Crimea on Sept. 18," the U.S. State Department said in a statement on Friday. "Our position on Crimea is clear: The peninsula remains an integral part of Ukraine."

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