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Crimean Businessmen Launch Angry Protests Against Russian Expropriation

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Krym.Realii / Youtube

Disgruntled businessmen have taken to the streets in the annexed Crimean peninsula to protest what they say is an increasingly oppressive business climate, including Russian officials' demands for tribute money and land expropriation.

Russia annexed the Black Sea peninsula from Ukraine in 2014, drawing international sanctions and a crisis in relations with the West. Since then, the Kremlin-installed administration in the Crimean port city of Sevastopol has filed thousands lawsuits to return land that it says Ukraine had illegally awarded to private businesses.

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"Officials from the mainland treat us like cattle," the Krym.Realii news website quoted Marat Tyunin, the chairman of the Sevastopol union of entrepreneurs, as saying at a rally on

Monday.

Local entrepreneurs are “forced to pay tributes” in an “ongoing redistribution of business,” Tyunin said.

Demonstrators carried posters calling for the resignation of local authorities, one of them reading “Earned in Ukraine! Squeezed in Russia.”

The unsanctioned protests were attended by representatives of big businesses, including shipyards and winemakers, Russia’s investigative newspaper Novaya Gazeta reported.

Entrepreneurs voiced their discontent against Sevastopol governor Dmitry Ovsyannikov after the closure of the city’s largest shopping mall last month.

“He doesn’t want to develop entrepreneurship. He literally ‘raped’ Sevastopol’s entrepreneurs and business in general. He’s not just ‘nightmaring’ it, he’s destroying it,” the Ria Novy Den news agency quoted Southern Sevastopol shipyard director Patimat Alieva as saying last week.

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