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Russia Widens Sanctions Against Ukraine

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Russia has expanded its list of sanctions against Ukraine to 245 figures and companies whose assets will be frozen in Russia.

Russian-Ukrainian ties have deteriorated since Moscow's annexation of the Crimean peninsula in 2014 and its support of breakaway republics in eastern Ukraine. A subject of Western and Ukrainian punitive measures itself, Russia levied sweeping sanctions on 322 Ukrainian nationals 68 businesses in November.

Tuesday's widened list includes seven organizations, including two defense enterprises, a major power-generating company, three freight and logistics firms, as well as a state import-export bank and an insurance company.

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The measures take immediate effect but can be canceled if Ukraine revokes its sanctions against Russian nationals and companies, according to President Vladimir Putin's decree issued in October.

Ukrainian lawmakers who were added to Russia's sanctions list, however, took the news in stride.

"I'm relieved, I can now look my friends in the eyes," Oleksandr Chernenko, a member of President Petro Poroshenko's party, wrote on Facebook.

Earlier this summer, Putin extended an embargo on the import of certain food products from Ukraine until the end of 2019. Ukraine extended sanctions last June against Russian companies and individuals, including lawmakers and top officials, on the back of new sanctions imposed by the U.S. government against Moscow.

Russia's expanded Ukrainian sanctions come at a time of heightened tensions between the Kremlin and the West over Moscow's seizure on Nov. 25 of three Ukrainian vessels and their crews.

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