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Majority of Russians Support Donbass Breaking Away From Ukraine, Survey Says

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Poster inscription: freedom for Donbass **Moskva News Agency**

A majority of Russians say they want two seperatist-led republics in eastern Ukraine to break away from the country, according to a recent poll conducted by the independent Levada Center pollster.

The Donetsk and Luhansk regions, collectively known as the Donbass, have existed as de facto states in eastern Ukraine since conflict broke out there between Russia-backed separatists and Ukrainian forces in 2014. More than 13,000 people have been killed in the war, and the sides regularly accuse each other of violating an internationally brokered ceasefire.

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Twenty-nine percent of Russians say they would like to see the Donbass become an

independent state, according to the Levada poll published Tuesday, while another 27 percent say they would prefer for the breakaway Ukrainian region to join Russia.

Another 17 percent of respondents said the Donbass should remain part of Ukraine but be given greater independence from Kiev, while 14 percent said it should remain part of Ukraine with the same conditions as it has now.

The last time the poll was conducted in 2017, 37 percent of respondents said they wanted independence for eastern Ukraine, while 21 percent said they wanted for the region to join Russia.

Newly elected Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has said that regaining control over the Donbass was a priority for his administration. The head of the seperatist administration of Donetsk in April said that eastern Ukraine "must return to its homeland" of Russia.

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