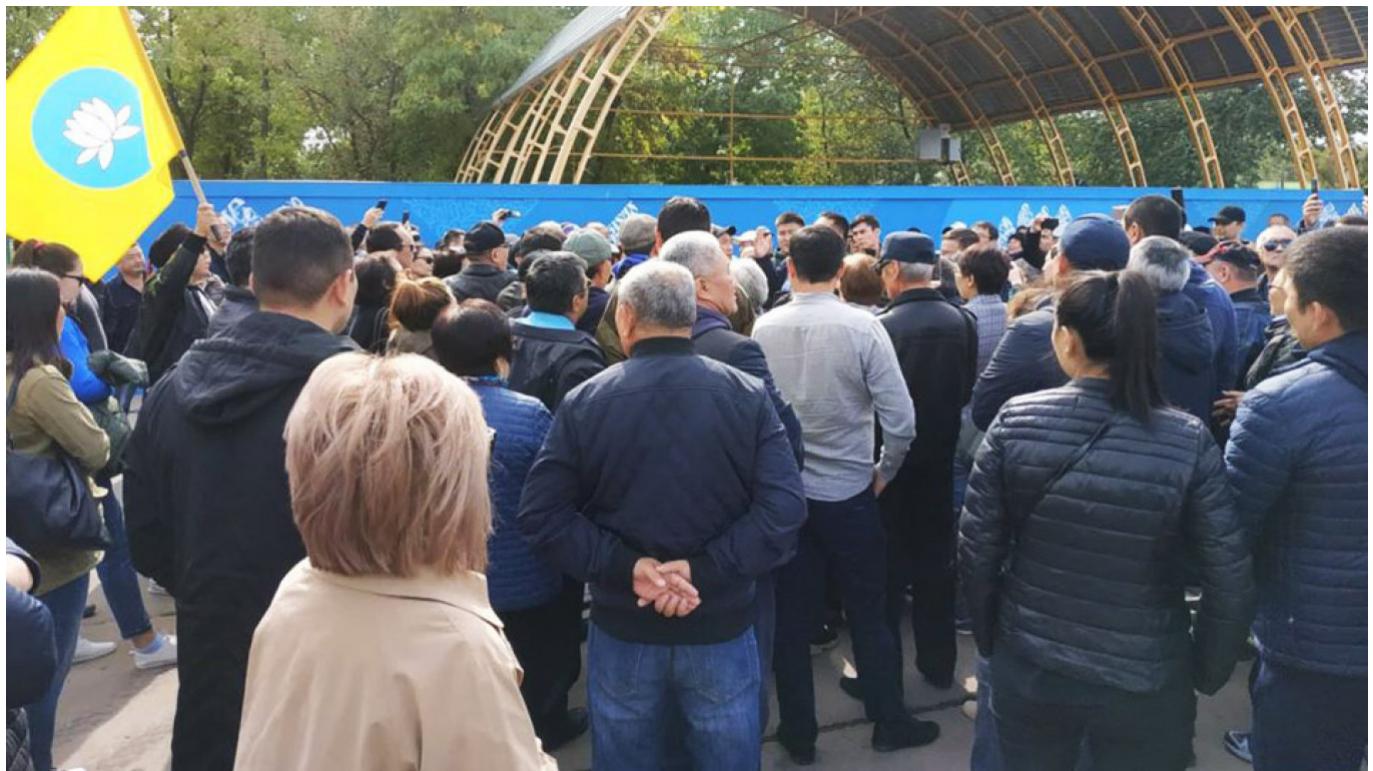


Russian Town Rallies Against New Mayor From Rebel-Held Eastern Ukraine

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Protesters in Russia's Buddhist republic of Kalmykia took to the streets against the appointment as mayor of a one-time leader of separatist-held eastern Ukraine.

Dmitry Trapeznikov, 38, briefly [led](#) the self-proclaimed Donetsk people's republic in war-torn eastern Ukraine after his predecessor was assassinated last year. On Thursday, the Kalmyk governor [announced](#) that he appointed Trapeznikov as the acting head of the regional administrative center of Elista, sparking [protests](#) over the weekend.

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Around 300 people gathered again in central Elista on Tuesday after authorities ignored their [demand](#) to fire Trapeznikov, [Interfax reported](#).

“Trapeznikov is not a native of Kalmykia, he's not even a citizen of Russia. He's an outsider,”

activist Batyr Boromangnayev was quoted as saying.

Activists had earlier sent a complaint to Russia's top prosecutor [alleging violations](#) of national and local municipal service laws.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Monday [called](#) Trapeznikov's appointment "exclusively the prerogative of the regional head."

Batu Khasikov, a champion kickboxer and the Putin-appointed governor of the republic of Kalmykia, [called](#) Trapeznikov's brief tenure at the helm of separatist-led Donetsk "the best school for an anti-crisis manager."

Relations between Ukraine and Russia have been rife with tension since protesters in Kiev ousted their Kremlin-backed president in 2014. Russia went on to annex Crimea and foment a conflict in Ukraine's Donbass region that has killed more than 13,000 people.

Trapeznikov [joined](#) pro-Russian rebels in the Donbass after managing Ukrainian billionaire Rinat Akhmetov's Shakhtar Donetsk football club.

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