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‘Crimea Is Lost,’ Pompeo Reportedly Tells Ukraine

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U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, pictured with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, recently visited Ukraine and other post-Soviet countries. **Efrem Lukatsky / AP / TASS**

Update: According to a journalist who spoke to prominent Ukrainian anti-corruption worker Yelena Tregub, the NV news website misquoted Pompeo. "When the international community sees Crimea as lost, it’s important to keep the issue and fate of Crimean Tatars in public eye and the U.S. plays a role in this," BuzzFeed journalist Christopher Miller quoted Tregub as recounting Pompeo's statement.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has allegedly said that Ukraine has lost Crimea to Russia forever, according to a closed-door meeting participant’s account provided to Ukrainian media.

Pompeo reportedly made the remarks Friday at talks with Ukrainian civil society members during his recent visit to Ukraine and other post-Soviet countries. Ukraine's relations with Russia collapsed after Moscow seized the Black Sea peninsula and a war between pro-Russian rebels and Kiev broke out in eastern Ukraine in 2014.

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“He said that Crimea is lost,” Yelena Trehub, the head of Ukraine’s nongovernmental anti-corruption watchdog, told the NV news magazine Tuesday.

“World players are well aware that Crimea is lost,” Trehub recounted Pompeo’s words to Crimean activist Emina Dzhaparova. “Russia is not a country from which you can take something away.”

The United States and Western countries have imposed economic sanctions on Russia over Crimea, including a fresh round last week after the peninsula’s 2019 election and the introduction of direct railway service to mainland Russia.

The Kremlin has maintained that the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine was a “closed issue” for Russia.

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