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First Diplomatic Mission to Open in Crimea Since Annexation – TASS

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Alexander Manzyuk / TASS

The first foreign diplomatic mission will open in sanctions-hit Crimea six years after Russia annexed the Black Sea peninsula from Ukraine and incurred international sanctions, Russian state media reported Tuesday.

The consulate will belong to the Central American nation of Nicaragua, which had named sanctioned Russian naval officer Oleg Belaventsev as its honorary consul in Crimea this summer. Ukraine urged Nicaragua to reverse the appointment and asked its SBU security service for targeted sanctions in response.

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"An honorary consulate of Nicaragua is planned to open in Crimea," Georgy Muradov, Russian President Vladimir Putin's envoy in Crimea, told the state-run TASS news agency.

“This is the opening of the first foreign consulate in the region since 2014,” Muradov added, playing up Nicaragua’s education ties with Crimea.

He did not say when or in which Crimean city the Nicaraguan consulate is expected to open its doors.

TASS reported that Nicaraguan Ambassador Alba Azucena Torres has visited Crimea at the invitation of its Moscow-backed leader Sergei Aksyonov ahead of the honorary consulate’s opening.

The international community considers Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 to be illegal, with the U.S. and other Western countries placing sanctions on Russia and banning their businesses from operating on the peninsula.

Moscow defends the annexation as the reunification of Crimea with its historical homeland.

The United States sanctioned senior Nicaraguan officials and a financial institution last month in the Trump administration’s latest push to pressure the leftist government it accuses of concentrating power in the hands of President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo.

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