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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

January 10, 2022



Ukrainian soldiers walks at the line of separation from pro-Russian rebels near Katerinivka, Donetsk region, Ukraine. **Andriy Dubchak / AP / TASS**

Security talks

A top Russian official said he had a "difficult" conversation with his U.S. counterpart on Sunday as preliminary talks on Ukraine got underway amid fears of a Russian invasion of its pro-Western neighbor.

The United States and Russia had set firm lines ahead of the high-stakes security talks on Ukraine, with Washington warning of the risk of confrontation and Moscow ruling out concessions. A full day of talks was to follow Monday.

Kazakhstan unrest

Russia has evacuated nearly 1,500 of its nationals from Kazakhstan, said Moscow's Defense Ministry, which leads a regional military alliance that has been deployed to quell anti-

government protests in the ex-Soviet Central Asian republic.

Kazakhstan's interior ministry said almost 8,000 people have been detained following a week of unrest. Its information ministry initially reported — before retracting its statement — that 164 people had died across the country during the violence.

Trading barbs

The U.S. and Russia traded barbs over the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization's (CSTO) deployment to Kazakhstan, whose "peacekeeping" mission authorities expect will wrap up in one week.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said "one lesson of recent history is that once Russians are in your house, it's sometimes very difficult to get them to leave."

Russia's Foreign Ministry hit back with references to past U.S. invasions of other countries, saying "when Americans are in your house, it can be difficult to stay alive, not being robbed or raped."

'Gateway to Hell'

Turkmenistan's strongman leader has ordered experts to find a way to finally extinguish a massive five-decade old fire in a giant natural gas crater in the Central Asian country, dubbed the "Gateway to Hell."

Citing environmental and economic concerns, President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov appeared on state television Saturday telling officials to put out the flames at the Darvaza gas crater in the middle of the vast Karakum desert.

Orthodox Christmas

Orthodox Christians observed Christmas on Friday, Jan. 7, with Patriarch Kirill leading the Russian Orthodox Church's main midnight service at Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow.

President Vladimir Putin attended a service at the Church of the Image of the Savior Made Without Hands in Novo-Ogaryovo, his residence outside Moscow where he has spent much of his time since the start of the pandemic.

Embed:

> Путин посетил рождественскую службу в храме в Ново—Огарево. В этом году глава государства в праздник Рождества остался в своей подмосковной резиденции — а вот в прошлом году он встречал его в Новгородской области. pic.twitter.com/DO0qxWsrok
>
> — Кремлевский пул РИА (@Kremlinpool_RIA) January 6, 2022

AFP contributed reporting.

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