

Russian Lawmakers to Decide on Recognizing Ukraine Separatist 'Republics'

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Russian State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin. duma.gov.ru

Russian lawmakers have scheduled a hearing next week on whether to recognize the independence of two pro-Russian separatist regions of Ukraine, Russia's parliament speaker [said](#) Friday as pro-Kremlin lawmakers suggested the move would trigger full-scale war between Moscow and Kyiv.

Russia's Communist Party submitted a [resolution](#) this week calling on President Vladimir Putin to formally recognize the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LNR).

Ukraine has been at war with the pro-Russian breakaway regions known collectively as the Donbass since 2014, when Moscow also annexed Crimea. Tensions flared again in recent months over Western fears that Russian troops massed near the Ukrainian border could invade the country, a claim that the Kremlin denies while seeking to extract security

concessions from the United States and NATO.

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Vyacheslav Volodin, speaker of Russia's lower house of parliament, the State Duma, said he will consult with party leaders next week to discuss the initiative recognizing Ukraine's breakaway regions.

"Following the results, we must consider the issue at the Council of the State Duma," he wrote on the Telegram messaging app, noting that major party leaders had already voiced support for the Communists' proposal.

"One thing is absolutely obvious: we need to seek solutions to ensure the safety of our citizens and compatriots in the DNR and LNR," Volodin said.

Putin in 2019 offered citizenship to Donbass residents through a simplified procedure of issuing Russian passports. More than half a million Russian passports have been granted to Donbass residents as of mid-2021.

The Kremlin said Friday that it welcomed a legislative review of the Communist Party's proposal to recognize the pro-Russian regions in eastern Ukraine. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov cautioned, however, that the issue remains "sensitive" and that "it's very important to avoid any steps that could provoke an increase in tensions."

Pro-Kremlin United Russia party member Alexander Borodai said he expects the Russian military to go to war with Ukraine if Moscow recognizes the Donbass' independence.

"A war will become a direct necessity," Reuters [quoted](#) Borodai, a former Donetsk prime minister, as saying. "Russia would have to take on some security responsibilities."

Kyiv's war against the pro-Russian separatists has claimed over 13,000 lives.

Western countries have accused Russia of supplying the separatists with troops, arms and other assistance, claims that Moscow denies.

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