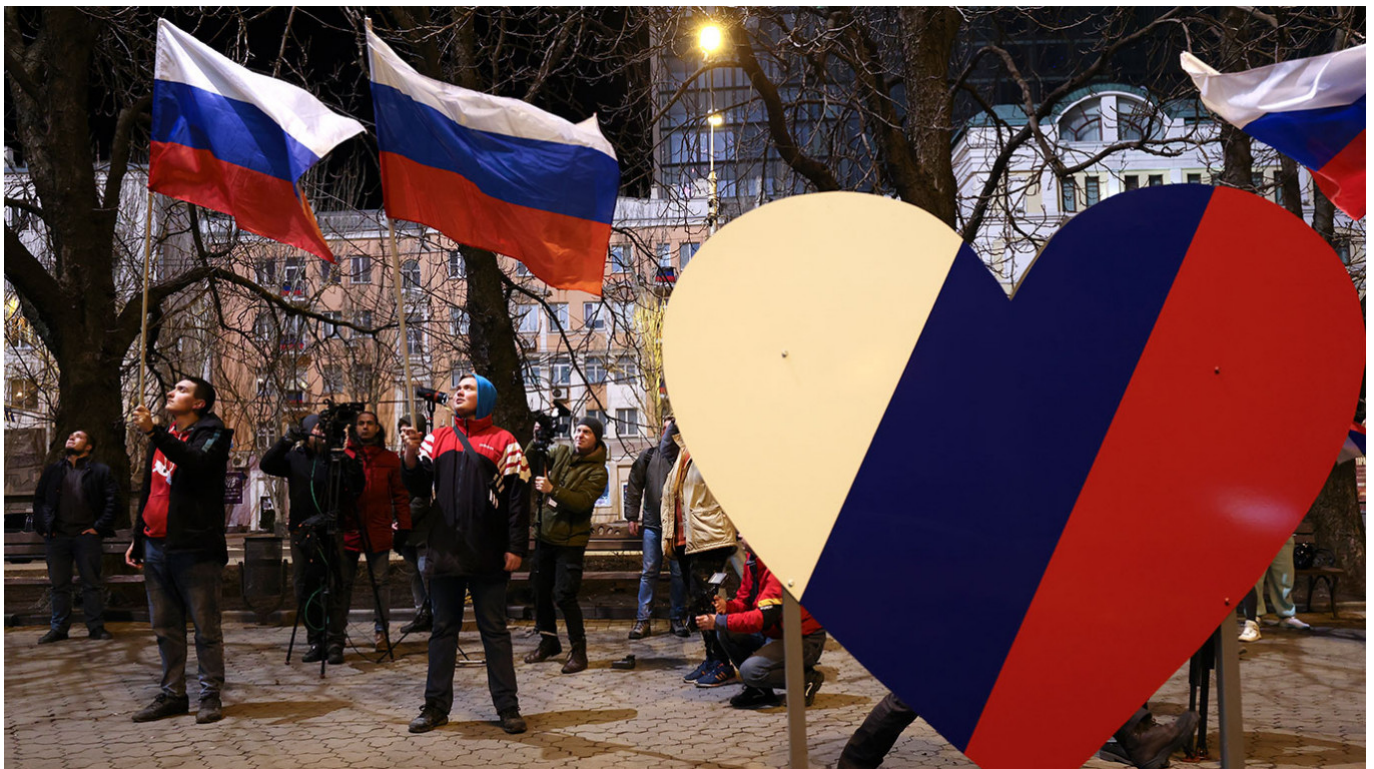


Global Reactions to Russia's Recognition of East Ukraine Separatists

February 22, 2022



Donetsk residents celebrate Russia's recognition of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. **Alexander Ryumin / TASS**

Western powers reacted swiftly to Monday's decision by Russian President Vladimir Putin to recognize the independence of the two self-proclaimed republics in eastern Ukraine, condemning Moscow and calling for sanctions — while Russian officials and Russian allies either favored the move or voiced concerns over the rising tensions.

Here is a summary of the responses so far:

Russian reactions

[Vyacheslav Volodin, chairman of Russia's lower house of parliament, the State Duma:](#)

“The recognition of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics' independence and the ratification of treaties on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance should stop the slaughter, the death of our citizens and compatriots living there.”

“As for unfriendly decisions and sanctions, they’ll be adopted anyway, just as they were earlier without any reasons or even pretexts. The United States and its satellite allies don’t need a strong Russia and they’ll do everything to slow down our country’s development.”

[Andrei Klimov, deputy chairman of the international committee in Russia's upper-house Federation Council:](#)

“[The recognition treaties] are submitted to both chambers of the Federal Assembly [Russia’s parliament] for ratification. We’ll consider this issue as part of the ratification procedures [on Tuesday].”

“We’re talking, of course, about those territories that are within the borders established today. Everything else is beyond the scope of legal actions.”

[Vasily Nebenzya, Russian Ambassador to the United Nations:](#)

“We’re still open to a diplomatic solution but we not longer intend to allow a new bloodbath in the [eastern Ukraine territories known as] Donbas.”

“We see that many colleagues want to declare the Minsk agreements dead. But that’s not the case and Kyiv is still bound to fulfill them.”

“The LPR and DPR had already declared independence at the time the Minsk agreements were signed [in 2015]. The fact that Russia has recognized it today does not change the composition of the parties to the Minsk agreements in any way, since Russia is not one. We have repeatedly stated this and, thus, nothing has changed in this regard.”

[Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov:](#)

“Our country was left with no other choice. Hundreds of thousands of Russians live in Donetsk and Luhansk, and Russia has never abandoned its own.”

“The peoples of the DPR and LPR can finally defend their rights in the international arena, fight for peace and order on their land.”

[Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny:](#)

“These Putin dotards don't even have an ideology, only constant and outright lies. They don't even bother to make their casus belli have the slightest credibility.”

[They] need one thing: diverting the attention of the people of Russia from real problems — the development of the economy, rising prices, reigning lawlessness — and diverting it to "imperial hysteria.”

Russian allies' responses:

[Belarusian foreign ministry:](#)

“We view the Russian side's decision to recognize the independence of the Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics with respect and understanding.”

Moving forward, “the Belarusian side intends to proceed from the principles of a conscientious attitude of all parties to the fulfillment of international obligations, the strategic alliance with fraternal Russia, and to also take into account the further development of the situation.”

Kazakhstan’s Foreign Minister Mukhtar Tileuberdi:

“Kazakhstan’s official position is under development, the Kazakh security council will be held in the coming hours, where we’ll finally adopt it.”

“But I must assure you that the question of Kazakhstan recognizing the Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics isn’t on the agenda.”

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic:

“Everything we knew yesterday no longer exists today... This is probably the most difficult situation for all our contemporaries, our parents, for us and our children... This de facto and substantially changes the world order.”

“This is the severity of our position: Serbia is on the European path, Serbia has always supported the integrity of Ukraine, and on the third side, there are 85% of citizens who, no matter what happens, no matter how it happens, will be on the side of Russia.”

Vucic said there are fears that the Ukraine crisis “could spread in other parts of Europe and the world, especially on the Western Balkans.”

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega:

“I’m sure that if a referendum is held there, as was done in Crimea, people will vote for their regions to be included in Russia.”

“This is a Russian population and it’s not subject to the dictates of NATO, the EU and the U.S.”

India

India’s ambassador to the United Nations urged all sides to show “restraint” in the face of rising tensions.

“The immediate priority is de-escalation of tensions, taking into account the legitimate security interests of all countries and aimed towards securing long-term peace and stability in the region and beyond,” T.S. Tirumurti said.

China

Beijing — one of Russia’s closest allies — did not take sides, instead calling for all parties to “avoid any action that may fuel tensions.”

“The current situation in Ukraine is a result of many complex factors,” China’s UN ambassador Zhang Jun told the UN security council.

Western and global reactions

Move 'won't go unanswered': Biden, Macron, Scholz

The leaders of France, Germany and the United States condemned Putin's move as a "clear breach" of the Minsk peace agreements.

French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and US President Joe Biden agreed that "this step will not go unanswered," the German chancellery said in a statement published following their conversation.

United States

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken tweeted that Putin's decision required "a swift and firm response, and we will take appropriate steps in coordination with partners."

The United States announced financial sanctions against the rebel territories freshly recognized by Russia in eastern Ukraine and warned that more were ready if necessary.

United Nations

UN chief Antonio Guterres said Russia's decision amounted to "a violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and inconsistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said in a statement that "Any significant escalation in military action creates a heightened risk of serious human rights violations as well as violations of international humanitarian law."

She added that "at this critical juncture, the priority, above all, must be to prevent a further escalation, and to prevent civilian casualties, displacement and destruction of civilian infrastructure."

France

French President Emmanuel Macron, who was still pressing for a diplomatic settlement earlier Monday, called for targeted European Union sanctions against Moscow.

"He is demanding an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council as well as the adoption of targeted European sanctions," said a statement from his office.

United Kingdom

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson denounced Putin's decision as "a flagrant violation of the sovereignty and integrity of the Ukraine."

A "very robust package of sanctions" would be triggered "with the first toecap of a Russian incursion or Russian invasion," he added.

Germany

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said that Moscow was breaking the Minsk peace agreements that it signed in 2014.

"With its decision, Russia is breaking all its promises to the world community," she said.

Italy

Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi on Tuesday attacked Russia's recognition of two Ukraine rebel republics and warned that sanctions by the EU were underway.

"This is an unacceptable violation of Ukraine's democratic sovereignty and territorial integrity," said Draghi as he addressed the Council of State, which oversees administration in Italy.

"I am in constant contact with allies to find a peaceful solution to the crisis and avoid a war in the heart of Europe," he said. "The path of dialogue remains essential, but we are already defining within the European Union measures and sanctions against Russia."

NATO

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said Putin's decision "further undermines Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, erodes efforts towards a resolution of the conflict, and violates the Minsk Agreements, to which Russia is a party.

"Moscow continues to fuel the conflict in eastern Ukraine by providing financial and military support to the separatists. It is also trying to stage a pretext to invade Ukraine once again," he added.

European Union

Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel, the European Union's two most senior figures, posted identical statements on Twitter.

Condemning Putin's move as "a blatant violation of international law," they added: "The EU and its partners will react with unity, firmness and with determination in solidarity with Ukraine."

Romania

Romania's foreign ministry tells all its nationals in Ukraine to "leave the country immediately!"

Japan

Japan's prime minister Fumio Kishida said that Russia's actions violated "Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and cannot be tolerated."

"If an invasion occurs, we will coordinate a strong response, including sanctions, coordinating with the G7 and the international community while closely monitoring the situation," he said.

Australia

Australian prime minister Scott Morrison slammed as “nonsense” Putin’s claims that the troops being sent into eastern Ukraine were peacekeepers.

“We cannot have threats of violence being used to seek to advantage nation’s positions over others,” he said.

“That is not a peaceful world order that would be achieving that. And so it’s important that like-minded countries who denounce this sort of behavior do stick together.”

AFP contributed reporting.

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