

Russia Establishes Diplomatic Ties with Ukraine's Separatist Regions

By [AFP](#)

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Russia recognized the breakaway the Donetsk People's Republic and Lugansk People's Republic earlier this week in a move strongly criticized by the West. **Alexander Kravchenko / TASS**

Russia on Tuesday said it had established diplomatic relations with Ukraine's separatist-controlled regions recognized by President Vladimir Putin as independent this week.

"An agreement was drawn up on the establishment from that date (Feb. 22) of diplomatic relations between the Russian Federation and the Donetsk People's Republic, as well as the Russian Federation and Lugansk People's Republic at the level of embassies," the Foreign Ministry in Moscow said.

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Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has sent congratulations to his counterparts in the

Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic, the ministry said in a statement.

"The Russian side is aiming for the comprehensive development of cooperation with the DPR and LPR, including through the foreign ministries in the interests of the citizens of our countries, strengthening peace, regional stability and security," the statement added.

Earlier Tuesday Russian lawmakers gave Putin the green light to deploy forces abroad, paving the way for the Russian leader to send troops into Ukraine despite a fierce global backlash.

The unanimous approval by Russia's upper house, the Federation Council, allows Putin to deploy "peacekeepers" to the two breakaway Ukrainian regions now recognized by Moscow as independent, and potentially into other parts of Ukraine.

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