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Annexed Crimea Announces End of Ukrainian Blockade

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A train running between Moscow and Simferopol is seen at the main railway station in Simferopol, Crimea. **Sergei Malgavko/TASS**

Officials in Russian-controlled Crimea said Thursday they have ended an eight-year Ukrainian blockade of the peninsula and begun restoring traffic via formerly Ukraine-held territory.

Ukraine suspended train and bus services to Crimea and imposed a blockade on freight shipments in the months after Russia seized it from Kyiv in 2014.

"The transportation blockade of Crimea imposed by Ukrainian nationalists eight years ago is a thing of the past," Crimean official Oleg Kryuchkov told Russia's state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

"The process of restoring freight and passenger service has begun," added Kryuchkov, an information policy adviser to Crimea's pro-Moscow governor.

Russia's military took control of large parts of southern Ukraine's shortly after the start of the invasion, creating a land corridor to Crimea.

Moscow has installed new local governments in the southern Ukrainian cities its troops have seized from Kyiv, and is apparently preparing to integrate the regions into Russia.

The Russian military has organized press tours in captured cities and state media has published footage of Russian National Guard troops patroling their streets.

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