

Russian Banks to Open Branches in Ukraine's Occupied Kherson Region

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A man riding a bicycle past a poster reading "Great Patriotic War 1941-1945" in Kherson, Ukraine. **Sergei Ilnitsky / EPA / TASS**

A Russian bank is set to open a branch in Ukraine's occupied Kherson region this week, an official in the region's Moscow-appointed administration [announced](#) Tuesday.

"I think in the near future, a month or a month and a half, people will be able to open accounts and try to pay via the internet," said Kirill Stremousov, deputy head of the Kherson region's "military-civilian" administration, without specifying which Russian bank will be opening.

"Ukrainian banks will no longer work due to the disconnection of communications from the Ukrainian side," Stremousov told reporters during a visit to the Russia-annexed Crimean peninsula.

Stremousov added that more Russian banks could open branches in Kherson in the near future.

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The Kherson region of southern Ukraine has seen a gradual “Russification” since Russia’s forces took control in March, prompting speculation that its Moscow-installed authorities could stage a referendum to become part of Russia.

The region started transitioning to the Russian ruble last month, and Russian [television channels](#) and cellphone signals have replaced Ukrainian ones.

Russia has also [simplified](#) the process of obtaining a Russian passport for residents of captured Ukrainian territories.

On Monday, Stremousov [claimed](#) that the Kherson region “will soon become a full-fledged subject of the Russian Federation.”

President Vladimir Putin [vowed](#) that Russia would not occupy Ukrainian territory when he launched what he calls a “special military operation” in Ukraine on Feb. 24.

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