

Russia Ruling Party Proposes Nov. 4 Annexation Votes For Occupied Ukraine

By [AFP](#)

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A pontoon ferry operating near Kherson in Russia-occupied Ukraine. **TASS**

President Vladimir Putin's ruling United Russia party on Wednesday proposed holding referendums on Nov. 4 to annex territories taken by Moscow's forces in Ukraine.

"It would be right and symbolic" to hold the votes on Nov. 4, Russia's Day of National Unity, party secretary general Andrey Turchak said on its website.

After the votes, he said, "Donetsk, Luhansk and many other Russian cities will finally return to their home port. And the Russian world, now divided by formal borders, will regain its integrity."

"We will prepare for this precise date... even if we are ready for this referendum to take place right now," a senior pro-Russian official in the Kherson region, Kirill Stremousov, told Russian news agency TASS following the announcement.

Putin recognised the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of eastern Ukraine as independent days before launching Russia's military offensive on February 24.

The Russian army has since taken control of several southern areas of Ukraine including Kherson.

Moscow-installed authorities have for several weeks been discussing referendum plans to bring the occupied territories into Russia, as happened with the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Moscow is also pressing ahead with a campaign to bring the territories closer to Russia, for example by giving out Russian passports to local residents.

On Monday, Stremousov had hinted at delays in referendum plans amid a Ukrainian counter-offensive to retake Kherson.

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