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Occupied Ukrainian Regions Could Form Single Russian District Upon Annexation – Vedomosti

September 27, 2022



A man in the Donetsk People's Republic carries ballots during the separatist region's referendum on becoming part of Russia. **Yegor Aleyev / TASS**

Four Russian-occupied Ukrainian regions and annexed Crimea could become a single Russian district following referendums denounced as a sham by Kyiv and its Western allies, the Vedomosti business daily reported Tuesday.

The Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the east and Kherson and Zaporizhzhia in the south are wrapping up five days of voting to become parts of Russia. Its results, which the United States and European governments have refused to recognize in advance, could be announced Tuesday evening.

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The four regions, along with Crimea, would be formed into Russia's ninth federal district, Vedomosti reported, citing an unnamed Russian senator and a source close to the Crimean administration.

Russian troops have only been able to partially control these four territories seven months into its war in Ukraine.

Crimea, which most of the international community recognizes as Ukrainian territory, is by Moscow considered part of Russia's Southern Federal District.

Sergei Tsekov, Russia's senator from Crimea, later told state media that he has "no doubt" about the creation of a new federal district comprising annexed Ukrainian territories.

"But there are different options as to its name," Tsekov told the RIA Novosti news agency.

Citing two unnamed sources close to the Kremlin and one in Russia's defense industry, Vedomosti reported that nationalist politician and avid supporter of Russia's Ukraine offensive, Dmitry Rogozin, could become President Vladimir Putin's envoy in the new district.

Rogozin, who had served as Putin's deputy prime minister and envoy to NATO before being named head of Russia's space agency, was dismissed from his role as Roscosmos chief in July.

"He will have a new job in due time," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters at the time. He did not comment on Rogozin's expected appointment Tuesday.

Vedomosti cited a Russian space agency source saying Tuesday that Rogozin would welcome his new post.

The Kremlin declined to comment on Vedomosti's report Tuesday, with spokesman Dmitry Peskov telling reporters "we never announce decrees of that nature."

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