

Pro-Russian Officials in Ukraine Claim Victory in Annexation Votes

By [AFP](#)

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Zaporizhzhia Region Central Election Commission Chair Galina Danilchenko announces the results of a Zaporizhzhia Region referendum on joining Russia at the Shevchenko Palace of Culture **TASS**

Officials in four Moscow-occupied regions of Ukraine on Tuesday claimed victory in referendums for a merger with Russia amid international condemnation of sham ballots.

The local poll body in the southern Zaporizhzhia region said 93.11 percent of voters opted for Russian annexation after all ballots were counted.

It said however that this was a preliminary result.

In Kherson, also in the south, authorities said 87.05 percent of voters opted for Russian annexation after a vote count was completed.

In the eastern Luhansk region controlled by pro-Russia separatists, 98.42 percent opted for annexation by Russia, Russian news agencies said, citing local authorities.

"It is clear" that Luhansk will return to the Russian fold, Leonid Pasechnik, the leader of the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic, said on Telegram.

In the Donetsk region in eastern Ukraine, the poll body said 99.23 percent of voters opted for Russian annexation after all ballots were counted, according to news agencies.

Denis Pushilin, the Kremlin-backed separatist leader in Donetsk, said: "We have all wanted this for a very long time", according to Russia's state-run news agency RIA Novosti.

He welcomed what he called the "colossal" result, saying: "We are reuniting with our great homeland, with great Russia".

The United Nations meanwhile said it was "committed" to Ukraine's "territorial integrity" within "recognised" borders.

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