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# Russia to Allow 'Extremist' Maps Showing Pre-Occupation Ukraine – Reports

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**Alexander Demianchuk / TASS**

Russia's government has introduced legislative changes that would not punish mapmakers for displaying occupied territories as Ukrainian regions before their capture by Russian forces, the Vedomosti business daily reported Tuesday.

Russia's lower house of parliament passed the original draft bill in December imposing up to 15 days of jail or fines of up to 1 million rubles ($14,000) for "extremist" maps that "dispute Russia's territorial integrity."

Government amendments to the bill now recognize extremism only in maps that "deliberately distort information about the Russian state border at the time of their creation," according to Vedomosti.

Lawmakers are anticipated to vote on the bill in its second of three readings in June.

The amended bill will become law once it advances through both chambers of the Russian parliament and receives President Vladimir Putin's signature.

**Related article**: Russian Maps Featuring Occupied Ukraine Territories Go on Sale in Moscow

Russian forces have only partially occupied the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions of eastern and southern Ukraine since invading the country in February 2022.

Putin claimed to have annexed the four regions in their entirety last fall following widely disputed referendums.

Before invading Ukraine, Putin recognized the independence of the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk "people's republics" within borders that rebel fighters did not have complete control over.

The Kremlin has not specified whether Russia would formally annex territory its forces do not fully control.

According to Vedomosti, the government's legislative commission approved the Justice Ministry's changes to soften the original bill on Monday.

The ministry believes, it added, that maps published before Moscow annexed the four partially-occupied Ukrainian territories last fall should not fall under the proposed rules.

Still, experts interviewed by the publication point out that it is still unclear whether the punishments would apply to "extremist" maps published before the proposed bill comes into force.

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