

《关于克里米亚公投入俄的英文报道》

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Lawmakers in Crimea called a March 16 referendum on whether to break away from Ukraine and join Russia instead as Crimea's parliament voted to do so on Thursday.

"This is our response to the disorder and lawlessness in Kiev," said Sergei Shuvainikov, a member of the local Crimean legislature. "We will decide our future ourselves."

The 100-seat parliament in Crimea, which enjoys a degree of autonomy under current Ukrainian law, voted 78-0, with eight abstentions in favor of holding the referendum for joining Russia. Local voters will also be given the choice of deciding to remain part of Ukraine, but with enhanced local powers.

There was no immediate response from the Ukrainian central government on the vote. On Wednesday, Ukraine's prime minister told The Associated Press that Crimea would remain part of Ukraine.

Russian President Vladimir Putin held a briefing session with members of Russia's Security Council on Thursday, presidential spokesperson Dmitry Peskov reported.

The representative said that during the session, "the situation around Ukraine was discussed, in particular, regarding the resolution of Crimea's Supreme Council adopted today", according to ITAR-TASS News Agency.

In Moscow, a prominent member of Russia's Parliament, Sergei Mironov, said he has introduced a bill to simplify the procedure for Crimea to join Russia and it could be passed as soon as next week, Tass reported.

The Obama administration slapped new visa restrictions on Thursday on pro-Russian opponents of the new Ukraine government in Kiev and cleared the way for financial sanctions.

The new restrictions targeted an unspecified and unidentified number of people and entities that the Obama administration accused of threatening Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial borders.

On Tuesday, Putin said Russia had no intention of annexing Crimea, while insisting its residents have the right to determine the region's status in a referendum.

A referendum had previously been scheduled in Crimea on March 30, but the question to be put to voters was on whether their region should enjoy "state autonomy" within Ukraine.

Earlier, Crimea's new leader said pro-Russian forces numbering more than 11,000 now control all access to the peninsula in the Black Sea and have blockaded all military bases that have not yet surrendered.

The West has joined the new Ukrainian leadership in Kiev in demanding that Russia pull its forces back from Crimea, but little progress was reported after a flurry of diplomatic activity in Paris on Wednesday involving US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Russia will face sanctions unless it withdraws its troops or engages in credible talks to defuse the situation, European leaders said on Thursday.

"We need to send a very clear message to the Russian government that what has happened is unacceptable and should have consequences," British Prime Minister David Cameron said as he arrived at an emergency meeting of the bloc's 28 leaders in Brussels.

