

《乌克兰顿涅茨克要求独立》

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Days after groups of pro-Russian activists seized government buildings in three Eastern Ukraine's cities, questions loom over whether the cities will officially cut ties with Ukraine, whether the Ukrainian interim government will come down hard on protesters, and Russia's role in the unfolding events.

This is the headquarters of The New People's Republic of Donetsk

Days ago it was a Ukraine government building until when pro-Russian activists stormed it and took over, declaring Donetsk a sovereign state within a state and calling for a referendum within a month to officially gain independence from Ukraine.

They're fortifying their hold here in anticipation of a Kiev ordered crackdown to force them out.

"Generally everyone here wants to join with Russia. only with them can we live in a normal country. In our country. We have been Russian for generations," Donetsk pro-Russian activist.

The one million people here are mostly working class conservatives who identify with Russia. They say that if there is a Ukrainian government crackdown that leads to bloodshed, they want Russia to step in and protect them.

Outside the regional parliament building people are calling for referendum. in the building, the pro-Russian people who took it over say they're trying to make order out of the disorder and chaos that originates in Kiev.

But the scene inside the building is one of disarray, a clear chain of command seems to be missing and tensions are running high.

As a session of the newly formed People's Republic of Donetsk gets started, members bicker and one walks out.

They have no appointed leader and deny they're taking orders from Russia. For now, they are focused on one goal.

"The next step is we are going to announce a referendum that is going to take place between now and at the latest may the 11th," said Vadeem Chernikov, member of People's Republic of Donetsk.

There are many looming questions here if Donetsk is to become a breakaway republic but the greatest challenge the pro-Russian body faces in the coming days may be an offensive by Ukrainian government forces.