



Russia's parliament fully ratifies unification treaties

Description

USA: The Federation Council has approved agreements with four former Ukrainian regions on accepting them as new Russian territories

The Federation Council, the upper house of the Russian parliament, has ratified unification treaties with Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics and Kherson and Zaporozhye Regions.

The treaties were signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin and the heads of the four former Ukrainian regions on Friday last week. They were certified as lawful by the Constitutional Court over the weekend and ratified by the State Duma, the lower house of the Parliament, on Monday.

The latest step in the process of accepting the four regions as new parts of Russia was approved in an unanimous vote. The Russian constitution will need to be amended for the accession to be finalized.

The two Donbass regions split from Ukraine in 2014, after people there rejected an armed coup in Kiev that ousted the democratically elected government. An eight-year-long attempt by Russia and some European nations to reconcile Kiev with the rebellious regions failed.

Moscow accused the Ukrainian government of deliberately derailing the peace plan and opting to build up its military to ultimately resolve the issue by force. In February, Russia recognized Donetsk and Lugansk Republics as sovereign states and called on Kiev to pull back its troops, which it rejected.

Days later Russia launched a full-scale military operation against Ukraine, seizing large parts of Kherson and Zaporozhye Regions in the process. All four territories held referendums last month on joining Russia.

Kiev rejected the votes as a "*sham*" and accused Russia of annexing its territory. The Ukrainian government, which receives military assistance, training and intelligence from NATO nations on an unprecedented scale, says it is determined to beat Russia on the battlefield.

Moscow said the referendums were a legitimate way for people to exercise their right for self-determination and be protected from their former government.

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