

# Los Angeles Times | WORLD

LOCAL U.S. WORLD BUSINESS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT HEALTH STYLE TRAVEL OPINION SHOP

IN THE NEWS: LAKERS-SPURS | MALAYSIA AIRLINES JET | UKRAINE | SXSW CRASH | CHRIS BROWN | PINKBERRY | SHARE

## Group of 7, European Union warn Russia against Crimea gambit

  Comments 0



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk hold a news conference after emergency consultations on the Ukraine crisis on Wednesday in Warsaw. (Alik Keplicz / Associated Press / March 12, 2014)

By Carol J. Williams  
March 12, 2014 | 1:35 p.m.

The leaders of Germany and Poland warned Russia on Wednesday that it has until Monday to agree to work with an international "contact group" to resolve the crisis in Ukraine's Crimea region or face immediate sanctions.

At a meeting in Warsaw, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk and German Chancellor Angela Merkel put the Kremlin on



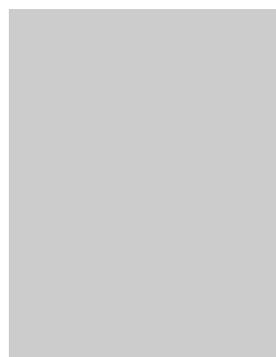
Video: Unrest in the Ukraine



 Connect

Recommended on F

adve



In Case You Mis

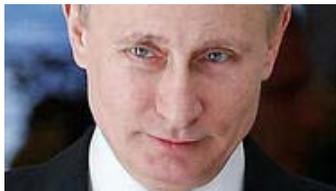




Photos: Crisis in Ukraine



Ukraine watches nervously as world powers wrestle over its future



Russia's Putin unmoved by pressure to defuse Crimea crisis



Ukraine loans stalled in Congress for reasons unrelated to aid



In Ukraine, the jobless and aimless replace the revolutionaries

[See more stories »](#)

notice that what are seen as its provocative moves aimed at annexing Crimea -- despite Moscow's disavowal -- threatened to dramatically escalate tensions throughout Europe.

European Union leaders meeting in Brussels a week ago laid out a three-stage sanctions regime that Moscow would face if it refused to negotiate an end to the armed standoff over Crimea, where Russia has deployed thousands of troops and seized Ukrainian government and military sites.

Ukraine's interim government said Wednesday that Russia has also amassed 80,000 troops along its border with Ukraine. Russian officials denied that accusation, as they have reports and video evidence of Russian forces flooding into the Crimean peninsula ahead of a controversial referendum on the region's future set for Sunday.

"We have to recognize, even though we will continue to move forward with this attempt to form a contact group, that we've made no progress," Merkel told reporters at a joint news appearance with Tusk in Warsaw.

Merkel's reminder to Russian President Vladimir Putin of severe consequences if his government persists with destabilizing moves in Ukraine followed a warning Tuesday from the Group of 7 industrialized countries that Moscow must "cease all efforts to change the status of Crimea."

Russia was admitted to the exclusive clique of powerful nations in 1998, after which the forum was referred to as the Group of 8. But the G-7 leaders have sidelined Russia in confronting its intervention in Ukraine and suspended planning for a Russian-hosted summit in June.

Sunday's referendum in Crimea -- a strategic, largely Russian-speaking area that is home to 2 million people -- asks voters whether they want to secede from Ukraine and become an independent country.

The pro-Moscow regional government installed by Russian gunmen two weeks ago had originally planned to ask voters

whether they wanted Crimea to be annexed by Russia. However, the referendum wording was revised Tuesday, apparently in an effort to shield the Kremlin from the consequences of engineering a transfer of a sovereign country's territory in breach of the U.N. Charter and other international treaties and laws.

The G-7 statement said the referendum is "a deeply flawed process which would have no moral force," and that the outcome of the vote would "have no legal effect."

Merkel and Tusk also called for Ukraine to sign the European Union association agreement that was the catalyst for a three-month rebellion against former President Viktor Yanukovich. A pliant Kremlin ally, Yanukovich unilaterally decided to reject the EU association deal in late November, proclaiming Ukraine's need to stay economically intertwined with Russia. He fled Kiev on Feb. 21 after capitulating to an EU-brokered agreement to end days of bloody violence that took scores of lives among the clashing demonstrators and police.

Putin and the Kremlin-controlled Russian media have cast the uprising against Yanukovich as an unconstitutional overthrow of an elected leader done at the urging of meddling Western states. Russia



## VIDEO

continues to describe the political opponents of Yanukovich now running the Ukrainian government as fascists and ultranationalists and contends the troop deployments in Crimea represent local efforts to protect Ukraine's Russian minority and key military installations.

Russia bases its Black Sea fleet on leased territory in the Crimean port of Sevastopol.

Ethnic Russians comprise about 17% of Ukraine's 46 million population, and about one in four claim Russian as their mother tongue. Ethnic Russians are concentrated in the eastern and southern areas of Ukraine. In Crimea, which was part of Russia for centuries before 1954, they are a majority.

**ALSO:**

[Marchers, mayors defy Venezuelan government](#)

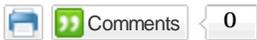
[In Ukraine, the jobless and aimless replace the revolutionaries](#)

[South Sudan ponders the road ahead after ethnic killings](#)

[carol.williams@latimes.com](mailto:carol.williams@latimes.com)

Twitter: [@cjwilliamslat](#)

Copyright © 2014, Los Angeles Times



**Times Global B**

Click on bureau location correspondents

We've upgraded our reader commenting system. [Learn more](#) about the new features.

Los Angeles Times welcomes civil dialogue about our stories; you must register with the site to participate. We filter comments for language and adherence to our Terms of Service, but not for factual accuracy. By commenting, you agree to [these legal terms](#). Please flag inappropriate comments.

Having technical problems? [Check here](#) for guidance.

## In Case You Missed It...



**Photos:** 11 amazing food maps



**Photos:** South by Southwest 2014



**Photos:** Oscar Pistorius faces murder charge



**Photos:** Remembering LAPD Officer Nicholas Lee



**Ph**  
**go**

---

[Corrections](#)

[Digital Services](#)

[Media Kit](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

---

# Los Angeles Times

[Burbank Leader](#) | [Coastline Pilot](#) | [Daily Pilot](#) | [Huntington Beach Independent](#) | [News Press](#) | [Valley Sun](#) | [KTLA](#) | [Hoy](#)  
[Baltimore Sun](#) | [Chicago Tribune](#) | [Daily Press](#) | [Hartford Courant](#) | [Los Angeles Times](#) | [Orlando Sentinel](#) | [Sun Sentinel](#) | [The Morning Call](#)  
[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [About Our Ads](#) | [Copyright 2014](#)

*A Tribune Newspaper website*