Democracy Landslide in Eastern Ukraine: Lugansk and Donetsk Declare Independence

By Stephen Lendman
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Theme: Media Disinformation

On Sunday, Donetsk and Lugansk regional referendums were held. Democracy triumphed overwhelmingly.

Almost 90% of Donetsk residents voted for self-determination. For local autonomy. For self-rule. Accounting to Central Election Commission head Roman Lyagin:

> "Counting the ballots proved to be surprisingly easy. The number of people who said 'no' was relatively small, and there appeared to be only a tiny proportion of spoiled ballots, so we managed to carry out counting quite fast."

> "The figures are as follows: 89.07 percent voted 'for' (self rule), 10.19 percent voted 'against' and 0.74 percent of ballots were rendered ineligible."

> "The region is witnessing the escalation of violence," he added. "(L)ots or armed people have come to the region. Sometimes it is impossible to say whom these people represent."

Ballot deliveries were impeded. They were "beset by the danger to the life and health of members of election commission" members.

Final Lugansk results showed 96.2% for self-rule. Election Committee deputy chairman Alexander Malykhyn announced it.

A celebratory 5-6PM Monday rally was held. Thousands participated. They did so under hazardous conditions.

They came anyway. New rules apply. Self-determination is official. Kiev putschists have no say.

Residents in both regions live under virtual war zone conditions. Fundamental rights matter more. Freedom is too precious to sacrifice. Near unanimity affirmed it.

Turnout under dangerous conditions was extraordinary. It was unexpectedly high.

In Lugansk it was 81%. In Donetsk 74.87%. Residents in some areas risked life and limb to vote.

They did so anyway. In Krasnoarmeysk, special National Guard forces and Right Sector thugs opened fire on unarmed civilians.

Two deaths were reported. Others were injured. Fascist regimes operate this way. Kiev acts

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on direct orders from Washington.

Donetsk Region People's Governor Pavel Gubarev said:

> "The referendum for us is about creating a new state paradigm." It's "everything for us. It is our independence."

> "It is formation of a new entity – The Donetsk People's Republic. But this new entity is only the first step to our forming a bigger entity of Novorossia."

He referred to 18th century Russian empire territory. In 1922, it included Southeastern Ukraine.

Slavyansk People's Mayor Vyacheslav Ponomaryov said closer ties with Russia will follow.

It's "our brotherly nation," he explained. He hopes for "full interaction…including entering (into) a Customs Union."

RT International's Paula Slier tweeted:

> "#Lugansk leader says it's probable that after independence, the rgn'll form a unit govt w/#Donetz. Acc. to him, other rgns'll follow them."

A Kremlin press service statement said:

> "We have taken note of high voter turnout despite attempts to derail the voting and we condemn the force used, including military hardware, against civilians, which lead to fatalities."

> "Moscow respects the will of the people in Donetsk and Lugansk and hopes that the practical realization of the outcome of the referendums will be carried out in a civilized manner, without resorting to violence, through dialogue between representatives of Kiev, Donetsk and Lugansk."

> "In the interests of establishing such a dialogue all mediation efforts will be welcome, including by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe."

Russia condemned the use of force, "including with the use of heavy armaments against peaceful citizens that caused human losses."

Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov said his views on what happened Sunday depend "on the strength of their results."

He'll make them known at an appropriate time. He recommended postponing Sunday's referendums.

> "(It) was difficult" for area residents to comply. "Taking into account real combat conditions, (they) had to act according to their own plan and proceed from the actual situation."

Peskov called Western accusations against Russia "absolute folly."

"Why could not the West prevent the use of armoured personnel carriers in Slavyansk and Kramatorsk and avoid the gunning down of civilians," he asked.

"They did not use their influence, and they do not give a hang while Russia is blamed for everything."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov closely followed events.

"We have taken note of high voter turnout despite attempts to derail the voting, and we condemn the force used, including military hardware, against civilians, which lead to fatalities," he said.

Russia's lower house State Duma Speaker Sergei Naryshkin said:

"The referendums show(ed) (the will of the people) to defend their rights, essentially, their wish to be free."

They believe "their rights are massively violated in the current state system."

Russian upper house Federation Council member Sergei Tsekov said Donetsk and Lugansk regions demonstrated real choice. World nations should recognize it, he added.

"Unfortunately, the self-proclaimed authorities of Ukraine did not let (both regions) hold their referendums in a calm atmosphere, but, clearly, the vote demonstrated the will of people…"

"The referendums have totally convincing results: we saw how enthusiastic people were about the referendum and how many of them came to polling stations."

"If the world unwaveringly supports democratic values and wishes peace and accord in Ukraine, it should recognize the referendums and do its best to assist Ukrainian regions and the center to sit down and agree on their future."

On Monday, EU foreign ministers met in Brussels. They discussed Sunday's referendums. They considered policy options going forward.

They include possible sanctions on 15 more Russian officials and five Crimea-based companies.

On Monday, European Council President Herman Van Rompuy visited Kiev. He came to support its coup-appointed government.

He discussed preparations for May 25 sham presidential elections. They'll be illegitimate when held. EU nations support them. So does Washington.

Western countries endorse what demands condemnation. They criticize real democracy. They deny their own people fundamental rights. They want other nations denied theirs.

On Monday, Sergey Lavrov said no new meetings on Ukraine are planned. Efforts to resolve crisis conditions so far accomplished nothing.

"I have heard statements by Ukraine's Acting Foreign Minister (Andrii) Deshchytsia and While House spokesman (Jay) Carney to the effect that the four-party format of the talks

should be preserved, but I shall say once again that, without including the regime's opponents into the direct dialogue over ways of settling the crisis, the efforts will go nowhere," he said.

"Russian channels are being blocked in Ukraine," he added. "The West is seeking to fill them with their interpretation of events."

> "But ambassadors in Moscow watch what Russian television shows and should say the truth about current events in Ukraine to their governments."

Lavrov commented on flagrant Western lies relating to Donetsk People's Republic statements he made. He hopes implementing referendum results going forward will proceed smoothly.

Washington and rogue EU partners reacted to Sunday's referendums as expected. They denounced real democracy.

They called it illegal. They might try adopting some themselves. They consider it verboten. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki lied saying:

Sunday's referendums "violate(d) international law and the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The United States will not recognize the results of these illegal referenda."

Rogue EU nations march in lockstep. Foreign policy chief Katherine Ashton's spokeswoman Maja Kocijancic lied saying:

> "The so-called referenda in…parts of Lugansk and Donetsk regions were illegal, and we do not recognize the outcome. Those who organized the referenda have no democratic legitimacy."

Hostile public statements won't change things. Donetsk and Lugansk residents spoke. They did so courageously.

They affirmed their legitimate rights. Their democratic ones everyone deserves.

They did so overwhelmingly. They reject Kiev fascists. They acted responsibly. They deserve universal support.

On Monday, Kiev troops attacked Andreevka village. It's about 100 kilometers from Slavyansk.

"There was an artillery attack," a self-defense spokesperson said. It began pre-dawn.

> "Houses have been destroyed. Cars are on fire. There are casualties, but the numbers aren't yet known."

> "The enemy started the artillery attack…using heavy mortars and howitzers. Also we have data on…using helicopters for covering operations."

RT's Paula Slier tweeted:

> "Communication between #Andreevka and #Slavyansk – as well w/other cities around it – reportedly affected. It's difficult to get info."

Repeated explosions were heard. Firing came from Karachun Mountain's TV tower vicinity.

Checkpoints were attacked. So were residential areas. Kiev tried disrupting Sunday's referendums. It failed to do so.

Assaults on self-defense forces and noncombatants continued on Monday. It bears repeating. Fascist regimes operate this way.

On Monday, the Moscow Times headlined "Russia Recognizes Outcome of Self-Rule Referendums in Eastern Ukraine," saying:

Kremlin authorities urged implementing it peacefully. People spoke. They did so overwhelmingly. Their will matters.

It bears repeating. It deserves respect. It merits universal support. It's polar opposite Washington's way.

It's the right way. It's a model for people everywhere to follow.

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His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

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