

Russia's UN Envoy Says Ukraine Crisis Talks Could Fail Over Southeast Crackdown



MOSCOW, April 14 (RIA Novosti) – Russia's ambassador to United Nations Vitaly Churkin warned the Kiev government at an ad hoc UN session Monday that the upcoming crisis talks between Ukraine, Russia, US and EU could fail if the regime cracked down on protesters in the country's southeast.

“Do you expect us to write papers for the meeting if tomorrow there is military operation going on in the southeast?” Churkin asked at the special UN Security Council session. “Should this happen, the chances of such a meeting taking place would be quite slim,” he cautioned.

Churkin bashed the West for blaming the unrest in the region, which sparked off after the regime scrapped the official status of the Russian language, entirely on Moscow.

“Some people, including those in this room, are too blind to see the actual cause of the Ukrainian crisis and keep insisting that it's all Moscow's doing. You should really quit it,” the Russian envoy said.

“Stop telling stories about a build-up of our forces on the Ukrainian border that can march all the way to La

Manche (English Channel) in a matter of hours and that we've sent in hordes of agents that are coordinating the protests in Ukraine," Churkin said.

This comes as the coup-imposed Acting President of Ukraine and ex-Speaker of Ukraine's Parliament, Oleksandr Turchynov, announced the beginning of a large-scale operation in the restive southeastern provinces, which involves the country's armed forces and possibly United Nations peacekeeping troops. According to Kiev, the federalists are to relinquish control of the seized buildings and surrender by 9 am local time.

In a telephone conversation with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, Turchynov suggested that an "anti-terrorist operation" could be conducted jointly by Ukrainian security forces and UN peacekeepers, however, such UN deployment must be approved by the organization's security council in which Russia holds veto power.

Beginning last month, protests in east Ukrainian cities have been held each weekend, with citizens refusing to accept their newly-appointed governors as legitimate, as they were installed by the government that seized power in a coup in February.

Residents of the country's east, where many are Russian speakers, fear the rise of ultranationalist forces in the country's central government and demand greater autonomy, including in issues of official language and regional government.

The rallies intensified last weekend, with protesters in Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv seizing regional government buildings. Pro-federalization activists declared creation of the People's Republic of Kharkiv and Donetsk People's Republic.

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