

Russia Doubts New Ukrainian Government's Legitimacy



Moscow, February 25 (RHC)-- Russia has questioned the legitimacy of Ukraine's new government, saying the current authorities have come to power as a result of an "armed mutiny."

"The legitimacy of a whole number of organs of power that function there raises great doubts," local news agencies quoted Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev as saying on Monday.

The Russian premier denounced the Western countries' decision to accept the Ukrainian new authorities as a mistake and an "aberration of consciousness." He also noted that Moscow was unable to accept the current leaders in the Eastern European country as a partner for talks.

"If you consider Kalashnikov-toting people in black masks who are roaming [the capital] Kiev to be the government, then it will be hard for us to work with that government," Medvedev added. Furthermore, he said, Moscow-Kiev relations will be resumed once Russia sees a "normal, modern government based on laws and the constitution of Ukraine."

Russia summoned its ambassador to Ukraine on Sunday to discuss what Moscow called the "deteriorating situation" in Kiev. Meanwhile, Russia's Economy Minister warned that if Kiev signs a partnership agreement with the European Union, Moscow will raise import duties on goods.

On February 23rd, the Ukrainian parliament ousted president Viktor Yanukovich and named Oleksandr Turchynov, the legislature's newly-elected speaker, as interim president. Ukraine has been the scene of anti-government protests since November last year, when Yanukovich refrained from signing an Association Agreement with the EU in favor of closer ties with Russia.

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