

Russian Parliament Terminates Black Sea Fleet Agreements with Ukraine



Moscow, March 31 (RHC-RIA Novosti) -- The Russian parliament approved on Monday a bill terminating a number of agreements with Ukraine over the Black Sea fleet.

"As a result of the treaty signed between Russia and the Republic of Crimea on March 18th, 2014, about Crimea's accession to Russia, the subject of the Russia-Ukraine agreements has been nullified due to factual end of legal lease by Russia of its Black Sea Fleet's facilities in Ukraine," the State Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament, said in a statement.

Under a "gas-for-fleet" deal signed in April 2010, Russia agreed to a 30% price drop for gas supplies to Ukraine in exchange for extending its lease of the naval base in Sevastopol for another 25 years.

The Duma voted unanimously to terminate three agreements signed in 1997 and the one in 2010, citing the Vienna Convention of 1969, which gives Moscow a right to cancel international agreements.

The Black Sea fleet's status would be regulated by Russian laws from now on, as the Sevastopol naval base has become Russian territory, though major Western powers refused to recognize it.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin said that Moscow would discuss legal and financial issues resulting from the agreements termination only with Ukraine's future legitimate authorities.

Karasin told the Duma: "We'll be ready to discuss these questions with Ukraine's government hopefully to be formed in a democratic, constitutional way."

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