

Reports Say Life Goes On in Donetsk



Donetsk, April 10 (Xinhua – RHC) -- Life in east Ukraine's Donetsk remains largely normal despite ongoing pro-Russian protests.

Restaurants, banks, stores and other facilities around the government headquarters which was seized by pro-Moscow demonstrators Sunday are still operating, according to Xinhua reporters at the scene.

Reporters touring the embattled state capital Wednesday saw a Russian flag flying on top of the state building surrounded by barriers made of tyres and wire, and hundreds of demonstrators shouting slogans demanding a referendum and integration into Russia, as has happened in Crimea.

The narrow corridors inside the building were in a mess -- staff were moving computers and documents outside the facilities. Government offices were moving to a new location, said a staff member, who did not reveal where.

Demonstrators were strengthening their fortifications around the state building to fend off possible "aggression," one protester said.

"People of Donetsk love peace, and we don't want any bloodshed here," the unnamed woman said.

On March 18, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Crimean leaders signed a treaty to make the southern peninsula part of Russian territory after almost 97 percent of Crimean voters backed splitting from Ukraine in a referendum.

Kiev has rejected the referendum and Crimea's integration into Russia as unconstitutional.

However, according to a poll conducted by a Donetsk college of social survey and political analysis, less than 20 percent of the Donetsk public support the occupation of the government headquarters.

The Ukraine government has ratcheted up its fight against separatism after the series of pro-Russian rallies in eastern Ukraine, including the seizure of government buildings in the cities of Donetsk, Lugansk and Kharkov.

The parliament approved a bill against separatism Tuesday, under which, those charged with violation of Ukraine's territorial supremacy could face a jail term of up to five years for a single offence and up to 10 years for repeated offenses.

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