

# *Russian President Raps Ukraine Events as a Coup*

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Moscow, March 4 (RHC)-- Russian President Vladimir Putin has denounced Ukrainian opposition's power grab as a coup, noting that Victor Yanukovich remains legal president of Ukraine. Speaking to media in a news conference at his residence outside the capital Moscow, the Russian president censured recent developments in neighboring Ukraine as unconstitutional and a coup.

Putin admitted Ukrainian people's call for change, but pointed out that illegally changing the status quo could not be encouraged and endorsed. According to Putin, Yanukovich is still Ukraine's legitimate president, even though he does not have actual power.

Russian leader stressed that there is no need to use military force in the southern region of Crimea, but that he will use Russian forces to protect civilians in Ukraine, particularly ethnic Russians in eastern and southern parts of the country.

Putin added that Russia has reserved the right to use its troops in Ukraine's Crimea region as a "last resort." He also dismissed the allegation that Russia is acting illegitimately in Ukraine, noting that even if Moscow does use force in Ukraine, it would not violate international law.

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