

Crimea vs. Quebec: The Legal Right to a Referendum on Self-Determination

By [Prof. John Ryan](#)

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There has been a great hue and cry by the USA, Ukraine and other countries about the supposed illegality of the proposed referendum by Crimea on its future political status. They indignantly proclaim that this is a violation of international law.

Amazingly, have Obama and the leaders of these other countries never heard of the situation in Canada with regard to Quebec? Quebec, as a province of Canada, has held two referenda (1980 and 1995) on the matter of independence from Canada . . . and a third referendum may be in the works in the near future.

Quebec never had to get permission from Canada's federal government to hold a referendum, and no one ever questioned the legality of Quebec's referendum.

Crimea is an autonomous region within Ukraine and seems to have the same rights as a Canadian province. So if it is perfectly legal for a province such as Quebec to hold a referendum on independence, why would it not be legal for Crimea to do the same? At no time did the USA object to Quebec holding a referendum on independence, so why the big brouhaha over Crimea? Moreover, what business would it be for the USA to have such objections – for Quebec or Crimea?

The UN charter gives people the right to self-determination and by virtue of that right they are free to determine their political status. Quebec in Canada has exercised that right, and there should be no reason why Crimea could not do the same.

John Ryan, Ph.D., Retired Professor of Geography and Senior Scholar, University of Winnipeg, Canada.

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