

Eastern Ukraine in Crisis: Clashes erupt as Kharkov protesters declare independence

By [RT](#)

Global Research, April 07, 2014

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Police have clashed with anti-coup protesters in Kharkov, in an effort to push the crowd back from the administration building. Earlier, activists in the second-largest Ukrainian city followed those in Donetsk and proclaimed a People's Republic of Kharkov

A group of protesters tried to storm the Kharkov administration building on Monday evening but were pushed back by law enforcement officers who barricaded themselves inside the building. Police were reportedly using fire-hoses and stun grenades to push the crowd back.

Protesters reportedly started several fires near the building and were also throwing Molotov cocktails in order to smoke police out from the building. According to activists at the scene, police who barricaded themselves inside the building were deployed from western Ukraine.



Eventually, a group of local police outside the administration building moved in to push protesters back. However, witnesses at the scene reported that a group of demonstrators were allowed to enter the government building after the tensions eased.

Speaking through a loudspeaker in the hall of the city's regional administration building, an activist could be heard saying that the issue of Kharkov becoming a sovereign state independent from Ukraine will be decided by a regional referendum. A crowd of demonstrators responded to the statement with cheers.

Earlier on Monday, Kharkov protesters erected barricades around administrative buildings and the regional headquarters of the Security Service of Ukraine. Brief clashes between supporters of the federalization of Ukraine and pro-EU demonstrators were reported in downtown Kharkov. Protesters on both sides reportedly used firecrackers and stun grenades.

Anti-coup protesters in Donetsk [proclaimed](#) on Monday the creation of a People's Republic of Donetsk after seizing the local administration building on Sunday night.

The situation remains tense in the port city of Mariupol in the Donetsk region, where pro-Russian activists on Saturday stormed the Prosecutor's Office building, demanding the release of detained "people's mayor" Dmitry Kuzmenko.

A demonstration against political repression in Ukraine is also being held in the southern regional center of Odessa.

In a rare incident, Dnepropetrovsk city authorities moved to negotiate with the anti-government activists. According to the region's vice governor, Boris Filatov, both the "left-wing" and the pro-Russian protesters agreed to refrain from "calls for separatist actions." In return, the authorities said they will let the activists use some cabinets in the administrative buildings for their "meetings and work," as well as provide them with "free access" to local printed media.

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