

# Eastern Ukrainians Vote

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

In-depth Report: [UKRAINE REPORT](#)

On May 11, Donetsk and Lugansk regional referendums were held. Polls opened at 8AM.

Central Election Commission head Roman Lyagin said “turnout is not just high, it’s off the charts.”

“People (queued) up at polling stations...(E)lection commissions (worked) at full capacity.”

Results will be declared valid whatever the turnout, he added.

Around 1,500 polling stations were set up in each region. Thousands participated in preparations. Thousands more including local autonomy campaigners.

Residents in both regions were asked if they “support an act of state self-rule.” Yes or no.

Election Commission officials dispelled false information. Residents didn’t choose between remaining in Ukraine or joining Russia.

They voted up or down for self-determination. For federalization. For local autonomy.

For their inalienable right to elect area officials. For having say on regional governance. For real democracy.

For fundamental rights Kiev putschists want denied. For what people everywhere deserve.

Democracy means rule of the people. Fascists want it denied. They want their way force-fed. They want nonbelievers eliminated. They want what free people reject.

Western observers didn’t monitor voting. No one expressed willingness to come.

They deplore real democracy in action. They support Kiev illegitimacy.

“We did not refuse anyone,” said Lyagin. “(T)here were no applications,” he explained.

He called Sunday’s process a way to “legitimize us in society all over the world.”

At the same time, Donetsk region had over 470 accredited international journalists covering Sunday’s process.

Thirty international observers monitored Lugansk regional voting. Kiev blocked Russian Public Chamber representatives from coming.

They refused border crossing permission. Georgy Fedorov spoke for others saying:

“We were informed that operational groups had been waiting for us at border checkpoints.” They denied permission to enter Ukraine.

One poll showed 83% of its residents for local autonomy.

Donetsk residents likely feel the same way. Results will be announced Monday, May 12.

On Sunday, Kiev military forces attacked Slavyansk self-defense forces. Gunfire and explosions were heard.

Fighting began hours before polls opened. According to one local activist: “They used mortars to shoot at us and fired mine shells.”

RT International’s Paula Slier tweeted: “Slavyansk – crowd gathering at checkpoint/say grad missiles were put there by #Ukrainian army.”

Slavyansk self-defense spokeswoman Stella Khorosheva said:

“Yes, there (was) gunfire on the outskirts of the city, apparently heavy weapons. There are casualties on our side.”

Journalists on site reported eight people injured. Eyewitness Katica Djurovic tweeted: “Explosions and gunshots in Slavyansk. In the city center teens drink, kids in the playground. Everything seems normal @Ruptly #Ukraine.”

Hours earlier, Slavyansk People’s Mayor Vyacheslav Ponomaryov reported at least 20 deaths and 30 wounded.

During May 9 Victory Day commemorations, indiscriminate gunfire injured a nine-year boy.

“Most likely, some (militant) group infiltrated the city,” said Ponomaryov. “A boy was shot at. He sustained two gunshot wounds which passed clear” through his body.

He’s in “serious” condition, “but his life is out of danger.” Elements Kiev sent to Eastern Ukraine operate this way. They include specially recruited National Guard and Right Sector extremists.

Self-defense forces captured militants masquerading as journalists. Weapons and explosives they carried were seized.

Ponomaryov said if Kiev wants real dialogue, it should stop aggression straightaway. It should withdraw its military from regional cities.

It should cease attacking its own people. It should stop killing and injuring them. It should respect their fundamental rights. It should permit self-determination. It should allow real democracy.

Kiev outrageously claims ongoing operations target terrorists. Local activists are freedom fighters. They’re ordinary people.

They want their fundamental rights respected. They want what coup-installed putschists deny them.

Kiev said military operations will continue regardless of Sunday's outcome. Coup-appointed National Security/Defense Council head Andriy Parubiy confirmed it.

Fascist regimes operate this way. Growing thousands of Eastern Ukrainians reject them.

Reports said Ukrainian National Guard forces blocked polling stations and ballot deliveries in four Lugansk districts: Belokurakinsky, Svatovo, Troitsky and Melovoye.

Central Elections Commission spokesman Vasily Nikitin said:

"More than 15,000 ballot papers (were) seized by militants of Ukraine's National Guard from" these districts.

Efforts were made to relocate them. "In Savato alone, more than 2,000 people (waited) for new ballot papers to be brought so they could vote," he added.

Efforts to subvert real democracy shows how Kiev fears it. White House orders said crush it. Go all-out to do it.

Most polling stations operated normally. Donetsk region election commission head Boris Litvinov said "(o)f course there (were) problems."

Kiev bore full responsibility. Most polling stations operated as planned, he added.

[Voice of Russia](#) (VOR) said "Kiev used troops, armor and heavy artillery against federalization activists in both regions in a fierce attempt to disrupt the vote."

Lugansk People's Governor Valery Bolotov said results will be valid whatever the turnout.

Washington duplicitously called Eastern Ukrainian referendums "illegal." On Saturday, State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki lied saying:

"As the United States has said, the referenda being planned for May 11 in portions of eastern Ukraine by armed separatist groups are illegal under Ukrainian law and are an attempt to create further division and disorder."

"If these referenda go forward, they will violate international law and the territorial integrity of Ukraine."

"The United States will not recognize the results..." At the same time, she warned Moscow," adding:

"As President Obama and (German) Chancellor Merkel stated on May 2, the Russian leadership must know that if it continues to destabilize eastern Ukraine and disrupt this month's presidential election, we will move quickly to impose greater costs on Russia."

"(K)remlin backed social media and news stations encouraged residents of eastern Ukraine to vote (Sunday)."

"(O)ne even offer(ed) instructions for polling stations in Moscow. Russian state media continue to strongly back the referenda."

“The focus of the international community must now be on supporting the Ukrainian government’s consistent efforts to hold a presidential election on May 25.”

“International observers note that preparations for these elections are proceeding apace and in accordance with international standards, which will allow all Ukrainian people a voice in the future of their country.”

“According to recent independent polls, a substantial majority of Ukrainians intend to vote on May 25.”

“Any efforts to disrupt this democratic process will be seen clearly for what they are, attempts to deny the rights of Ukraine’s citizens to express their political will freely.”

Fact: Eastern Ukrainian activists aren’t separatists.

Fact: They’re pro-democracy freedom fighters.

Fact: They favor Ukrainian unity.

Fact: They support self-determination.

Fact: They want Ukraine federalized.

Fact: Sunday’s referendums aren’t about joining Russia.

Fact: They’re entirely legal.

Fact: Self-determination is a universal right.

Fact: UN Charter provisions affirm it.

Fact: Eastern Ukrainian referendums shame America’s sham process.

Fact: US voters have no say.

Fact: Monied interests run things.

Fact: Democracy is pure fantasy.

Fact: Eastern Ukrainians want the real thing.

Fact: They deserve universal support.

Fact: Russian media report accurately on what’s ongoing.

Fact: Western mainstream media regurgitate official Big Lies.

Fact: Kiev planned May 25 elections will be farcical when held.

Fact: They’ll have no legitimacy whatever.

Fact: Ballot choices exclude democracy.

The [New York Times](#) disgracefully mocked Sunday’s referendums. It called preparations for

them “as ad hoc as the votes themselves.”

It characterized real democracy as “slapdash.” At the same time, it ignored America’s illegitimate process. Voters get the best democracy money can buy.

It lied calling federalization supports “separatist...pro-Russian militant(s).” It quoted coup-appointed Kiev president Oleksandr Turchynov calling Sunday’s referendums “a step into the abyss.”

It lied characterizing them as “secession.” It quoted unrelated Pew Research poll results showing 70% of Ukrainians favor unity.

The [Washington Post](#) referred to “drunken mobs rampaging through the streets of...Mariupol.” It called federalization supporters “separatists.”

“...Ukraine’s government has been joined by the United States and Western Europe in dismissing the vote,” it said.

It cited a fabricated audio recording. An unnamed Russian politician allegedly advised a local autonomy leader to say 99% of people voted yes. Or 89%.

WaPo admitted the recording couldn’t be verified. Activists went all-out to replicate Crimea’s scrupulously free, open and fair process.

Foreign observers didn’t show up. None offered to come. Hundreds of international journalists monitored instead. So did regional ones.

Voter rolls weren’t entirely updated. Residents with passports were allowed to vote. Volunteers manned polling stations.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) headlined “Pro-Russian Separatists Hold Referendum in Eastern Ukraine,” saying:

They have “little chance of winning a free and fair vote...” At the same time, it quoted History Professor Sergei Baryshnikov saying he “waited 23 years for this.”

He referred to Ukraine’s independence. It followed Soviet Russia’s 1991 dissolution.

Activists said voting isn’t for “outright independence.” It’s for “state self-determination.” At the same time, they reject Kiev’s illegitimacy. They won’t recognize May 25 election results.

London’s [Guardian](#) reported more responsibly than its US counterparts. It said “huge queues” showed up in Mariupol.

It quoted former factory worker Nikolai Cherepin saying “I want to be independent from everyone.”

A florist identified as Tatiana said “(w)e have come to fight for our rights and become independent, and we are happy that we’ve been given the right to voice our opinion.”

“If we’re independent, it will be hard at the beginning but it will be better than being with the fascists.”

An unnamed man was quoted saying “(t)his is the Donetsk people’s republic! We will destroy the Kiev junta...We will win!”

Tatyana Logacheva was quoted saying:

“Ukraine is not a real country...This is Russian land, and they have tried to steal (it) from us and our language, but we will not give it up easily.”

According to the Guardian, Kiev “appears to be in denial that increasingly large swaths of the population are backing the resistance movement...”

“(l)ncreasingly by the bloody death toll from Kiev’s (mischaracterized) ‘anti-terror’ maneuvers.”

At the same time, it repeated Turchynov’s Big Lie about voting yes means an Eastern “step into the abyss.” It’s “self-destruction,” he claimed.

It’s what freedom fighting is all about. It’s real democracy. It’s what Kiev putschists want crushed. It’s what Washington won’t tolerate.

It’s what Eastern Ukrainians regions appear heading for getting. They’ll have to go all-out to keep it.

Hopefully they’re up to the task. Much rides on their success. It may inspire nationwide resistance. All Ukrainians deserve real democracy. They deserve to live free.

This writer’s edited and contributed to new book is titled “Flashpoint in Ukraine: How the US Drive for Hegemony Risks World War III.”

It’s dedicated “(t)o all Ukrainians. May they achieve peace, equity and justice. May they inspire others globally. May freedom triumph worldwide.”

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*His new book as editor and contributor is titled “Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III.”*

*<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html>*

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