

Ukraine Justice Ministry Moves to Ban Communist Party

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The Ukrainian Justice Ministry has asked Kiev's District Administrative Court to ban the country's Communist Party, the ministry announced Tuesday.

The request is based on various alleged indiscretions, including support for separatists in eastern Ukraine, support for Russia's annexation of Crimea, and calls for changes to Ukraine's territorial integrity and constitutional order, according to a statement released by the Justice Ministry.

"After having analyzed a large amount of evidence provided by law enforcement authorities, the Security Service and the Prosecutor General concerning the illegal activities of the Communist Party of Ukraine, I have signed and submitted a claim to have the party banned,"

Justice Minister Pavlo Petrenko said at a briefing of the Ukrainian Cabinet on Tuesday, according to the ministry.

As early as May, Oleksandr Turchynov — who served as acting president prior to Petro Poroshenko's inauguration — spoke of a possible Communist Party ban because of its "complicity in terrorist and separatist activities." Turchynov also accused the leader of the Ukrainian Communist Party, Petro Symonenko, of spreading "Russian propaganda."

The Ukrainian Communist party was banned in 1991 following the collapse of the Soviet Union, but was reinstated two years later. During the presidency of Viktor Yanukovych — who was ousted in February after months of street protests — the party served in a coalition with the ruling Party of Regions.

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