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<http://news.antiwar.com/2017/07/18/east-ukraine-rebels-announce-referendum-for-a-new-state/>

## East Ukraine Rebels Announce Referendum for a New State

Jason Ditz  
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The rebels in Eastern Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts today have announced that they are planning to hold a referendum within their territory with an eye toward declaring themselves a new, independent state called Malorossiya, or "Little Russia."

Malorossiya is not a new term, and ironically initially referred to an area further to the west, encompassing much of the rest of the Ukraine, but not the breakaway regions. This Malorossiya was such a pervasive concept that until the late 19th century, Ukrainians were generally referred to as Malorossiyans.

In this new context, the term appears to reflect the eastern Ukrainian region's status as largely ethnic Russian, and seeing their interests prominently aligned with their much larger neighbor, a vital trading partner they don't want to lose to the rest of Ukraine's increasingly overtures to the West.



**MALOROSIYA**



Ukrainian officials rejected the referendum, and insisted that the announcement could derail the negotiations that have been ongoing trying to resolve the war of secession, which has been in a state of mostly ceasefire for the past couple of years.

Ukraine accused the effort of being a Russian plot, but Kremlin officials denied this, saying they'd only heard about the referendum initiative in the media, after it had already been announced.