

# Electoral Process and Legitimacy in Russian-Occupied Ukrainian Territories

## Key Points

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- **Controversial Elections** The elections held in Russian-occupied Ukrainian territories have been widely criticized and deemed illegitimate by various international actors. These elections are perceived as a Kremlin effort to establish control before the upcoming presidential elections in March.
- **Shift to Electronic Voting** There is a growing focus on converting electoral infrastructure for electronic voting as a strategy to increase control and efficiency, potentially minimizing public dissent and international scrutiny.
- **International Condemnation** Numerous stakeholders, including the European Union, G7, and the United Nations, have expressed strong opposition against these elections, citing violations of international laws and undermining democratic principles.
- **Political Implications** These events are not merely local issues but represent a broader geopolitical struggle involving Western and Russian interests, influencing international relations and regional stability.

## Important Stakeholders

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### UKR

**Volodymyr Zelenskyy** The President of Ukraine, vehemently opposes the elections held in occupied territories, viewing them as a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and international law.

**Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine** The executive government body in Ukraine which denounces the legitimacy of elections, aligning with international allies.

### EU

**Josep Borrell** High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Rejects the legitimacy of these elections and calls for adherence to international democratic principles.

### GBR

**James Cleverly** Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the UK, repudiates the elections as a facade designed to legitimize Russian presence in these territories.

## Arguments and Counterarguments

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### Arguments Supporting the Electoral Events

- Enhancement of electoral processes through electronic means could be seen as a modernization attempt.
- Some stakeholders argue that involving local populations in elections, irrespective of their legality, can foster civic engagement.

# Arguments Against the Electoral Events

- The elections in occupied territories violate international norms and Ukraine's sovereignty, posing threats to regional security.
- Almost all international stakeholders view these events as illegitimate, aimed at creating a facade of democracy under occupation.

## Time Analysis

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From early September to the end of the month, there has been a consistent increase in the intensity of international criticism towards the elections in Russian-occupied territories. The arguments against these elections have solidified over time, with growing unity among Western nations. Concurrently, Russia's attempt to project legitimacy through these electoral processes persists, despite international backlash.

2023-08-07

*Andrej Jerman Reports on the situation in Russian-occupied Ukraine.*

2023-08-16

*Peter Esben-Petersen Describes Russia's elections as a charade.*

2023-09-11

*Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Invalidates elections held in occupied Ukrainian territories.*

2023-09-30

*Volodymyr Zelenskyy Announces opposition to the electoral events in occupied territories and seeks international support.*