

Address on Day of Reunification of the Donetsk People's Republic, Lugansk People's Republic and the Zaporozhye and Kherson Regions with Russia

September 30, 2023 00:00

President of Russia Vladimir Putin: Friends, citizens of Russia,

I congratulate you on the occasion of the Day of Reunification of the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics, and the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions with Russia.

A year ago, on September 30, a defining and truly historic event took place when agreements were signed to incorporate four new constituent entities into the Russian Federation. Millions of residents of Donbass and the Kherson and Zaporozhye regions made their choice to be with their Fatherland.

This conscious, long-awaited, hard-won and genuinely popular decision was made collectively through referendums in full compliance with international norms. People showed courage and integrity in the face of attempts to intimidate and deprive them of their right to determine their own future, their destiny, and to take away something every person values, namely, culture, traditions, and mother tongue, in a word, everything that was loathed by nationalists and their Western patrons who orchestrated a coup in Kiev in 2014 and then unleashed a full-scale civil war and terror against dissenters and organised blockades, constant shelling, and punitive actions in Donbass.

But nothing and no one can break the will of millions of people, or their belief in truth and historical justice. The free and unequivocal choice of our brothers and sisters was wholeheartedly supported by the Russian people. We understood and deeply felt the most important thing: by defending our compatriots in Donbass and Novorossiia,

we are defending Russia itself. Together, we are fighting for the Motherland, for our sovereignty, spiritual values, unity, and victory. I thank all the citizens of the country for this solidarity and patriotism.

Today, we are also building our common future together, rebuilding and building schools and hospitals, housing and roads, museums and memorial sites. All our regions are providing truly fraternal assistance to the cities and towns of Donbass and Novorossiia. Volunteers, civil and religious organisations, parliamentary parties, entrepreneurs, and labour collectives all contribute to this work and common cause. Our entire large and united country is working together.

The recent elections in the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics and the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions were an important step in strengthening our common state and the political and legal space. Just like a year ago during the historic referendums, people once again expressed and reaffirmed their desire to be with Russia, and supported their fellow citizens who earned the people's trust through hard work and real achievements.

Much work lies ahead of us to address complex challenges and implement a large-scale programme for the revival and socioeconomic development of our historical regions. We will by all means achieve our goals.

I would like to address the residents of the Donetsk People's Republic, Lugansk People's Republic, and the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions specifically. Thank you for preserving and passing on your love for the Fatherland to your children despite all the trials. Thanks to you, your fortitude and determination, Russia has become even stronger. We are one people, and together we can overcome anything and meet any challenge.

Happy Day of Reunification with Russia, friends!

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