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Crimea, formerly known as the Tauric Peninsula, is a peninsula in Eastern Europe surrounded by theBlack Seaand theSea of Azov. The Isthmus of Perekop connect the peninsula to Kherson on mainland Ukraine, with the Strait of Kerch separating it from Kuban, Russia. However, it is linked to the Russian region by the Crimea Bridge. Crimea covers an area of approximately 27,000 square kilometers, roughly the size of theUS state of Massachusetts. The peninsula has been a subject of dispute betweenUkraineandRussia, with the dispute popularly referred to as the Crimean Question or the Crimean Problem. Although Russia administers Crimea, most international governments consider the peninsula a Ukrainian territory. Contents: Location And Geography Map showing the Crimean Peninsula. The current political standoff between Ukraine and Russia over Crimea has its origin in the peninsulas history and location, with the two nations having interconnected historical backgrounds. Crimea is a peninsula in Eastern Europe located on the Black Seas northern coast and the Sea of Azovs western coast. It comprises the main peninsula and a smaller peninsula known as the Kerch Peninsula. Crimea is connected to Kherson (Ukrainian region) on the south by the 5-7 kilometers wide Isthmus of Perekop and separated from Russias Taman Peninsula on the east by the Kerch Peninsula. However, the Russian-constructed Crimea Bridge links Crimea to the Russian region of Kuban. The Crimean Bridge. Image credit: Rosavtdor.ru via Wikimedia Commons The border between mainland Ukraine and Crimea Peninsula comprises shallow lagoons commonly known as Rotten Sea or Sivash. These large systems of lagoon stretch along the Sea of Azovs western shores and are separated from the sea by a thin strip of land known as the Arabat Split. The peninsula is also linked to Henichesk Raion, Ukraine, by a bridge over the Henichesk and Chonhar Straits. Landscape of the Crimean Peninsula. Crimea Peninsula is divided geographically into three zones; mountains, steppe, and the southern coast. The Crimea Mountains are located approximately 8-12 kilometers from the southern coast. The main range, called Cape Fiolent, rises to 600-1,545 meters from the Black Sea floor and begins at the peninsulas southwestern point. This cape is of volcanic origin and one of the most striking landmarks on the peninsula. Crimea has 257 rivers, including Salyhr, Alma, Kacha, and Belbek. The peninsula also has numerous salt pans and salty lakes, with Lake Sasyk as the largest of them. Other lakes include Kovashskaya, Bakalskoye, Aqtas, and Donuzlav. Origin Of The Dispute In 1783, the Russian Empire annexed Crimea, then controlled by the Crimea Khanate, following a successful Russo-Turkish War. The following year (1784), the Taurid Oblast was established over most parts of the Peninsula following Catherine the Greats decree. However, Paul I abolished the oblast in 1796 and divided the region into two administrative subdivisions known as uyezds. Between 1853 and 1856, the Crimean War was fought on the peninsula, with the Russians losing to an alliance of the UK, Ottoman Empire, France, and Sardinia. Detail ofFranz Roubaud'spanoramic paintingSiege of Sevastopol (1904). Valentin Ramirez, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons Crimeas political situation got even more complex after the 1917 Russian Revolution. After the revolution, the Russian Civil War ensued, during which Crimea was controlled by different powers, first by the White Army, then by the Red Army in 1920. In 1921, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic made Crimean its autonomous republic. During World War II, the Romanian troops and Nazi Germany invaded the peninsula and occupied the area until 1944, with the Nazis killing over 30,000 Crimean Jews. In 1946, the Crimean Autonomous Republic was downgraded to an oblast, with about 230,000 Crimean Tatars deported for collaborating with the Nazis, an action considered genocide by Ukraine and a few other countries. On February 19, 1954, the USSRs Supreme Soviet transferred Crimea to the Ukrainian USSR, citing close relations between the two regions. However, Russians and other historians questioned the legitimacy of the transfer has, with the Supreme Soviet of Russia declaring the transfer illegal in May 1992. Following the collapse of the USSR in 1991, Ukraine regained its independence, formalizing it with a referendum in December of the same year. The peninsula became the Autonomous Republic of Crimea with Ukraine. According to Ukrainian laws, the autonomous republic can independently decide on certain matters as per the Constitution of Ukraine. However, the Regional Supreme Council insisted the peninsula was a democratic republic exercising its sovereignty and powers. Political Status Of Crimea Flag of the Republic of Crimea. Currently, Crimea is a disputed territory between Ukraine and Russia, with both countries considering the peninsula as their respective republics. Ukraine claims the region as the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, while Russia claims it as the Republic of Crimea. When Ukraine reestablished itself as an independent state, Crimea renamed itself to the Republic of Crimea. Although Ukraine did not initially oppose the name, it did not accept the peninsulas claim of being a state. In 1992, Russia declared the 1954 Crimea transfer illegal, a move that Ukraine condemned. Official coat of arms of the Republic of Crimea. According to the May 1992 Crimean Constitution, the Republic of Crimea is a democratic state which exercises its full sovereignty. However, the Ukrainian Parliament declared this constitution null and void. In 1995, Crimean passed another constitution, but the Ukrainian Parliament rejected most of its parts, including citizenship and name Republic. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian constitution declares the peninsula the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and its inseparable territory. Throughout the 1990s, Ukraine frustrated Crimeas autonomy, including replacing elected presidents with people of their choice. Referendum And Outcome Russian flag among the houses in Sevastopol in the Crimea Peninsula. After the Ukrainian Revolution of 2014, which resulted in the ousting of President Viktor Yanukovych, Russia began plans to repossess Crimea. Military forces, believed to be Russians, took control of Crimea and Sevastopol immediately after the revolution. A referendum to determine whether Crimea should join Russia was conducted on March 16, 2014, with 97% of the voters choosing to join Russia. However, those loyal to Ukraine boycotted the referendum, with Ukrainian and Western governments terming the exercise as illegal. The UN General Assembly also adopted the resolution declaring the referendum invalid and illegal. However, Putin and the Republic of Crimea signed accession, annexing Crimea and Sevastopol into Russia. Crimea became a Russian republic, while Sevastopol became a federal city in Russia. Stances Russia, alongside a few other countries, considers the 2014 referendum and treaty of accession legitimate. Russia also insists the Republic of Crimea was an independent state before the referendum. The claim is also based on the fact that the local population had the right to self-determine their destiny and did so through a referendum. However, the claim on Crimea has attracted international sanctions, including being barred from attending the G8 Summit. On the other hand, the Ukrainian government, alongside the international community, does not recognize the treaty of accession nor Crimeas sovereignty before the pact with Russia. Countries that have condemned the referendum and subsequent treaty include the US, Canada, and the European Union. Ukraine argues that Crimea should not have held a referendum with an option of joining Russia since the area was already under Russian forces. It has been 11 years since Crimea fell under Russian control.However, Moscow's invasion of Ukraine has put the territory back in the global spotlight.Recently, US President Donald Trump criticised his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy for refusing to recognise Crimea as Russian territory.Mr Trump described Mr Zelenskyy's comments as "very harmful to the peace negotiations", saying Crimea was lost years ago and was "not even a point of discussion".So, what has happened in Crimea since Russia's illegal takeover and why is it contested?Here's what we know.What has happened in Crimea since Russia's invasion?Crimea has been governed by Russia-backed Sergey Aksyonov since February 2014, after Russia illegally invaded and annexed Crimea.Weeks after the annexation, fighting broke out in eastern Ukraine between pro-Kremlin militias and Kyiv's forces.Here are key events between Russia and Ukraine:Will Crimea be part of Russia-Ukraine ceasefire talks?Unlikely."Crimea will not be a part of negotiations as an independent entity," said Jessica Genauer, a senior lecturer in International Relations at Flinders University, citing that Crimea "is under Russian-backed governance at present." "However, negotiations between Russia and Ukraine for a peace settlement will need to reach [an] agreement on Crimean governance," Dr Genauer told the ABC.She added that 55 per cent of Ukrainians were opposed to any territorial concessions to Russia from Ukraine, including Crimea, according to the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology polling in May 2024."If Zelenskyy were to formally cede Crimea to Russian control, this would be unacceptable to a majority of the Ukrainian population and would be politically risky for Zelenskyy," Dr Genauer said.What do we expect next?Dr Genauer said a temporary cessation of hostilities in the Russia-Ukraine war would likely happen based on the current negotiators, but it "will not lead to a lasting peace". "[Donald] Trump is primarily concerned about showing his domestic core support base that he can 'get results' in the war between Russia and Ukraine", she said."Trump is less concerned about the specifics of those results or whether they lead to a lasting and substantive peace. Trump will, therefore, try to push for any agreement to be reached."Realistically, this will be at most a temporary cessation of hostilities."If that happens, Dr Genauer said Mr Trump would claim the cessation as a "win" for himself and his presidency and would blame any failure to reach a more lasting agreement on Ukraine and Russia.She said, "The deeper, more intractable issue of territorial sovereignty and control would need to be addressed for a more comprehensive peace agreement to be reached."However, Russia and Ukraine stand too far apart on this issue at present for agreement."Russia would like Crimea and about 20 per cent of Ukrainian sovereign territory to be officially ceded to Russia Ukrainians would never agree to such a deal."Mr Trump told Time Magazine during an interview that Crimea would stay with Russia."Well, Crimea went to the Russians," he said, "It was handed to them by Barack Hussein Obama, and not by me," he said."It's been with them long before Trump came along. Again, this is Obama's war."This is a war that should have never happened. I call it the war that should have never happened."Why is Crimea significant?It is strategically significant for military purposes and global transportation.Russia's Black Sea Fleet is based in Sevastopol, which was leased from Ukraine and gives Moscow access to the Mediterranean.Russia has frequently used Crimea as a launch pad for missile and drone attacks since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2024, and the Ukrainian military has also fired missiles at Crimea.On the other hand, the possession of Crimea is key to control over activities in the Black Sea, which is a critical corridor for the world's grain, among other goods. Crimea's unique position in the Black Sea makes it a strategically important asset for whoever controls it, and Russia has spent centuries fighting for it.Who lawfully owns Crimea?Crimea was home to Turkic-speaking Tatars when the Russian Empire first annexed it in the 18th century. The Soviet Union took over Crimea after the Tatars briefly regained independence as a Tatar republic for two centuries in 1944. Soviet dictator Josef Stalin deported nearly 200,000 Tatars, or about a third of Crimea's population, to Central Asia, 3,200 kilometres to the east.Crimea was part of Russia until 1955, when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev transferred Crimea from Russia to Ukraine to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the unification of Moscow and Kyiv.When the Soviet Union collapsed, the peninsula became part of newly independent Ukraine.ABC/wiresThe Crimean peninsula, which Russia seized from Ukraine in 2014, is at the centre of the worst East-West standoff since the Cold War.The issue led to another clash between U.S. President Donald Trump and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Wednesday. Trump chided the Ukrainian leader for refusing to recognise Russia's occupation of Crimea as part of a U.S. peace deal to end the war in Ukraine.Zelenskyy has said that Ukraine would never cede Crimea to RussiaHISTORYCrimea, which juts out into the Black Sea off southern Ukraine, was absorbed into the Russian Empire along with most ethnic Ukrainian territory by Catherine the Great in the 18th century. Russia's Black Sea naval base at Sevastopol was founded soon afterwards.More than half a million people were killed in the Crimean War of 1853-56 when competing geopolitical powers Russia and the Ottoman Empire, backed by Britain and France, took up arms. The conflict reshaped Europe and paved the way for World War One.In 1921, the peninsula, then populated mainly by Muslim Tatars, became part of the Soviet Union. The Tatars were deported en masse by Soviet leader Josef Stalin at the end of World War Two for alleged collaboration with the Nazis.Crimea became part of Russia within the Soviet Union until 1954, when it was handed to Ukraine, also then a Soviet Republic, by Stalin's successor Nikita Khrushchev, a Ukrainian.After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, there were periodic political tussles over its status between Moscow and Kyiv before Russia captured Crimea by force in 2014.RUSSIAN SEIZURE OF CRIMEARussia sent forces into Crimea and seized control of the peninsula after Ukraine's pro-Russian president, Viktor Yanukovych, was ousted during mass protests in February 2014.After Crimea voted in a disputed referendum to become part of Russia, Russia formally annexed Crimea on March 18, 2014, with Putin saying Crimea has always been and remains an inseparable part of Russia.The United Nations General Assembly, the United States and many other countries condemned the annexation, and the U.S. and the European Union imposed sanctions on Russia over its moves. Few countries have recognised Crimea as part of the Russian Federation but the Kremlin has said the question has been closed "forever". "WHAT HAS ZELENSKIY SAID ABOUT CRIMEA?"Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has ruled out ceding territory occupied by Russian forces and has said Ukrainian sovereignty of Crimea must be restored through diplomacy.A Russian military landing ship sails near Kerch, Crimea (AP)Military significance of CrimeaRussia's Black Sea base in Sevastopol, which was leased from Ukraine, gives Moscow access to the Mediterranean. Russia has frequently used Crimea as a launchpad for missile and drone attacks on Ukraine since sending tens of thousands of troops into the country on February 24, 2022 in what Mr Putin calls a "special military operation". Ukrainian forces have also fired missiles at Crimea since Russia's 2022 invasion. After its full-scale invasion in 2022, Russia enforced a de facto blockade of Ukraine's Black Sea ports which severely restricted grain exports that had been vital to Kyiv's pre-war economy. This resulted in a rise in world food prices and the threat of famine in lower-income countries. A deal known as the Black Sea Grain Initiative was reached in July 2022 to allow safe passage from certain ports but it later collapsed. A freight train runs on the Crimean Bridge connecting the Russian mainland and Crimean peninsula over the Kerch Strait (AP)The geography of CrimeaThe mountainous peninsula is attached to the rest of Ukraine by a narrow strip of land in the north. To the east, it is separated from Russia by the narrow Kerch Strait. A bridge built by Russia across the strait has been damaged during the war.With an area of 27,000 sq km (10,000 sq miles), Crimea is slightly smaller than Belgium, with the city of Simferopol as its capital.POPULATIONThe pre-war population was around 2 million. Ukraine's 2001 census showed around 58 per cent were ethnic Russian, 24 per cent ethnic Ukrainian and 12 per cent Tatars.Youths mark the ninth anniversary of the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine with a banner reading, Russia doesn't start wars, it ends them (AP)EconomyCrimea's temperate climate made it a popular tourist destination for Ukrainians and Russians before the Russia-Ukraine war, especially Yalta, where the Soviet, US and British victors of World War Two met in 1945 to discuss the future shape of Europe. Before the 2022 invasion, it accounted for 3 per cent of Ukraine's gross domestic product. Wheat, corn and sunflowers are the main crops. Crimea has chemical processing plants and iron ore is mined in Kerch in eastern Crimea. Ukraine has two grain terminals in Crimea, in Kerch and in Sevastopol. Stalin accused the Tatars of collaborating with the German occupiers and deported them to Central Asia and Siberia in 1944. Many did not survive.Only as the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 were they allowed to return. By the time over a quarter of a million did so in the early 1990s, it was to an independent Ukraine where they faced very high unemployment and extremely poor housing conditions.There were persistent tensions and protests over land rights, and allocation of land to Crimean Tatars was a contentious issue.After Ukrainian independence, political figures from the local Russian community sought to assert sovereignty and strengthen ties with Russia through a series of moves declared unconstitutional by the Ukrainian government.The 1996 Ukrainian constitution stipulated that Crimea would have autonomous republic status, but insisted that Crimean legislation must be in keeping with that of Ukraine.Crimea has its own parliament and government with powers over agriculture, public infrastructure and tourism.The Crimean Tatars have their own unofficial parliament, the Mejlis, which states its purpose as being to promote the rights and interests of the Crimean Tatars.The port of Sevastopol is a major naval base and has been home to the Black Sea Fleet since 1783. Following the collapse of the USSR, the fleet was divided up between Russia and Ukraine.The presence of the Russian fleet in Sevastopol was a focus of tension between Russia and Ukraine. In 2008, Ukraine - then under the pro-Western President Viktor Yushchenko - demanded that Moscow not use the Black Sea Fleet during the its war with Georgia.Both countries had agreed to allow the Russian fleet to stay until 2017, but after the election of the pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovych as president in 2010, Ukraine agreed to extend the lease by 25 years beyond 2017, in return for cheaper Russian gas.In 2022, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy cemented Ukraine's goal of liberating all its territories, including Crimea, in a peace formula he presented at the G20 summit in Bali. In 2022 and 2023, the strategic Kerch bridge - actually a pair of bridges - which link Crimea to Russia's Taman peninsula across the Sea of Azov came under repeated Ukrainian attack.It is one of the key ways Moscow can reinforce its troops in Crimea and the southern Kherson region and logistics hubs across Russian-occupied territory have been repeatedly hit using long-range weapons supplied by Ukraine's Western backers. This article does not have any sources. You can help Wikipedia by finding good sources, and adding them. (April 2025)Satellite picture of CrimeaCrimea, (Ukrainian: Крим) sometimes also called The Crimea, is a peninsula in the Black Sea. The peninsula separates the Black Sea from the Sea of Azov. Crimea has a surface of 26,081 square kilometres (10,070sqmi). About 2.4 million people live there. The Ottoman Empire had the peninsula for a long time. In the 18th century the Russian Empire took control. The Crimean War was fought here. Crimea was part of Russia until the Soviet Union gave it to Ukraine in 1954. Ukraine gave it a limited self-rule as an autonomous republic. The seat of the government is Simferopol, which is also the biggest city. Other major cities are Sevastopol and Kerch.In March, 2014, after a series of protests in Ukraine the previous month, Russian troops took control of Crimea. A referendum was held, in which over 90% of voters voted to join the Russian Federation. The Crimean parliament quickly proclaimed independence from Ukraine and on March 18, became the Republic of Crimea, a federal subject of Russia. However, Ukraine and most other countries in the world continue to recognize that Crimea is part of Ukraine. On March 24, Russia was kicked out of the G8 (which became the G7), and on March 27, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 68/262, which says that the referendum was invalid and Crimea belongs to Ukraine. In later months, many countries including the United States and the European Union started economic sanctions to prevent Russians and their goods from entering their countries. This short article about Europe can be made longer. You can help Wikipedia by adding to it.Retrieved from " Geography & Travel States & Other Subdivisions Crimea, autonomous republic, southern Ukraine. The republic is coterminous with the Crimean Peninsula, lying between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. In 2014 Russia covertly invaded and illegally annexed Crimea, a move that was denounced by the international community. Area 10,400 square miles (27,000 square km). Pop. (2001) 2,033,736; (2013 est.) 1,965,177. Syvash Syvash in the Crimean Peninsula, Ukraine.The peninsula is connected on the northwest to the mainland by the Perekop Isthmus, a 5-mile -(8-km-) wide strip of land that has been the site of numerous battles for the control of Crimea. Between Crimea and the mainland to the north lies Syvash (Putrid Sea), a network of shallow inlets that is separated from the Sea of Azov by the Arabat Spit, a 70-mile- (113-km-) long sandbar along the eastern shore of Crimea. Brines from Syvash supply chemical plants at Krasnoperekopsk in northwestern Crimea. Crimea itself comprises three regions. The first of these, consisting of the northern and central part of Crimea (which constitutes about three-fourths of the peninsula), is made up of a level plain that slopes down gently from south to north. This steppe region is under intensive agricultural cultivation, with winter wheat, corn (maize), potatoes, and sunflowers among the main crops. The climate is dry and continental, and additional water supplies are brought by canal from the Dneper River at Kakhivka (Kakhovka); ruins of PanticapaeumRuins of Panticapaeum, former city of the Kingdom of the Bosphorus, now located in Kerch, Ukraine.The second region, the Kerch Peninsula, thrusts eastward toward the Russian kray (territory) of Krasnodar and consists of low hills rich in iron ore. The mud volcanoes and mineral springs that dot the landscape have given rise to a spa industry that draws both domestic and international tourists. There is steppe vegetation, but large-scale agricultural development has been hindered by the limited availability of suitable soil. Heavier industry is concentrated in the city of Kerch, traditionally a centre of large-scale iron ore mining. A 12-mile- (19-km-) long bridge spans the Kerch Strait, linking Crimea and Russia. The third region is made up of the alpine fold mountains of the south, which form three chains parallel to the southern coast. These chains of flat-topped limestone blocks, known as the Crimean Mountains, rise successively higher from the north to the south (with steep-faced southern slopes and gentler northern slopes), topping out at 5,069 feet (1,545 metres) at Mount Roman-Kosh. This range drops steeply to the sea, where there is a narrow coastal plain broken by cliffs and headlands. Precipitation in the mountainous belt is significantly greater than elsewhere in Crimea, its average annual rainfall totals exceeding 23 inches (600 mm). The mountains have a luxuriant and varied forest vegetation of oak, beech, hornbeam, maple, and other species, which give way to juniper and meadow grasses at higher elevations. The southern coast, sheltered by the mountains from cold northern air, has a mild Mediterranean climate. Many exotic plants have been introduced, such as cypress, oleander, almond, and myrtle, together with palms and other subtropical flora. On the lower mountain slopes of the south are many vineyards. Tobacco is important, as are flowers for perfume. Most towns are engaged in processing farm produce, especially wine making. Simferopol, the administrative centre of the republic, is located in the foothills of the Crimean Mountains. It has a diversified economy of light industry and services, and it is a major regional transportation hub. The Crimean Astrophysical Observatory, located in Nauchny, is one of the largest astronomical research facilities in eastern Europe. There are a number of stone quarries, especially for limestone and diorite. Along the southern coast, tourism is extremely important, with Yalta, Gurzuf, Alushta, and Alupka among the main centres. The port city of Sevastopol serves as the headquarters of the Russian Black Sea Fleet.

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