

# Ukraine crisis | Ukrainian history [2013-2014]

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Michael Ray

## ukrajinská krize

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Ukrajinská historie [2013-2014]

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Protesty na Majdanu

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## Krym



## Ukrajina



## ukrajinská krize

V roce 2014 čelila Ukrajina největší hrozbě své národní bezpečnosti od rozpadu Sovětského svazu , jehož součástí byla po většinu 20. století. Měsíce lidových protestů se přehnalý proruským tiskem. Viktor Janukovyč odstoupil z úřadu v únoru a nahradila ho

prozápadni prozatimni vlada. Zatimco se prozatimni vlada pokousela vypořadat se s rozkolisanou ekonomikou, těžce ozbrojeni prurusti separatiste obsadili vladni budovy na Krymu a s podporou ruskych jednotek vyhlasi nezávislost na centralni vlade v Kyjevě. Rusko formálně anektovalo Krym v březnu 2014, krok, který byl na Západě široce kritizován jako hrubé porušení mezinárodního práva, a separatistické aktivity se rozšířily na východní Ukrajinu. Ukrajinské bezpečnostní služby zpočátku nebyly schopny odolat útokům, které často prováděli vojáci s ruskými zbraněmi a vybavením, ale v uniformách bez jasných znaků. S desítkami tisíc ruských vojáků shromážděných těsně za hranicí a vzpomínkou na konflikt z roku 2008 mezi Ruskem a Gruzií v jejich čerstvé mysli byli vůdci v Kyjevě nuceni zvážit jakoukoli možnou vojenskou reakci s pravděpodobností spuštění zjevné ruské intervence. Když ukrajinské síly začaly systematicky obnovovat sporné území před prezidentskými volbami v květnu 2014, Spojené státy a Evropská unie (EU) rozšířily ekonomické sankce vůči stále širšímu okruhu ruských společností a jednotlivců. V této speciální funkci nabízí Britannica průvodce nedávnými událostmi na Ukrajině a zkoumá historický a geografický kontext krize.

## **Od nezávislosti k protestům na Majdanu**

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Leonid Kučma

Ukrajinskou historií po nezávislosti lze do značné míry charakterizovat jako balancování mezi evropskými aspiracemi země a jejími historickými, etnickými a ekonomickými vazbami na Rusko. Leonid Kravčuk, dlouholetý funkcionář komunistické strany, který sloužil jako první nezávislý ukrajinský prezident (1991–94), přijal prozápadní zahraniční politiku a diktoval podmínky rodičího se státu při jeho často prudkých „rozvodových“ jednáních s Ruskem. Jeho snaha o druhé funkční období se nezdařila, když byl v prezidentských volbách v roce 1994 poražen Leonidem Kučmou, který se snažil zlepšit vztahy s Ruskem a urychlit ekonomický růst zvýšenou privatizací státních průmyslů. Kučma vedl zemi více než deset let, dohlížel na období ekonomické stabilizace a také na rostoucí vazby s Evropou. Obvinění z korupce spolu se vznikem hlasité opozice za Viktora Juščenka, bývalého Kučmova premiéra a strůjce mnoha ekonomických reforem země, by však nakonec vedly ke Kučmově politickému pádu.



## Více z Britannica

### Rusko: Ukrajinská krize

Kučma, jehož popularita prudce klesá, nekandidoval na znovuzvolení v roce 2004. Místo toho podpořil premiéra Viktora Janukovyče, rodáka z Doněcké pánve na východě Ukrajiny, který velkou část své podpory získal od etnického ruského obyvatelstva tohoto regionu. Během kampaně Juščenko vážně onemocněl, když byl otráven dioxinem-zřejmý pokus o atentát, který zanechal jeho tvář znetvořenou. Juščenko a Janukovyč byli nejlepšími v prvním kole hlasování a postoupili do druhého kola. Janukovyč byl ve druhém kole voleb prohlášen za vítěze, ale mezinárodní pozorovatelé zaznamenali rozsáhlé nesrovnalosti a Juščenkovi stoupenci zahájili masové protestní hnutí, které se stalo známým jako oranžová revoluce. Mezitím příznivci Janukovyče přísahali, že se odtrhnou, pokud budou výsledky voleb zvráceny. Ukrajinský nejvyšší soud reagoval tím, že nařídil opakovat druhé kolo a Juščenko z něj vyšel jako vítěz. Jeho prezidentství bylo však plné zmatků. Nedostatek paliva, nesouhlas v jeho straně a parlamentní boje s Janukovyčem podkopaly Juščenkovu schopnost prosadit reformy a brzy byl zastíněn jeho kolegou vůdce oranžové revoluce. Julia Tymošenková.

Tymošenková, která sloužila jako premiérka v roce 2005 a 2007 až 2010, vyzvala Juščenka na prezidentský úřad v roce 2010. Postoupila do druhého kola hlasování, ale prohrála s Janukovyčem ve volbách, které pozorovatelé považovali za svobodné a spravedlivé. Jako prezident Janukovyč okamžitě přistoupil k posílení vztahů s Ruskem, prodloužil ruskou nájemní smlouvu na přístavní zařízení v krymském městě Sevastopol a podepsal legislativu, která na neurčito zastavila postup Ukrajiny směrem k

NATO členství. Podnikl také kroky k neutralizaci svých odpůrců stíháním, které kritici charakterizovali jako selektivní a politicky motivované. V roce 2011 byla Tymošenková obviněna ze zneužití pravomoci a odsouzena k sedmi letům vězení. Následující rok byl za podobná obvinění uvězněn její politický spojenec Jurij Lucenko. V tom, co bylo všeobecně považováno za ústupek západnímu tlaku, Janukovyč v dubnu 2013 Lucenka propustil, ale tento vnímaný obrat na Západ by nevydržel.

Masové protesty vypukly v listopadu 2013, když Janukovyč oznámil, že nebude pokračovat v dlouho očekávaných asociačních a obchodních dohodách s Evropskou unií (EU). Po setkání s ruským pres. Vladimir Putin 9. listopadu Janukovyč místo toho přešel k dalšímu rozšíření vazeb s Ruskem. V reakci na to vyšly do ulic statisíce lidí a demonstranti založili protestní tábor na kyjevském Majdanu (náměstí nezávislosti). Opoziční politici vyjádřili svou podporu demonstrantům, zatímco Moskva podpořil Janukovyčovu administrativu příslibem půjček s nízkým úrokem a snížením ceny zemního plynu. Během následujících měsíců byla řada vládních zásahů neúspěšná při potlačování disentu a v únoru 2014 ukrajinské bezpečnostní síly zahájily palbu na demonstranty na Majdanu, zabily desítky a stovky zranily. Když se jeho politická základna rozpadla, Janukovyč propustil Tymošenkovou, naplánoval předčasné prezidentské volby na květen 2014, a nakonec uprchl ze země před hlasováním o impeachmentu a řadou trestních obvinění.

## Fakta a čísla o Ukrajině

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Oficiální jméno: Ukrajina (Ukrajina)

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Plocha: 233 062 čtverečních mil (603 628 čtverečních km)

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Populace (odhad 2013): 45,523,000

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Věkové rozdělení (2011): Do 15 let 14,2 %; 15–29, 22,0 %; 30–44, 21,3 %; 45–59, 21,6 %; 60–69, 9,4 %; 70 a více, 11,5 %

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Forma vlády:	Jednotná mnohostranná republika s jediným zákonodárným sborem (Verkhovna Rada)
Hlavní město:	Kyjev (Kyjev)
Další velká města :	Charkov, Oděsa (Oděsa), Dněpropetrovsk, Doněck
Úřední jazyk:	ukrajinština
Náboženská příslušnost (2004):	Ukrajínští pravoslavní, z toho „Kyjevský patriarchát“ 19 %, „žádný konkrétní patriarchát“ 16 %, „Moskevský patriarchát“ 9 %, Ukrajínští autokefální pravoslavní 2 %; Ukrajinský katolík 6 %; protestantské 2 %; latinský katolík 2 %; muslim 1 %; židovské 0,5 %; nenáboženští/ateisté/ostatní 42,5 %.
Etnické složení (2001):	Ukrajínština 77,8 %; ruština 17,3 %; běloruský 0,6 %; moldavský 0,5 %; Krymský Tatar 0,5 %; ostatní 3,3 %.
Míra nezaměstnanosti (2012):	7.5%
Celkový počet vojáků v aktivní službě (2012)	29 950 (armáda 54,5 %, námořnictvo 10,7 %, letectvo/protivzdušná obrana 34,8 %); rezerva 1 000 000

## Pozadí

Další informace o Ukrajině naleznete v následujících článcích:



[Přihlaste se k odběru](#)

## Časové osy událostí

### Klíčové události na Ukrajině, 1991–2013

**1991**

**1992**

Months of political wrangling conclude when Ukrainian Pres. Leonid Kravchuk and Russian Pres. Boris Yeltsin reach accords on Soviet-era military hardware located in Ukraine. In May Ukraine signs the Lisbon Protocol, agreeing to turn over its sizable nuclear arsenal to Russia. The following month a preliminary deal is reached on the Sevastopol-based Black Sea Fleet, which would be administered jointly by Russia and Ukraine for a period of three years.

**1994**

On January 10 Ukraine becomes a party to the Partnership for Peace, an agreement to strengthen political and military ties with NATO. In July Leonid Kuchma defeats Kravchuk to become president of Ukraine. Russia, Ukraine, the United States, and the United Kingdom sign the Budapest Memorandum in December, restating Ukraine's commitment to surrender its nuclear arsenal to Russia and pledging the signatories to acknowledge and respect the boundaries of Ukraine as an independent country.

**1995**

Ukraine joins the Council of Europe.

**1996**

Ukraine replaces its Soviet-era constitution with a democratic one that invests strong executive power in the office of president. The hryvnya is introduced as Ukraine's currency.



## **1997**

Ukraine and Russia conclude the Treaty of Friendship, pledging to respect each other's borders and preserve the rights of national minorities in each country. The matter of the Black Sea Fleet is settled, with Russia receiving the bulk of the ships as well as an extended lease on port facilities in Sevastopol and the right to garrison up to 25,000 troops in Crimea. Ukraine receives over \$500 million in compensation, and the Russian troops in Sevastopol are subject to a status of forces agreement that states that they may not operate outside of their bases without prior approval from Ukrainian authorities.

## **1999**

Kuchma appoints Viktor Yushchenko prime minister. Yushchenko introduces a series of financial reform measures that are credited with turning around the Ukrainian economy.

## **2000**

Investigative journalist Georgy Gongadze, who uncovered evidence of corruption within the Kuchma administration, is abducted in September; his decapitated body is found several months later in a forest outside Kiev. In December the final reactor at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant is shut down.

## **2001**

In an attempt to check his prime minister's growing popularity, Kuchma sacks Yushchenko, and Yushchenko immediately becomes one of the leading figures in the opposition to Kuchma's government. In December Ukraine conducts its first postindependence census. The most-dramatic demographic change is in Crimea, where some 250,000 Crimean Tatars have returned to the peninsula. The Crimean Tatars were internally deported by Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in 1944 and prohibited from returning to their ancestral home throughout the Soviet era.

## **2002**

Opposition groups call for Kuchma's resignation after audio tapes surface that implicate him in the politically motivated killing of Gongadze. A parliamentary commission reveals that the tapes also contain evidence that Kuchma approved a \$100 million arms deal with Iraq in contravention of a 1990 UN Security Council resolution.

## **2004**

Ukraine is pushed to the brink of civil war as intrigue and protest surround the presidential election of 2004. Kuchma, although constitutionally cleared to seek a third term, instead supports the candidacy of his prime minister, Viktor Yanukovich. Yushchenko, representing the opposition alliance Our Ukraine, suffers dioxin poisoning, allegedly at the hands of the Ukrainian State Security Service. After Yanukovich and Yushchenko finish first-round voting in a virtual tie, Yanukovich is declared the winner after a second round is held in November. Widespread demonstrations erupt, as Yushchenko supporters take to the streets in a movement that comes to be known as the Orange Revolution. In December the election results are annulled by the Supreme Court, and a second runoff is held, in which Yushchenko is victorious.

## **2005**

Yushchenko is inaugurated president in January, but his pro-Western administration is soon afflicted with the instability that would characterize his entire term in office. His first prime minister, Yuliya Tymoshenko, is dismissed along with the rest of Yushchenko's cabinet after just nine months. Tymoshenko soon emerges as Yushchenko's strongest challenger for leadership within the Orange coalition.

## **2006**

The Ukrainian political landscape is reshaped when Yanukovych's Party of Regions captures the largest share of votes in parliamentary elections in March. Unable to agree on a coalition with Tymoshenko despite protracted negotiations, Yushchenko is forced to form a unity government with Yanukovych as prime minister.

## **2007**

The power struggle between Yushchenko and Yanukovych results in the dismissal of parliament and the scheduling of snap elections, held in September. Although the Party of Regions remains the largest single group in parliament, the real winner is Tymoshenko, who emerges as the most-recognizable political figure in Ukraine. With the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko (BYT) providing most of its parliamentary strength, the Orange coalition reforms, and Tymoshenko is named prime minister in December.

## **2009**

Economic malaise grips Ukraine, and Russia halts the flow of natural gas into the country over a dispute about back payments. Tymoshenko proposes a budget that secures a multibillion-dollar loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but the IMF suspends disbursement after Party of Regions parliamentarians pass a bill that violates the terms of the agreement.

## **2010**

Ukraine's pivot to the West is sharply arrested when Yanukovych defeats Tymoshenko in the presidential election in February. Upon taking power, he immediately moves to strengthen ties with Russia and bolster the executive power of the presidency. Yanukovych extends Russia's lease on the Crimean port of Sevastopol, secures a discounted rate on Russian natural gas, and rebuts the Yushchenko government's contention that the Great Famine of 1932–33 was a Soviet-led act of genocide against the Ukrainian people. In December both Tymoshenko and her interior minister, Yuri Lutsenko, are charged with abuse of power in cases that are characterized as politically motivated by opposition leaders.

## **2011**

In October Tymoshenko is found guilty and sentenced to seven years in prison. The verdict is widely criticized in the West. The following month a new round of charges are brought against her, alleging that Tymoshenko evaded taxes while heading an energy concern in the 1990s.

## **2012**

In February Lutsenko is sentenced to four years in prison; he is sentenced to an additional two years in August. In parliamentary elections held in October, the Party of Regions captures the largest share of the vote, but Tymoshenko's Fatherland party, Vitali Klitschko's Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reforms (UDAR), and the ultranationalist Svoboda ("Freedom") party all perform well. In December the Party of Regions, headed by Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, forms a government with the support of the Communist Party and independent representatives.

## **Maidan, Crimea, and the separatist movement, 2013–14**

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### ***April 7, 2013***

Bowing to Western pressure, Yanukovych pardons Lutsenko and orders his release. Tymoshenko remains imprisoned.

### ***November 9, 2013***

Yanukovich meets with Russian Pres. Vladimir Putin in Moscow in advance of the EU's Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. Ukraine is among the former Soviet bloc countries scheduled to sign association agreements that would expand political and economic ties with the EU.

### ***November 21, 2013***

Days before the Vilnius summit, Yanukovich announces that Ukraine will suspend talks with the EU in favour of strengthening its relationship with Russia. Mass protests erupt in major cities across Ukraine over subsequent days, with an estimated 100,000 people gathering in central Kiev. Observers characterize the demonstrations as the largest in Ukraine since the Orange Revolution.

### ***November 30–December 1, 2013***

Riot police descend on Kiev's Maidan (Independence Square) in an attempt to disperse the pro-Western demonstrators who are encamped there. Dozens of protesters are injured in the overnight crackdown. Hours later and a short distance away, protesters storm Kiev's city hall, beginning a two-and-a-half-month occupation of the building.

### ***December 3, 2013***

Prime Minister Azarov survives a vote of confidence brought by opposition politicians.

### ***December 8, 2013***

An estimated 800,000 people attend a demonstration in central Kiev. The crowd topples and destroys a statue of Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin; images of that event prompt others to destroy Soviet-era monuments across Ukraine.

### ***December 17, 2013***

Putin pledges to support Ukraine's foundering economy by offering a substantial discount on Russian natural gas and purchasing \$15 billion in Ukrainian government bonds.

### ***January 17, 2014***

The Ukrainian parliament passes a harsh anti-protest bill by an informal show of hands rather than by employing its usual electronic voting system. Yanukovich signs the bill into law, triggering a fiery response from the opposition.

### ***January 22, 2014***

Two protesters are shot and killed by riot police in Kiev. The body of a third protester is found in the woods outside the city.

### ***January 28, 2014***

In a nearly unanimous vote, parliament abolishes the anti-protest law. Azarov tenders his resignation as a concession to opposition leaders.

### ***February 16, 2014***

Protesters evacuate city hall in exchange for a general amnesty; hundreds of imprisoned demonstrators are released from police custody.

### ***February 18, 2014***

More than 20 people are killed and hundreds are wounded as clashes between police and demonstrators in Kiev become increasingly violent. An estimated 25,000 protesters occupy a fortified camp in Kiev's Maidan.

### ***February 20, 2014***

Kiev sees its bloodiest day since World War II as government snipers open fire on demonstrators. Scores are killed, and the Maidan is transformed into a charred battleground, as protesters ignite massive bonfires to stymie attempts by security forces to retake the square. EU leaders agree to level sanctions against those in Ukraine believed to be responsible for the violence.

### ***February 21, 2014***

With his political support crumbling, Yanukovich accepts an EU-brokered deal that promises early elections and the implementation of a unity government that is to include members of the opposition. Parliament decriminalizes the statute under which Tymoshenko had been prosecuted, thus paving the way for her release.

### ***February 22, 2014***

Yanukovich vanishes as parliament votes to strip him of his presidential powers. Tymoshenko is freed from prison, and she immediately travels to Kiev, where she makes an impassioned speech to the crowd in the Maidan. Yanukovich, appearing in a television address, denounces his removal from office as a coup.

### ***February 27, 2014***

Yanukovich, resurfacing at a press conference in Russia, asserts that he is still the president of Ukraine. In the Ukrainian autonomous republic of Crimea, pro-Russian gunmen in uniforms that lack clear insignia occupy key buildings. The Russian flag is raised at the regional parliament building in Simferopol, and the unidentified troops expand their control of the peninsula over subsequent days. Despite initial Russian insistence that the unidentified gunmen are local militia members, Putin later confirms that they are, in fact, Russian troops. The interim government in Kiev elects Fatherland party leader Arseniy Yatsenyuk as prime minister.

### ***March 1, 2014***

Putin is granted parliamentary approval to use military force to protect Russian interests in Ukraine.

### ***March 6, 2014***

With Russian troops and affiliated paramilitary units in de facto control of the peninsula, Crimea's self-appointed parliament votes to secede from Ukraine and seek annexation by Russia. A regional referendum on the matter is scheduled for March 16.

### ***March 16, 2014***

Despite observers noting irregularities in the electoral process—such as the presence of armed men at polling places—Crimean officials declare that turnout has topped 80 percent, with more than 95 percent of voters declaring a wish to join Russia. Putin states that he will respect the wishes of the Crimean people, while the interim government in Kiev and Western leaders decry the election as illegal.

### ***March 18, 2014***

Putin signs a treaty with Crimean officials that incorporates Crimea into the Russian Federation. Ukraine prepares for the evacuation of an estimated 25,000 Ukrainian military personnel and their dependents from the peninsula.

### ***March 21, 2014***

With the approval of the Russian parliament, Putin signs a law that formally annexes Crimea. The move is not recognized by Western governments, and a flurry of sanctions are imposed on Russian and Crimean officials by the United States and the EU. Yatsenyuk signs a portion of the EU association treaty that was rejected by Yanukovich in November 2013.

### ***March 24, 2014***

The Group of Eight indefinitely suspends Russia's membership in that intragovernmental organization as a result of the annexation of Crimea.

### ***March 31, 2014***

Russia abrogates its lease on the port at Sevastopol, arguing that it is no longer valid, as the city is now part of Russian territory. The price of Russian natural gas, discounted while the agreement was in effect, subsequently skyrockets in Ukraine.



### ***Late March and early April 2014***

As many as 40,000 Russian troops mass on the border with Ukraine. Western intelligence analysts characterize the buildup as reminiscent of preparations made by the Russian military prior to large-scale offensives in Chechnya and its 2008 invasion of Georgia.

### ***April 7, 2014***

In a virtual replay of the events in Crimea, highly disciplined pro-Russian gunmen carrying Russian equipment and wearing uniforms without insignia execute armed takeovers of government buildings across eastern Ukraine. Pro-Russian separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk proclaim their independence and announce that referenda on the matter will be held on May 11.

### ***April 15, 2014***

Interim Ukrainian Pres. Oleksandr Turchynov announces the start of an “antiterrorist operation” in eastern Ukraine. Although Ukrainian armed forces recapture the Kramortsk airport, they experience a reversal the following day in Slov’yansk, when Ukrainian troops surrender six armoured vehicles to pro-Russian militants.

### ***April 17, 2014***

Emergency talks between Russia, Ukraine, the United States, and the EU begin in Geneva. Three pro-Russian militiamen are killed when Ukrainian troops repel an attack on a base in Mariupol. Volodymyr Rybak, a member of the Fatherland party and a city council member in Horlivka, is kidnapped by pro-Russian forces after he attempts to remove the flag of the separatist Donetsk republic from Horlivka city hall. A week later Rybak’s body is found in a river outside Slov’yansk.

### ***April 25, 2014***

Eight observers from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) are kidnapped by pro-Russian militants near Slov’yansk. They would remain captive for more than a week.

### ***April 28, 2014***

Kharkiv mayor and influential Party of Regions politician Gennady Kernes is shot and seriously wounded in an apparent assassination attempt. Kernes had been a harsh critic of the Maidan protests but recently reversed course and declared his support for a united Ukraine.

### ***May 2, 2014***

Two Ukrainian military helicopters are shot down by pro-Russian militants in Slov'yansk. Violence strikes the previously quiet city of Odessa when pro-Russian demonstrators attack a pro-Ukrainian march held by the supporters of a pair of Ukrainian association football (soccer) teams. A running street battle concludes when a building occupied by pro-Russian activists catches fire; more than 40 people die in the blaze.

### ***May 7, 2014***

Putin calls for the scheduled referenda in Donetsk and Luhansk to be postponed. The Council for Civil Society and Human Rights, an official advisory body to the Kremlin, issues a report that contradicts the published results of the Crimean independence referendum. According to their revised numbers, turnout was estimated to have been between 30 and 50 percent, with just over half of the voters opting for Russian annexation.

### ***May 11, 2014***

Separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk proceed with their referenda and declare independence from Ukraine, despite apparent widespread irregularities in the voting process. The interim government in Kiev characterizes the event as “a farce.”

### ***May 25, 2014***

Billionaire Petro Poroshenko emerges as the clear victor in the Ukrainian presidential election, winning more than 50 percent of the vote in the first round of polling to preclude a runoff. Tymoshenko finishes a distant second. UDAR party leader Vitali Klitschko is elected mayor of Kiev.

***May 26, 2014***

A second group of OSCE observers is abducted in eastern Ukraine. A third group would be kidnapped three days later. Both groups would remain captives of pro-Russian militias for more than a month.

***May 27, 2014***

Dozens of pro-Russian separatists are killed in a battle for Donetsk's international airport.

***May 29, 2014***

A Ukrainian military helicopter is shot down outside Slov'yansk; all 14 people aboard are killed.

***June 7, 2014***

Poroshenko is sworn in as president of Ukraine. In his inaugural address, he states that his government will not negotiate with armed militants and reiterates the claim that Crimea is Ukrainian territory.

***June 13, 2014***

After fierce fighting, Ukrainian forces retake Mariupol. Although Russia continues to deny involvement in the separatist movement, three Soviet-era T-64 tanks stripped of insignia are photographed in Ukrainian cities near the Russian border.

***June 14, 2014***

Rebels shoot down a Ukrainian military transport plane as it attempts to land in Luhansk; all 49 people on board are killed.

***June 20, 2014***

Poroshenko declares a weeklong cease-fire as part of a broader peace proposal to pro-Russian separatists. The United States levels a new round of economic sanctions against pro-Russian leaders in eastern Ukraine. Three days later, separatists agree to observe the truce.

### ***June 24, 2014***

Rebels shoot down a Ukrainian military helicopter outside Slov'yansk, killing nine, in violation of the tenuous cease-fire.

### ***June 27, 2014***

More than eight months after Yanukovych scuttled the treaty, Poroshenko signs the economic and political association agreement with the EU. Putin strenuously objects to the move, claiming that it will divide Ukraine. Poroshenko also extends the cease-fire by an additional 72 hours. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees issues a report showing that more than 50,000 people have been internally displaced as a result of the turmoil in Ukraine. Roughly 110,000 people have fled Ukraine for Russia, although fewer than 10 percent have requested permanent asylum.

### ***July 5, 2014***

Seemingly invigorated by the pause afforded by the cease-fire, Ukrainian armed forces renew their offensive in the east, capturing the rebel stronghold of Slov'yansk. Before the day is concluded, rebel forces are also pushed out of Kramatorsk. Rebel leaders' appeals for direct intervention by Moscow go unfulfilled.

### ***July 11, 2014***

At least 19 Ukrainian soldiers are killed and scores are wounded in a rocket attack near Zelenopillya, a town in the Luhansk region about 40 miles (64 km) from the Russian border.

### ***July 17, 2014***

Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, a 777 traveling from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur and carrying nearly 300 people, crashes in eastern Ukraine, killing all aboard. U.S. intelligence analysts state that the plane was shot down by a surface-to-air missile, and the Ukrainian government presents evidence alleging that pro-Russian militants fired on the aircraft thinking that it was a Ukrainian military transport. Putin denies any connection between Russia and the crash, saying that responsibility for the incident lies with Ukraine.

### ***July 18–20, 2014***

International investigators and recovery teams find their efforts to reach the crash site stymied by the rebel groups who control the area. Journalists and local residents are given relatively free access to the unsecured debris field, which covers some 20 square miles (50 square km) of separatist-held territory near the city of Torez. Reports of valuables being looted from the crash site are widespread. The U.S. government states that it detected the launch of a surface-to-air missile from a rebel-controlled area at the same time that air traffic controllers lost contact with flight MH17.

### ***July 21, 2014***

Separatists turn over “black box” flight recorders recovered from the crash to international investigators. Prosecutors in the Netherlands open a criminal investigation into the downing of the airliner, with a list of charges that includes murder and war crimes. Two-thirds of the passengers on flight MH17 were Dutch citizens.

### ***July 23, 2014***

Two Ukrainian Su-25 fighter-bombers are shot down over rebel-held territory some 25 miles (40 km) from the MH17 crash site. Separatist forces claim that the jets were downed at low altitude by shoulder-fired missiles, whereas a Ukrainian national security spokesperson states that the aircraft were flying at an altitude of more than 17,000 feet (5,200 metres) when they were hit by missiles fired from inside Russian territory. Russian authorities deny any involvement in the downing of the two planes.

### ***July 24, 2014***

Svoboda and UDAR withdraw their support from the ruling coalition government, and Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk resigns, citing frustration at the pace of passage of legislation governing defense spending.

### ***July 29, 2014***

The U.S. and the EU impose a coordinated round of sanctions against Russia, citing Moscow's continued support of pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine. The restrictions—which include an arms embargo, the closure of American and European capital markets to a number of state-owned Russian banks, and an export ban on energy-sector technology—represent the strongest measures taken by Western governments since the beginning of the crisis. Russian officials criticize the move as shortsighted and vow that the sanctions will only strengthen the Russian economy in the long term.

### ***August 1, 2014***

The Ukrainian parliament approves Yatsenyuk's proposed budget and overwhelmingly rejects his resignation, heading off early elections.

### ***August 7, 2014***

Russia responds to Western sanctions by announcing a one-year ban on a wide range of food products from Australia, Canada, the EU, Norway, and the U.S. Aleksandr Borodai, leader of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, announces his resignation.

### ***August 9, 2014***

Ukrainian military forces, which have made renewed progress against rebel forces since late July, surround the separatist stronghold of Donetsk. With conditions in rebel-held cities worsening as a result of fighting and the interruption of basic services, separatist commanders propose a cease-fire. The Ukrainian government restates its position that such an agreement can come only with the surrender and disarming of the separatists.

### ***August 12, 2014***

One day after Poroshenko authorizes a humanitarian aid mission to eastern Ukraine under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Russia announces the dispatch of 280 vehicles to the rebel-held zone. Putin states that the convoy is transporting humanitarian goods as part of a mission involving the Red Cross, but the Red Cross denies knowledge of any such agreement. Ukraine vows that the trucks will not be allowed to enter the country unless they are thoroughly examined and traveling under the auspices of the Red Cross.

### ***August 13, 2014***

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights states that the death toll associated with the conflict in Ukraine has escalated dramatically. Of the roughly 2,100 people killed since fighting began in April 2014, nearly half died in the period between July 26 and August 10. More than 5,000 people have been injured since the start of hostilities, and more than 150,000 have been internally displaced.

### ***August 14, 2014***

As Ukrainian armed forces continue their advance, separatists announce the resignation of commander Igor Girkin (also known by the nom de guerre Strelkov). Believed by EU authorities to be a Russian military intelligence officer, Girkin has been one of the most-visible faces in the rebel leadership structure. Valery Bolotov, leader of the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic, also announces that he is stepping down. Combined with the resignation of Borodai the previous week, this represents a complete overhaul in the top ranks of the rebel leadership.

### ***August 15, 2014***

Ukrainian armed forces report the destruction of part of an armoured column that entered Ukrainian territory from Russia. The Russian government decries the claim as “some kind of fantasy.” This announcement comes one day after Western journalists photographed a convoy of armoured personnel carriers crossing into Ukraine from Russia.

### ***August 16, 2014***

Aleksandr Zakharchenko, the new leader of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic, announces that he has received substantial reinforcements from Russia, including dozens of tanks and 1,200 Russian-trained troops. Russia continues to deny that it is supporting the rebels.

### ***August 18, 2014***

More than a dozen people are killed when rockets strike a convoy of refugees fleeing Luhansk. The civilians were traveling under a Ukrainian military escort but were not in an established humanitarian safety corridor at the time of the attack.

### ***August 21, 2014***

Ukrainian border authorities and Red Cross officials begin inspecting the Russian aid convoy, which has been parked on the Russian side of the border for nearly a week.

### ***August 22, 2014***

Stating that the inspection process is taking too long, Russia orders its convoy into Ukraine without the approval of the Ukrainian government. More than 200 trucks pass through a rebel-controlled border checkpoint and continue toward Luhansk. In Luhansk Lithuania’s honorary consul, Mykola Zelenec, is kidnapped and killed by an armed separatist group. NATO reports that Russian artillery positioned within both Russia and Ukraine is being used to shell Ukrainian military forces.



### ***August 24, 2014***

Thousands gather in Kiev for a celebration of Ukraine's Independence Day. A military parade and an address by Poroshenko mark the occasion, while in Donetsk separatists march a group of Ukrainian prisoners of war through the streets at bayonet-point. International human rights organizations immediately criticize the display as a violation of the Geneva Conventions.

### ***August 25, 2014***

Poroshenko dissolves parliament and calls for snap elections to be held on October 26, 2014. Moscow announces plans for a second humanitarian aid convoy to be dispatched to rebel-held territory in eastern Ukraine. Ukrainian authorities report a clash between border guards and a column of Russian armoured vehicles near Novoazovs'k. The city, which is a short distance from the Russian border and well outside the existing area of separatist control, is just 25 miles from Mariupol.

### ***August 26, 2014***

The Ukrainian military announces that 10 Russian paratroopers have been captured near the town of Dzerkal'ne, roughly 12 miles (20 km) from the Ukrainian-Russian border. For the first time since the start of hostilities, Russian military officials concede that Russian troops crossed into Ukraine, but they insist that the incursion was accidental. Poroshenko and Putin meet privately during a trade summit in Minsk, Belarus, to discuss border control issues and the cessation of hostilities in eastern Ukraine.

### ***August 28, 2014***

Poroshenko declares that “Russian forces have entered Ukraine” and convenes an emergency session of his security council. NATO estimates that more than 1,000 Russian troops are operating inside Ukraine, and intelligence analysts identify tanks in the separatist arsenal that could only have been obtained from Russia. Rebel forces take control of Novoazovs’k, and civilians flee Mariupol as the Ukrainian military bolsters its defenses there. Russia restates its claim that it has no role in the conflict.

### ***August 29, 2014***

Yatsenyuk announces that Ukraine will seek membership in NATO and introduces a bill in parliament that will begin that process.

### ***September 2, 2014***

In a conversation with European Commission Pres. José Manuel Barroso, Putin declares, “If I wanted to, I could take Kiev in two weeks.” Kremlin officials criticize Barroso for disclosing the remark but do not deny that Putin said it, stating instead that it was taken out of context.

### ***September 3, 2014***

France suspends delivery of a Mistral amphibious assault ship to Russia, stating that Russia’s actions in Ukraine have threatened European security. The ship, the first of two promised as part of a \$1.7 billion weapons deal that predates the EU arms embargo, has been undergoing crew training and sea trials in the French port of Saint-Nazaire.

***September 5, 2014***

While meeting at a NATO summit in Wales, Western leaders pledge their support for the Ukrainian government and announce a fresh round of sanctions against Russia. In Minsk, Belarus, former Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma brokers a cease-fire deal with Russian officials and representatives of pro-Russian separatist groups. Some 2,600 people—a total that does not include the victims of the flight MH17 crash—have been killed in eastern Ukraine since hostilities began in April.

Michael Ray

## **Viktor Yanukovich**

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president of Ukraine

Also known as: Viktor Fedorovich Yanukovich

Written by Michael Ray

Fact-checked by The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

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**Viktor Yanukovych**, in full **Viktor Fedorovych Yanukovych**, (born July 9, 1950, Yenakiyev, Ukraine, U.S.S.R. [now in Ukraine]), Ukrainian politician who served as prime minister (2002–05, 2006–07) and president (2010–14) of Ukraine.

Yanukovych was born to a poor family in the industrial Donets Basin, and his brushes with the law in his late teens and early twenties resulted in a pair of jail terms. Starting in 1969, he worked in heavy industry in and around his hometown of Yenakiyev, rising from mechanic to executive over a 20-year career. During that time he attended Donetsk Polytechnic Institute (now Donetsk State Technical University), earning a degree in mechanical engineering (1980); he also joined the Communist Party.



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[Ukraine: The Yanukovych presidency](#)

Following Ukraine's independence from the Soviet Union, Yanukovych became involved in local government. The 1990s were a period of uncertainty in the Donetsk region: organized crime was rampant, and government ministers and prominent businessmen were frequently the targets of assassination attempts. In this climate Yanukovych, who affected an imposing demeanour based partly on his physical stature (he stood almost 6 feet 6 inches [2 metres] tall), emerged as a favoured candidate of the business community, and in 1997 he became governor of Donetsk province. During his time in that post, he earned a law degree from the Ukrainian Academy of Foreign Trade (2000).

In 2002 Ukrainian Pres. Leonid Kuchma appointed Yanukovych prime minister. Yanukovych, who did not speak Ukrainian prior to his appointment, shared Kuchma's desire to maintain close ties

with Russia. As the 2004 presidential election approached, Yanukovych was presented as Kuchma's clear successor, and Russian Pres. Vladimir Putin offered support for his candidacy. During the campaign Yanukovych's chief opponent, the pro-Western Viktor Yushchenko, became ill after an apparent assassination attempt, and the race drew international attention. The results of the first round of the election were inconclusive. In the November runoff Yanukovych was declared the winner, in spite of exit polling that showed Yushchenko with a commanding lead. Yushchenko's supporters took to the streets by the tens of thousands in a series of protests that were dubbed the Orange Revolution, and the runoff results were overturned by the Ukrainian Supreme Court. In a new runoff held on December 26, 2004, Yanukovych was soundly defeated.

As a fuel crisis and parliamentary gridlock plagued Yushchenko's administration, Yanukovych began to rebuild his power base. In 2006 Yanukovych's Party of Regions scored a victory in parliamentary elections, and Yushchenko was compelled to name Yanukovych prime minister. However, Yanukovych lost that post in 2007 to Yuliya Tymoshenko, a major figure in the Orange Revolution and, like Yanukovych, a challenger to Yushchenko in the presidential election of 2010.

In January 2010 Yanukovych, Tymoshenko, and Yushchenko faced off in the first round of presidential polling. Yushchenko, capturing only about 5 percent of the vote, was eliminated, and a runoff election between Yanukovych and Tymoshenko was held on February 7, 2010. Yanukovych won a narrow victory by taking 48.95 percent of the vote to 45.47 percent for Tymoshenko. Although international observers found the poll to be fair, Tymoshenko denied the validity of the results, and her parliamentary bloc refused to attend Yanukovych's inauguration ceremony on February 25, 2010.



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As president, Yanukovich promptly demonstrated his pro-Russian leanings. In April 2010 he struck a deal with Russian Pres. Dmitry Medvedev to extend Russia's lease of the port at Sevastopol, the base of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, until 2042. In exchange, Ukraine would receive a reduction in the price of Russian natural gas. The parliamentary debate over the agreement devolved into a melee, with some members of the opposition throwing eggs and lighting smoke bombs, but the measure narrowly passed.

Yanukovich drew additional ire from his opponents when he stated that the Great Famine of 1932–33 (a Soviet-era famine in which four to five million Ukrainians died) should not be considered an act of genocide carried out by Soviet authorities against the Ukrainian people, as former president Yushchenko had declared.

A decision by the Constitutional Court in October 2010 greatly expanded the powers of the presidency. In 2011 Tymoshenko was charged with abuse of power and sentenced to seven years in prison. The following year Tymoshenko's interior minister, Yuri Lutsenko, received a four-year sentence for similar charges; many observers characterized both prosecutions as politically motivated. In October 2012 the Party of Regions won the largest share of seats in parliamentary elections, and most observers characterized the polling as relatively free and fair. It appeared that Yanukovich

was attempting to pivot toward the West in April 2013, when he ordered the release of Lutsenko in advance of the signing of an association agreement with the European Union.

Just days before that treaty was to be signed in November 2013, Yanukovych pulled out of the deal, triggering a scramble among EU leaders and sparking a wave of popular protests in Kiev. Putin pledged billions in financial assistance as the demonstrations in Kiev's Maidan (Independence Square) continued into 2014. Yanukovych responded by enacting a series of anti-protest measures that were hastily repealed by the parliament after two demonstrators were killed in clashes with police in January 2014. Protests spread to eastern Ukraine, traditionally Yanukovych's stronghold, and violence in the Maidan escalated dramatically. More than 70 people were killed in clashes with police and security forces in February 2014, as the remaining support for Yanukovych and his administration crumbled. The parliament voted to impeach Yanukovych on February 22; he responded by denouncing the action as a coup and fleeing the capital. His whereabouts unknown, protesters descended upon Yanukovych's opulent residence outside Kiev, and Ukraine's interim government issued a warrant for his arrest on charges of mass murder.

On February 28 Yanukovych reappeared in Rostov-na-Donu, Russia, where he delivered a speech that decried members of the acting Ukrainian government as fascists and asserted that he was still the president of Ukraine. Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk accused Yanukovych and his associates of embezzling some \$70 billion in state assets and transferring the funds to foreign banks. Authorities in Switzerland, Austria, and Liechtenstein moved to freeze assets and accounts linked to Yanukovych's family, and prosecutors in Geneva opened a money-laundering investigation. Yanukovych himself denied the existence of any foreign accounts. In January 2015 Interpol placed the deposed leader on its wanted list in connection with those charges.

Beginning in May 2017, Yanukovich was tried in absentia for high treason and abetting Russian aggression against Ukraine. The trial included testimony from several senior Ukrainian officials, including Pres. Petro Porošenko a Janukovyčovi právníci se pokusili charakterizovat stíhání jako politicky motivovaný trik Porošenkovy administrativy. Porošenko zase vykreslil Janukovyče jako podněcovatele „ruské hybridní války proti Ukrajině“. V lednu 2019 byl Janukovyč shledán vinným z velezrady a odsouzen k 13 letům vězení. Janukovyčovi právníci se proti rozhodnutí odvolali, ačkoli Janukovyčův pokračující exil v Rusku znamenal, že bylo krajně nepravděpodobné, že by ukrajinské úřady měly příležitost vykonat rozsudek.

Michael Ray