

Four occupied Ukraine regions plan imminent ‘votes’ on joining Russia

‘Referendum’ announcements in Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson may indicate move to annex territories

Four Russian-occupied regions in Ukraine have said they are planning to hold “referendums” on joining the Russian Federation in a series of coordinated announcements that could indicate the Kremlin has made a decision to formally annex the territories.

Moscow may be betting that a formal annexation would help halt Russian territorial losses, after a successful Ukrainian counter-offensive that has reclaimed large portions of territory in the Kharkiv region.

But Ukraine and the west have indicated that they will not recognise the annexations – and that Russia’s new territorial claims will not slow Ukraine reclaiming its sovereign land.

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