

## Russia defies Ukrainian court order on lighthouse handover

02/11/2006 16:57

KIEV, November 2 (RIA Novosti) - Russia will not obey a Ukrainian court ruling requiring its Defense Ministry to hand over the Russian Black Sea Fleet's lighthouses in Crimea, the ambassador to Ukraine said Thursday.

Ukraine is seeking control over 22 lighthouses and other navigation facilities on its Crimean peninsula, which are currently being used by the Russian fleet. The ownership of the lighthouses, and the rent Russia pays for them, is one of the main ongoing disputes between the ex-Soviet neighbors.

Viktor Chernomyrdin said, "This issue should be solved only at an intergovernmental level."

He also said the fleet will stay in Crimea through 2017, as stipulated by a 1997 agreement.

"Our fleet will remain in Crimea until the date set in the treaty," he said.

Russia pays Ukraine an annual rent of \$93 million to base its fleet in the peninsula.

During a televised phone-in session in October, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Moscow would like to see the Russian navy's lease extended beyond 2017.

Ukraine's pro-Western leadership, seeking integration with NATO and the European Union, rejected the proposal, saying they will honor the 1997 treaty, but expect the post-Soviet neighbor to withdraw its military base from Ukrainian soil as soon as the accord expires.

### other articles

- 15:02** 15/11/2006 Ukraine will not renege on Russian fleet deal - FM
- 15:34** 25/10/2006 Russia ready for talks to extend Black Sea Fleet's stay in Crimea
- 17:42** 18/09/2006 Ukraine says no Russia control of Black Sea facilities
- 18:04** 14/09/2006 Russia cautions Ukraine against fleet property seizure-ministry

