

# New pictures show eye-popping opulence of ousted Ukrainian president's palace as sprawling estate becomes tourist attraction

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New pictures have been released that reveal the vulgar luxury that the deposed leader of Ukraine lived in.

Viktor Yanukovich fled to Russia recently following one of the worst periods of violence in the country's history and left behind a new tourist attraction - his sprawling luxury estate in Mezhyhirya, an hour's drive from Kiev.

Hundreds of people have since flocked to view the mansion, which is set in a beautiful forested estate of graceful waterways, summer houses and exotic gardens.



Yanukovich's house is stuffed with fine ornaments, including this golden leopard

Visitors rubbed their eyes in disbelief when they were confronted by the scale of the opulence Yanukovich had built around him.



Secret: The huge property, closed off to the public for a month, contained rooms designed for entertaining guests in style

Locals said that up to 3,000 security and support staff would arrive when Yanukovich planned a major social event.

The release of the pictures comes as Ukraine and Russia inch towards all-out war, which could effect the stability of the whole of Europe, possibly the world.

Russian troops surrounded a Ukrainian infantry base on Sunday as Ukraine's leaders mobilised the country's armed forces in preparation for conflict.

Ukraine called on Sunday for 'real steps' by world leaders for help. Ukrainian prime minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk said 'we are on the brink of disaster' and the actions of Russian President Vladimir Putin were said to amount to a declaration of war.

'Any attempt to attack military installations is in fact direct military aggression against our country and the Russian military and the Russian leadership will be held responsible,' Acting President Oleksander Turchinov said.

Crimea is now effectively controlled by Russia directly or with the help of so-called self defence units, which in reality include Russian troops and GRU intelligence personnel.