

4 Dead in East Ukraine Fighting, Report Says

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A Ukrainian soldier aims his rifle at pro-Russia protesters gathered in front of a Ukrainian airbase in Kramatorsk, in eastern Ukraine April 15, 2014.

A pro-Russian separatist in eastern Ukraine has said that a battle between his militia and the Ukrainian army has resulted in at least four deaths and two injuries to the separatist side, a news report said Tuesday evening.

An unidentified militia source told state news wire RIA Novosti that the fight at an airfield in Kramatorsk, a city in the Donetsk region, had ended and separatist troops have retreated.

Acting President Oleksandr Turchynov deployed Ukrainian troops in the east of the country as part of an "anti-terrorist" operation after pro-Russian separatists took control of government buildings in a number of cities in the region.

Journalists in the city have posted on their Twitter accounts that firing was heard and that a fighter jet was seen flying overhead. After the battle local residents have reportedly confronted anti-terrorist operation troops and begun piling tires to block access to the city.

The head of the Donbass people's militia, Sergei Tsyplakov, told earlier Interfax said that the streets of Slavyansk have been blocked by armored vehicles and that forces dispatched by Kiev were preparing for an assault on the city. He said that his information came from his militia's reconnaissance efforts and added that his militia was getting ready to fight back.

The Ukrainian State Security Service confirmed that an operation was also going on in Slavyansk, Reuters reported.

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