

UN Says Timing Is Wrong for Peacekeeping Troops in Ukraine

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United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon leaves after the opening of the First High-level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation in Mexico City.

MEXICO CITY — It is not the right moment for any United Nations peacekeeping troops to be sent to Ukraine, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said.

"At this moment, it does not seem very practical to send troops," Ban told Mexican newspaper Reforma, according to the Spanish text of an interview.

Ban, who was in Mexico City to attend a conference on international development, was speaking as Ukrainian forces launched a "special operation" against separatist militia in the Russian-speaking east of the country.

Tensions have flared between Moscow and the West in Ukraine since Russia's annexation of the Crimean region last month after the overthrow of Ukraine's Moscow-backed president, Viktor Yanukovich.

Ban told the newspaper that any decision to send troops to Ukraine would need to be agreed by the UN Security Council, of which Russia is a permanent member.

"Unless we have a clear mandate and authorization from the Security Council, I can't take any action," Ban said.

Earlier Tuesday, the Kremlin said Russian President Vladimir Putin told Ban that the UN and the international community should condemn the use of force by Ukrainian authorities in eastern Ukraine.

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