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Yanukovych Didn't Authorize Use of Force Against Protesters, Putin Says

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President Vladimir Putin said during his annual call-in show that ousted Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych told him he did not authorize the use of force against anti-government protesters on Kiev's Independence Square during clashes in February.

Responding to a question from a former member of the Ukrainian Berkut police in the audience, who asked whether Yanukovych was "always such a weakling and a traitor," Putin said the ousted leader fulfilled his duties "as he considered necessary."

Speaking about the violence that broke out in central Kiev, for which the current Ukrainian government blames Yanukovych, Putin said Yanukovych told him that "his arm did not rise to sign an order to authorize the use of force" against protesters.

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