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Mortar Fire Damages Gas Pipe in Eastern Ukraine

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Heavy mortar fire outside the eastern Ukrainian city of Slovyansk has damaged a large gas pipeline and set off a fire.

AP journalists on Monday witnessed mortar fire hitting the village of Andriyivka, just outside Slovyansk. The shelling damaged a gas main running across a field and onto local residents' lands. The pipeline caught fire, but no residents were hurt. Slovyansk has been the epicenter of fighting between Ukrainian troops and pro-Russian insurgents, who have seized government buildings across the east.

Ukraine's central government has urged rebels to lay down arms and sit down for talks, but they say they are only prepared to discuss the withdrawal of government troops.
The insurgents have recently declared the two regions independent following referendums rejected as illegal by Ukraine and the West.

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