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Italian Journalist and Russian Colleague Reported Killed in Ukraine

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Members of the Ukrainian security services stand near a armoured personnel carrier at a checkpoint near the town of Slovyansk, east Ukraine.

An Italian journalist and his Russian translator have been killed in fighting between pro-Russian forces and Ukrainian government troops in eastern Ukraine, the Italian Foreign Ministry said Sunday.

The bodies of Andrea Rocchelli, a freelance photographer who worked with the Cesura photographers' collective, and his colleague, Andrey Mironov, were taken to a hospital in the town of Slavyansk.

An earlier statement issued by the ministry identified the journalist as Andrea Ronchelli.

Italian Foreign Minister Federica Mogherini said she would be speaking to her Ukrainian counterpart to ascertain what happened in the incident.

Separately, French freelance journalist William Roguelon, who had been traveling with

Rocchelli and his translator, said the group came under fire on the outskirts of the eastern town on Saturday afternoon.

"We went to the area because there had been a bombing next to a neighborhood. So, there was nothing when we arrived. We were an Italian journalist, a fixer, a driver," Roguelon, who was wounded in the attack, told reporters at Slavyansk hospital.

"After we arrived we got shot at, we threw ourselves in a ditch, after they shot at least 40 shells onto us and the vehicle."

Roguelon said Rocchelli and Mironov were hit by mortar fire between rebels and Ukrainian troops while he himself had walked off along the road looking for help.

He said he did not know for certain whether the two men were dead when he last saw them but he said they were not moving.

"They were on the ground," he said.

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