

Merkel, Hollande Call Putin on Eve of Ukraine Vote

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The leaders of Germany and France called on President Vladimir Putin to discuss the situation in Ukraine on the eve of elections there.

The office of German Chancellor Angela Merkel said she and French President Francois Hollande spoke to Putin late Saturday afternoon, and all three expressed their concern about the situation in Ukraine.

Merkel's office said the three leaders agreed that the presidential election should take place peacefully in as many parts of Ukraine as possible.

Pro-Russian insurgents are expected to prevent voting in half or more of the election districts in Ukraine's embattled east on Sunday.

Merkel's office declined to say whether any disagreements were expressed during the call.

Germany and France, like most western countries, have blamed Russia for fanning

the separatists' rebellion in eastern Ukraine.

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