

Ukraine Accuses Pro-Russian Rebels of Violating Ceasefire Agreement

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma (2nd L), OSCE Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini (C) and Russian Ambassador to Ukraine Mikhail Zurabov attend a meeting with leaders of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic in the city of Donetsk, Ukraine.

Ukrainian government forces have accused pro-Russian separatists of firing on Ukrainian military checkpoints in several parts of the east despite a cease-fire declared by the rebels.

No sustained fighting was reported in the incidents, nor any casualties on the Ukrainian side which is also observing a week-long cease-fire until June 27.

"[Separatist] fighters are not ceasing to shoot at the positions of Ukrainian forces," Vladyslav Seleznyov, a spokesman for the Kiev government's "anti-terrorist" operation, said Tuesday on his Facebook page.

Rebel militia, using grenade-launchers and mortar, carried out attacks on a government

military post near the rebel-controlled town of Slovyansk and used small arms in an assault on another post further east towards the border with Russia, Selznyov said.

He said Ukrainian government forces had not been involved in any military action in line with a cease-fire announced by Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko last Friday.

"I can not say whether the separatists have violated or not violated [the cease-fire], but the facts speak for themselves — yesterday during the day and in the evening they fired on our positions," Seleznyov said separately.

Separatist leaders in two main areas of Ukraine's east on Monday night also agreed to a truce until the morning of June 27, raising the first real prospect of an end to hostilities since separatist rebellions erupted in the east in April.

The rebels, who have declared "people's republics" and have said they want to join Russia, declared their cease-fire after talks involving former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, Moscow's envoy to Kiev, and a high-ranking representative of the OSCE security and rights watchdog.

Poroshenko's cease-fire is part of his peace plan to end a pro-Russia insurgency in areas near the border with Russia which threatens dismemberment of the ex-Soviet republic.

Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean peninsula earlier this year after street protests in Kiev ousted the Moscow-backed Viktor Yanukovich from power.

Poroshenko's plan, which offers a safety "corridor" back to Russia for pro-Russian fighters who lay down their arms, has secured the backing of Western governments and qualified support from Russian President Vladimir Putin who has urged Kiev to hold talks with the separatist leaders.

The next step in contacts between the two sides is not clear, though it seems likely the rebels may use the break in hostilities to press demands for "federalization" of Ukraine — something which Kiev refuses because it sees it as likely to lead to the country breaking up.

See also:

[Separatists Agree to Observe Cease-Fire in Ukraine, Rebel Leader Says](https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/06/24/ukraine-accuses-pro-russian-rebels-of-violating-ceasefire-agreement-a36676)

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