

East Ukraine Rebel Leader Strelkov Bans Swearing to Appease God

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Separatist military commander Igor Strelkov attends a news conference in the eastern Ukrainian city of Donetsk.

A Russian citizen who leads rebels in eastern Ukraine has divined an unorthodox way to raise the combat effectiveness of his troops, who have suffered a series of setbacks lately: Stop using foul language, so that God will be pleased and will help the rebels' cause.

A particularly crude collection of profanities — known as Russian "mat" — "spiritually humiliates us and leads the army to defeat," Igor Strelkov, who heads the separatists of the self-declared Donetsk People's Republic, said in an order this week published by his supporters Tuesday.

"We call ourselves an Orthodox army and are proud to be serving not the golden calf, but Our Lord Jesus Christ and our people," he said. "Using 'mat' swearing is blasphemy against our Lord and the Mother of God, whom we serve and who cover us in battle."

Strelkov's order follows the line of his homeland, which has banned swearing in public, in the arts and in the media, although Russia did not cite religious values as grounds for its laws.

Strelkov did not specify what penalties may be handed down to those who violate the order.

Ukrainian government forces have been making rapid gains in the country's separatist east in recent days, retaking control of areas around the crash site of a Malaysian airliner that was shot down on July 17.

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