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Luhansk Separatist Leader Announces Resignation

By The Moscow Times

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Valery Bolotov, head of the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic, speaks during a news briefing in a regional administration building in the eastern Ukrainian city of Luhansk.

The leader of the pro-Russian separatist rebels in Ukraine's Luhansk region announced his resignation on Thursday, becoming the second senior rebel to quit in the space of seven days.

Russian state-run broadcaster Rossiya 24 on Thursday broadcast the statement by Valery Bolotov, head of the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic, saying he was injured and could not carry on in his role.

The Luhansk region, on the border with Russia, has been the scene of fighting between rebels and Ukrainian forces who are trying to reestablish central control over separatist-held areas.

Bolotov, in the comments broadcast on Russian television, said Igor Plotnitsky, defense minister of the Luhansk People's Republic, would take over from him.

His resignation means that both the main separatist entities, in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions of eastern Ukraine, are having leadership changes. Alexander Borodai, head of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, announced on Aug. 7 that he was stepping down.

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