

Ukraine Separatists Deny Commander Igor Strelkov Badly Injured

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Igor Strelkov during a news conference in Donetsk in late July. Separatists on Wednesday denied Strelkov had been badly injured during the ongoing conflict with Ukrainian government forces in eastern Ukraine.

Separatists in eastern Ukraine on Wednesday denied a report that rebel commander Igor Strelkov had been wounded in fighting, a Russian state newspaper said.

"It's not the first time such rumors appear, and they've never been confirmed. Everything is fine with Igor Strelkov," newspaper Rossiiskaya Gazeta quoted Fyodor Berezin, the deputy defense minister of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, or DNR, as saying.

A small separatist Internet news outlet Novorossiia, quoting an unnamed source, earlier said Strelkov, whose real name is Igor Girkin, had been badly wounded.

The report could not be independently confirmed, and an aide to Strelkov declined

to comment, saying: "No comments. I have clear instructions."

The ITAR-Tass news agency quoted another separatist leader as saying he could not rule out the report.

"I don't have specific information, but it is likely true," said Andrei Purgin, the DNR's deputy prime minister. "There is heavy fighting in that area."

A serious injury to one of the rebels' chief commanders would be a further blow to the separatists, who have abandoned a string of towns in eastern Ukraine to government forces in recent weeks.

Kiev says rebel leaders, some of whom are Russian and who want union with Russia, are receiving arms from Moscow, an allegation the Kremlin denies.

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