

Ukraine PM Tells Army to be on Full Battle Alert Despite Cease-Fire

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A Ukrainian serviceman uses his mobile phone as he rides on a military truck near the eastern Ukrainian town of Pervomaysk, September 17, 2014.

Ukraine's prime minister told government forces to remain on full battle alert on Wednesday as fighting in the rebel-held eastern city of Donetsk killed at least two civilians and further strained a cease-fire with Russian-backed separatists.

"Russia definitely will not give us either peace or stability. It is not their goal. So I am asking the defence minister for full battle readiness," Arseny Yatseniuk, who is emerging as a policy hawk in President Petro Poroshenko's leadership, told a government meeting.

The pro-Western Poroshenko, who will be looking for U.S. support for his strategy in handling the separatist rebellions and Russia when he addresses the U.S. Congress on Thursday, called the cease-fire on Sept. 5 after heavy battlefield losses which Kiev ascribes to Russian military intervention on behalf of the rebels.

Moscow denies its armed forces are involved in the fighting despite what Kiev and Western

governments say is undeniable proof.

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