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France and Germany Offer Drones to Help Monitor Ukraine Cease-Fire

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OSCE observers take pictures at the site where rebels say is a mass grave with five bodies, in the town of Nizhnaya Krinka, eastern Ukraine.

PARIS — France and Germany have offered to deploy drones as part of efforts by the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) to beef up monitoring of the cease-fire in Ukraine, France's foreign ministry said Monday.

OSCE spokesman Shiv Sharma said earlier in September that the group would initially deploy two drones at the end of the month or the beginning of October, and that more would follow later.

"As requested by the OSCE in Europe, France and Germany have proposed to provide drones aimed at monitoring the cease-fire's implementation," French Foreign Ministry spokesman Romain Nadal said in a daily news briefing.

Despite the Sept. 5 cease-fire, fighting has flared frequently around Donetsk international airport, in eastern Ukraine, which is held by government forces.

Seven Ukrainian soldiers were killed when a separatist shell hit their armored personnel carrier near the airport, a military spokesman said Monday.

Nadal said the drone offer was being studied by the OSCE. He gave no further details.

The drones are part of plans to expand the OSCE's mission in Ukraine, where five months of fighting have led to Russia's biggest clash with the West since the end of the Cold War.

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