The Moscow Times
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Russia Blames Death of Swiss Red Cross Worker on Kiev

October 03, 2014



Russia said Friday the mortar fire that killed a Swiss worker from the International Committee of the Red Cross in Donetsk in eastern Ukraine was fired from territory controlled by Ukrainian government forces.

"Kiev did not want to admit the obvious: The area of Donetsk affected by the fire was under the control of the [pro-Russian separatist] militia and the fire came from positions taken by Ukrainian forces," a Foreign Ministry statement said.

Pro-Russian separatists and the Ukrainian government forces they have been fighting have blamed each other for the attack late Thursday, adding fresh strain to a fragile cease-fire which has increasingly frayed in recent days.

The conflict has plunged ties between Russia and the West, which backs Kiev, to their lowest level since the end of the Cold War and claimed 3,000 lives, including 298 killed when a Malaysian airliner was downed over rebel-held eastern Ukraine.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavel Klimkin made a statement shortly after the attack

condemning the mortar bombing and placed responsibility on the separatists. Rebel leader Andrei Purgin said Ukrainian government forces had shelled Donetsk constantly and that the attack had come from one of their areas.

The ICRC offices in Donetsk are in a three-story building less than one kilometer from the state security headquarters, which has been occupied by separatist rebels along with other strategic points in the city since April.

The man killed, 38-year old Laurent DuPasqiuer, had been in Ukraine for six weeks before the attack, the Red Cross said.

Original url:
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