

Kiev Agrees to Pull Troops Out If Rebels Behave During 'Quiet Time' in East Ukraine

October 08, 2014

The  Moscow Times

Authorities in Kiev have agreed to pull out troops stationed in Ukraine's east if pro-Russian separatists in the area obey a 24-hour cease-fire, Ukrainian media reported Wednesday.

"The forces of anti-terrorist operations have unanimously agreed to shift to implementing the second provision of the plan to regulate the situation in eastern Ukraine, which calls for the removal of our troops to distant positions and boundaries," Vladislav Seleznev, a spokesman for the Ukrainian military, was cited as saying in comments to television channel 112 Ukraine by online news site Lenta.ru.

The order to pull troops out will be given if "within 24 hours no shooting or explosions are heard on the territory of counter-terrorism operations," Seleznev was cited as saying.

Until now, Ukrainian authorities had refused to pull back, citing the separatists' alleged violations of a cease-fire agreed to during negotiations in Minsk.

A so-called "quiet period" was introduced by the Ukraine side on Tuesday, with the Council of National Security and Defense calling for a full cease-fire starting from 7:30 p.m. Moscow time.

Both sides had agreed to certain conditions as part of the agreement reached in Minsk. The self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic announced on Sept. 22 that it had removed its equipment back to a certain boundary as part of the agreement. Ukrainian troops, for their part, said they were moving their equipment back 15 kilometers, as required by the agreement, Lenta.ru reported.

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