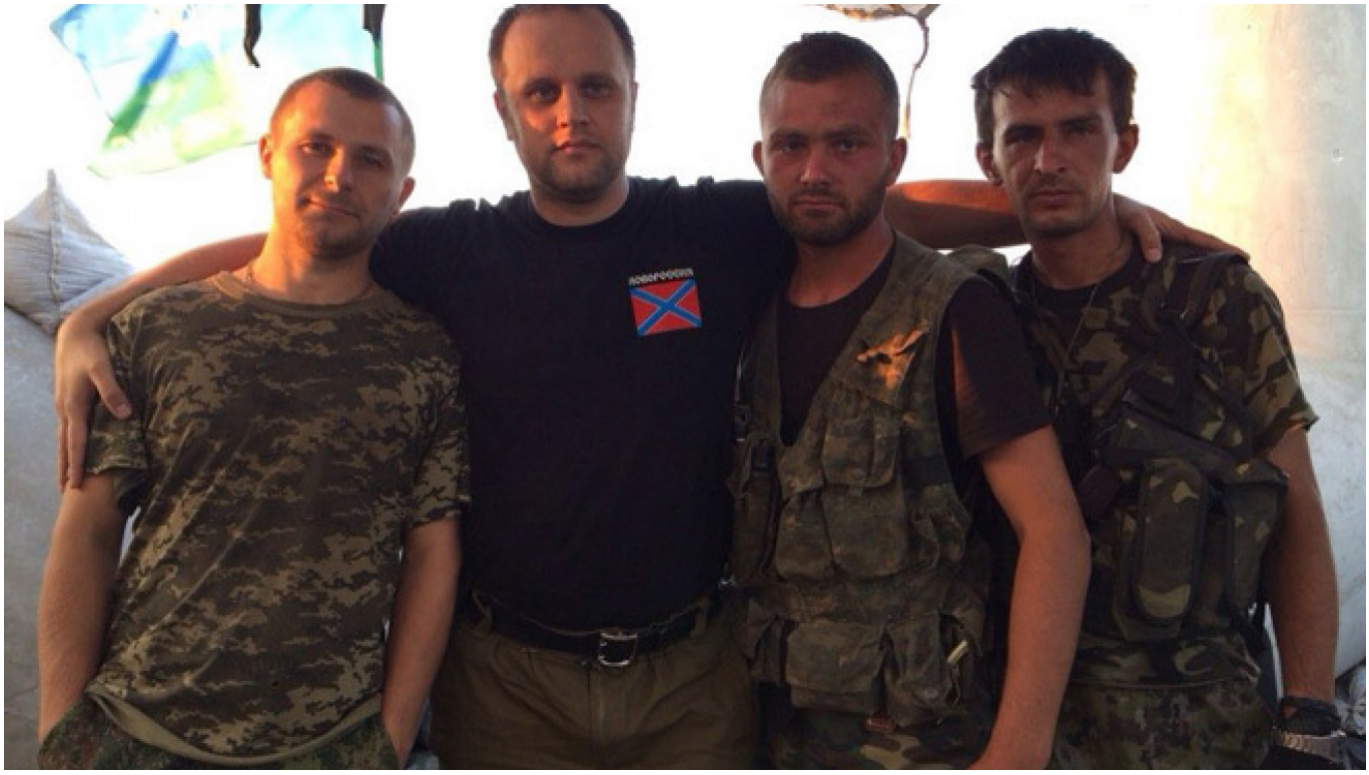
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Ukraine Rebel Leader Hospitalized After Assassination Attempt, Wife Says

By Jennifer Monaghan

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Ukraine Rebel Leader Pavel Gubarev (2nd from left) came under gunfire in his car when traveling across Donetsk late Sunday evening.

One of the leading figures of the separatist movement in eastern Ukraine has been hospitalized following an attempt on his life, his wife said Monday.

Pavel Gubarev, who earlier headed the self-declared Donetsk People's Republic, was traveling across Donetsk late Sunday evening when his car was fired upon by gunmen and veered into a concrete pillar, Yekaterina Gubareva wrote on her husband's Facebook page.

Gubarev was taken to a hospital in Rostov-on-Don, a southern Russian city near to the border with Ukraine, Russian news reports said.

"Pavel is receiving medical treatment in Russia. Pavel is alive, he has not suffered any gunshot wounds, fractures or damage to his vital organs. He has yet to regain consciousness,"

Gubareva wrote.

Gubarev, who also founded the militant separatist group Donetsk People's Militia, served as an early governor of the self-proclaimed republic until he was captured in March by Ukrainian forces.

After his release in May as part of a prisoner swap, he announced the creation of the Novorossia political party, whose stated aim is the creation of a new state on Ukraine's eastern territory.

Russia's state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported Sunday that the separatists' Central Election Committee had refused to register the Novorossia party for parliamentary elections announced by the Donetsk People's Republic and its counterpart in neighboring Luhansk for early November.

Gubarev said Sunday on Facebook that he was planning to run in the republics' gubernatorial elections, which take place at the same time as the parliamentary vote, and that he would be submitting his candidacy documents for head of the republic Monday. He added that he would be making an important announcement Monday, without disclosing further details.

His wife said Monday that the Novorossia party would be running in the upcoming parliamentary elections as part of the Free Donbass political bloc, and dismissed reports to the contrary.

Gubarev and other rebels have been fighting the pro-Western government's forces in eastern Ukraine for more than six months in a conflict that has claimed the lives of more than 3,500 people, according to UN estimates.

This attempt on the seperatist's life was also not the first, according to a statement on the Novorossia party website. In early June, attackers tried to throw a grenade into Gubarev's office in the Donetsk's People's Republic headquarters, but failed to hit their target, the statement said.

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