

France Names Conditions for Delivering Mistral Warships to Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russian sailors board their Russian Navy frigate Smolny as they leave the STX Les Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyard site in Saint-Nazaire, western France, Dec. 18, 2014.

The French defense minister has named the conditions on which France will consider fulfilling a contract to deliver two Mistral helicopter carriers to Russia, which was suspended indefinitely over Russia's support for separatists in eastern Ukraine, the Interfax news agency reported.

"There needs to be a ceasefire that is completely respected in this part of Europe [Ukraine]. A political roadmap is also necessary," Interfax quoted Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian as saying Thursday on radio station Europe 1.

The first of two Mistral warships was to be handed over to Russia on Nov. 14, but the French government delayed the delivery indefinitely in response to Russia's support for the separatists.

A ceasefire agreement was signed between separatist forces and the Ukrainian government in September after five months of bloody conflict. It has been flouted by both sides, however, with more than 1,000 people killed in intermittent shelling since the signing, according to the United Nations.

Russian Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov told Interfax last month that France must either fulfill the 1.2 billion euro (\$1.45 billion) contract or return Russia's money.

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