

Merkel Says Putin Pressured Rebels to Agree to Ukraine Cease-Fire

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Russia's President Vladimir Putin (2nd R) uses an elevator as he attends a peace summit to resolve the Ukrainian crisis in Minsk, Feb. 12, 2015.

BERLIN — German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Thursday that Russia's Vladimir Putin had put pressure on the pro-Moscow separatists in eastern Ukraine to agree to a cease-fire from Sunday, which she said offered a "glimmer of hope" for an end to the bloodshed.

"Towards the end President Putin also put pressure on the separatists so that they agreed for a cease-fire from Saturday at 24:00 hours, or Sunday at zero hours," Merkel said in comments to reporters in Minsk that were circulated by her office in Berlin.

In 16 hours of talks in the Belarus capital, Ukraine's Petro Poroshenko "did everything to achieve the possibility of an end to the bloodshed", Merkel said.

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