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Pro-Ukraine Protesters Chain Themselves to Russian Embassy in Prague

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Pro-Ukrainian activists stand after they handcuffed themselves to the fence outside the Russian Embassy in Prague Feb. 25, 2015.

Protesters in the Czech Republic chained themselves to the fence of the Russian Embassy and displayed signs denouncing Russia's President Vladimir Putin as a "jailer, occupant, murderer" in a rally against the Kremlin's meddling in Ukraine, news reports said.

The protesters in Prague also held Ukrainian flags, and some painted Ukraine's blue and yellow colors on their arms, according to photographs published by Czech media. Signs in Czech, Russian and English read: "Ruthless killers, hands off Ukraine," and "Putin — a leader, occupant, jailer, murderer."

Police cut the handcuffs with which five participants in the Wednesday action had chained themselves to the embassy fence and escorted the activists to a police station, spokesman David Schoen was cited as saying by the country's Ceske Noviny news site.

The protesters, identified as members of a group called oMEN that is highly critical of Moscow's policies, also handed over a letter to Russian Ambassador Sergei Kiselyov, asking him to help end the violence in Ukraine, the report said.

The activists also demanded the release of Ukrainian pilot Nadezhda Savchenko, whose hunger strike in a Moscow jail has gone into its third month. She was captured by pro-Moscow forces in eastern Ukraine and handed over to Russia last summer. Moscow accuses her of abetting the killing of two Russian journalists in the Luhansk region.

The conflict between Moscow-backed separatists and government forces in eastern Ukraine has killed some 5,700 people, according to a UN tally. Kiev and Western governments accuse Moscow of providing fighters, weapons and training to the insurgents, but Russia denies providing military aide, while publicly endorsing the rebels' cause.

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