

Activist Vows to Publish Nemtsov's Pre-Murder Report on Ukraine

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Ilya Yashin

A version of a damning report detailing Russia's alleged military presence in eastern Ukraine — which opposition politician Boris Nemtsov had been compiling before his grisly demise last week — will be published posthumously, his fellow activists told newspaper The Times of London.

Nemtsov, a vociferous critic of President Vladimir Putin, was gunned down steps from the Kremlin as he was walking across Moscow's Bolshoi Moskvoretsky Bridge on Friday night.

Ilya Yashin, a close ally of the slain politician, told The Times that evidence Nemtsov had gathered of Russian military involvement in clashes in eastern Ukraine had been saved, dispelling fears that the report had been lost in its entirety when law enforcement officers seized the politician's computer in the course of the murder probe.

“I have some ideas how to pick up the pieces of his report, but this is not something that can be done in a few days,” Yashin said in comments carried by The Times.

In the face of widespread accusations by Western leaders, Moscow has vehemently denied that Russian forces have been deployed to fight against the Ukrainian military in eastern Ukraine.

Independent Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta published an interview on Monday with Dorzhi Batomunkuyev, a 20-year-old Russian soldier who claimed to have been assigned to a tank unit in the fight for control of Debaltseve, an eastern Ukrainian city that fell under rebel control last month.

A survey published Wednesday by independent Moscow-based pollster the Levada Center also found that a majority of Russians believe their government when it says it has not sent troops to Ukraine.

The poll revealed that 53 percent of Russians believe that their country has not deployed any forces to Ukraine, while one quarter of the population believes the West's allegations that there is in fact a formal Russian military presence in its southwestern neighbor.

The poll also showed that 45 percent of the Russian population would be in favor of seeing Russian troops fight alongside the pro-Russian rebels of eastern Ukraine, while 35 percent of the population would be against it.

The Levada Center survey, conducted in February among 1,600 respondents across 46 Russian regions with a margin of error not exceeding 3.4 percent, found that 60 percent of the population disagrees with the notion that Russia is at war with Ukraine.

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