

4-Way Talks on Ukraine Crisis to Take Place in Berlin

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BERLIN — Senior Russian, Ukrainian, German and French officials will meet in Berlin on Friday to discuss eastern Ukraine and next steps needed towards implementing a peace accord struck three weeks ago in Minsk, Germany's foreign minister said.

"Of course, we cannot be satisfied with the speed of the implementation of the Minsk accord, but we have seen there has been a clear reduction of violence and a reduction of infringements of the cease-fire," Frank-Walter Steinmeier said.

"We will do another stock-take, look at where we are now ... We need to ensure the cease-fire and weapons withdrawal can be secured enough to provide solid ground for the next steps ahead, such as the introduction of a political process," he added at a joint press conference with his Polish counterpart.

Kiev accused rebels on Thursday of repeated violations of the cease-fire deal, and said they were building up forces in the southern Donetsk province, near the Ukrainian-held port city of Mariupol.

Leaders of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France struck a deal in Minsk on Feb. 12, in the so-called "Normandy format." Political directors of the countries' foreign ministries and deputy foreign ministers will attend the talks on Friday.

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