Kiev Claims Rebel Sniper Killed Ukrainian Serviceman Despite Cease-Fire

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One Ukrainian serviceman was killed and three wounded as a result of fighting in separatist eastern territories over the weekend despite a cease-fire deal, Ukrainian military spokesman Andriy Lysenko said Sunday.

Attacks have fallen significantly in the past two weeks, but accusations of continued violence on both sides show the fragility of the peace accord agreed in Minsk last month, which calls for the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the front line.

"There is increased activity of sniper groups. The serviceman who was killed died at the hands of a sniper," Lysenko said in a televised briefing.

He added that while the Minsk agreements were broadly observed along the front lines, and the intensity of provocative attacks had dropped significantly, rebels continued to fire on government positions.

Kiev accuses the separatists of using the cease–fire to regroup their forces and rearm for a further offensive, a charge the rebels deny, saying they have withdrawn heavy artillery in accordance with the Minsk peace deal.

"Illegal armed groups are actively involved in combat training, gathering resources and rebuilding technical readiness," Lysenko said, adding that rebels had been tracked amassing combat equipment around their stronghold of Donetsk.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which monitors the pullback of weapons, has said it cannot fully confirm withdrawal on both sides as it has not been given access to all the locations where some weapons have been moved.

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