

Poroshenko Urges: No Peace in Ukraine, No Russian World Cup

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko

BERLIN — Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko urged his country's allies to consider boycotting the 2018 soccer World Cup in Russia if Moscow does not pull all its troops out of his territory, in a German newspaper interview published on Monday.

Poroshenko told Bild that he preferred to keep soccer and politics separate but this was not possible when Ukrainian club Shakhtar Donetsk was having to play 1,200 kilometers (750 miles) away in Lviv because Donetsk was occupied by pro-Russian separatists.

"I think there has to be discussion of a boycott of this World Cup. As long as there are Russian troops in Ukraine, I think a World Cup in that country is unthinkable," said Poroshenko, who was in Berlin on an official visit Monday.

Dmitry Peskov, Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, said when asked about

Poroshenko's comments Monday that his country was preparing for the tournament and that "all the obligations that Russia took on as the organizer of the World Cup are being carried out and will be completed on time.

"The tournament will be one of the best in history," Peskov added, the R-Sport news agency reported.

The Ukrainian president said he would ask Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel to push for tougher sanctions on Russia because of what he described as repeated separatist violations of the cease-fire which she helped broker last month.

He was also going to ask the chancellor for more non-lethal military aid for Ukraine's forces, such as bulletproof vests.

"We need more to be able to defend ourselves and protect our soldiers. We need radar reconnaissance, drones, radio and night-vision equipment. I am going to talk to the Chancellor about this," said Poroshenko.

"It's not about weapons of attack — we don't want to attack anyone," he added.

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