

# G7 Ready to Strengthen Sanctions Against Russia If Needed

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German Chancellor Angela Merkel waits to welcome outreach delegates at the G7 summit at Elmau Castle hotel in Kruen near Garmisch-Partenkirchen, southern Germany, June 8, 2015.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Monday the leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) countries were ready, if necessary, to strengthen sanctions against Russia over its involvement in the Ukraine conflict.

Merkel said the leaders want Russia and Ukraine to comply with a Feb. 12 ceasefire agreed in the Belarus capital Minsk that largely halted fighting in eastern Ukraine between pro-Russian separatists and Ukrainian government forces.

"We are also ready, should the situation escalate, which we don't want, to strengthen sanctions if the situation makes that necessary but we believe we should do everything to move forward the political process of Minsk," she told the final news conference of the two-day G7 summit in Bavaria.

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