

One Ukrainian Serviceman Killed as Eastern Attacks Intensify

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Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko inspects military fortifications near Donetsk.

A Ukrainian serviceman was killed and 21 were wounded in separatist attacks in the past 24 hours, the Ukrainian military said on Sunday, as both sides accused the other of intensifying attacks despite a four-month-old cease-fire deal.

The truce brokered by the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France in Minsk, Belarus, has stemmed large-scale fighting but skirmishes claim lives almost daily on both sides. International monitors have warned of the threat of a bigger flare-up.

"In the past 24 hours the number of cease-fire violations by illegal military groups has risen," Ukrainian military spokesman Oleksander Motuzyanyk said at a briefing at midday.

Two civilians were wounded in shelling of government-held Avdiyivka, he said, describing attacks on the nearby town of Horlivka, the airport of rebel-held Donetsk and the town of Maryinka as being the most intense.

Senior separatist commander Eduard Basurin said rebels had recorded 185 cease-fire violations from the Ukrainian side in the past 24 hours, including tank fire and shelling by weapons banned under the Minsk agreements, rebel press service DAN reported.

Three rebel fighters and one civilian woman had been wounded, he said.

On Thursday, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe said that despite assertions to the contrary, neither side has completed the withdrawal of heavy weapons as agreed in the cease-fire deal.

The Ukrainian military reported on Saturday one of the heaviest deaths tolls for government troops since early June, saying six Ukrainian servicemen had been killed and 14 wounded.

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