

Putin Discusses Ukraine in Call With Merkel, Hollande

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Kremlin says leaders of Russia, France and Germany have discussed the Ukraine crisis before a new round of diplomatic efforts.

It said that Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke over the phone Monday with French President Francois Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel about the situation in eastern Ukraine, a day before Paris talks between the foreign ministers of Russia, France, Germany and Ukraine.

France and Germany co-sponsored February's peace deal that helped reduce hostilities between pro-Russia rebels and Ukrainian troops, but fighting again escalated in recent weeks.

Putin emphasized the need for Ukraine to conduct political settlement and provide social and economic assistance to the eastern region, according to the Kremlin.

Ukraine and the West accuse Russia of backing the rebels with troops and weapons — claims

Moscow denies.

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