

Ukrainian, French, German, Leaders to Meet Monday in Berlin

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel talks to France's President Francois Hollande.

The leaders of France, Germany and Ukraine are to meet in Berlin on Monday in a bid to bring an end to a new wave of violence in Ukraine, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday blamed the Ukrainian government for the latest upsurge in fighting between Kiev's forces and Russian-backed separatists in the east of the country.

The fighting flared earlier this week, killing at least two Ukrainian soldiers and several civilians. The clashes, near the port of Mariupol in the southeast and at rebel-held Horlivka, further frayed an increasingly tenuous ceasefire as Ukraine prepares to mark its Independence Day next week.

More than 6,500 people have been killed in the conflict, which erupted in April 2014 after

Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula in reaction to the fall of a Moscow-backed president to mass protests in Kiev.

"Its worrying," Fabius told reporters ahead of the meeting between his president, Francois Hollande, President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

"Military operations must stop and arms be withdrawn... Secondly, we need to right conditions for elections in the Donbass (eastern Ukraine)," he said. "I hope Monday's meeting will allow us to advance on both points. We hope to have a solution by December at the latest."

Poroshenko also arranged during a phone call with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker on Tuesday to visit EU institutions in Brussels before the end of the month.

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