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Russia Named Main Aggressor in Ukraine's New Military Doctrine

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Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseny Yatseniuk

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko signed a new military doctrine on Thursday naming Russia as the main military threat to Ukraine, according to a statement on the presidential website.

Ukraine and NATO accuse Russia of providing pro-Russian separatists with arms and troops in support of a rebellion in which nearly 8,000 have been killed since it broke out in eastern regions in the spring of 2014, after the fall of Kiev's pro-Moscow president to a popular uprising.

According to the statement, "Ukraine is currently facing an acute military threat — Russian armed aggression, which includes temporary occupation of Crimea and aggression in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions."

"The doctrine also stipulates scenarios that can endanger [the] military security of Ukraine.

The main scenario is full-scale armed aggression of Russia against Ukraine with decisive military-political goals," it said.

Russia denies any involvement in the eastern conflict or accusations that it is seeking to destabilize Ukraine, which was under Moscow's thumb before the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991.

The military doctrine was signed on the heels of a visit by NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg at the start of the week, which held strong symbolic importance for Kiev in its drive for Western integration in the face of pro-Russian separatism in its east.

In December 2014, Russia introduced a new military doctrine of its own in which it named NATO expansion among major external risks.

While the violence in Ukraine's conflict has ebbed to its lowest point since a ceasefire was signed in Minsk seven months ago, Western diplomats say the 11-point peace plan is far from fully implemented.

For example, tanks and lighter artillery have still not been withdrawn from front lines and negotiations on ground rules for local elections in the east remain deadlocked.

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