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Merkel Asks Putin to 'Use Influence' With Ukraine Rebels

By The Moscow Times

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German Chancellor Angela Merkel has asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to ensure that the Donbass rebels adhere to the ceasefire declared in eastern Ukraine during a phone talk, the Associated Foreign Press reported Tuesday.

"Here, Russia must use its influence on the separatists," Merkel said according to her spokesman's statement, the AFP reported.

Merkel told Putin that in order to resolve the situation in eastern Ukraine politically, the ceasefire had to be respected and access had to be granted to truce monitors, the AFP said.

During their phone conversation, the two leaders agreed that the Minsk agreements are crucial in resolving the situation in eastern Ukraine, the Kremlin press office reported Tuesday.

Merkel also had talks with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko on Monday. Following the

talks, she has ruled out lifting EU sanctions against Russia before a full ceasefire has been implemented in eastern Ukraine, international media reported.

The Minsk agreements were negotiated in the capital of Belarus in September 2014 and February 2015 by the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France. The agreements includes provisions to deliver a full cease-fire, return control of borders to Ukraine, withdraw heavy weaponry and to hold free elections in the region.

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