

Eastern Ukraine Separatist Leaders Pledge New Cease-Fire

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Max Black / AP

Separatist leaders in eastern Ukraine have announced a unilateral cease-fire starting at midnight on Wednesday.

Igor Plotnitsky, the head of the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic, said that he was seeking peaceful means to end the civil war.

“Despite the efforts of Russia, France and Germany, Kiev strongly distances itself from its commitments and is not interested in a peaceful resolution of the conflict,” he said in a statement on the republic's government website.

“At the same time, we are constantly accused of not fulfilling the Minsk agreements. Today, in order to demonstrate our commitment to peace, we are unilaterally taking the next step,” Plotnitsky said.

He also called on observers from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to monitor the cease-fire “fairly.”

Alexander Zakharchenko, the head of the Donetsk People's Republic, has also pledged to implement the cease-fire, the Associated Press reported.

Both men have ordered their military not to retaliate if fired on by Ukrainian troops, Russia's state-run NTV news channel reported.

A cease-fire in the region was officially declared in February, but was repeatedly flouted by both sides. A renewed truce was pledged on Sept. 1, but a number of violations have already been reported. Ukrainian officials announced on Tuesday that three soldiers had died in the past 24 hours in the Donetsk region.

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