

Putin Says It's Kiev That's Pushing Military Escalation in Donbass

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Vadim Ghirda / AP

Kiev is pushing a military agenda in order to tear the 2015 Minsk peace agreement apart, Putin reportedly told Russian security officials on Thursday.

Putin also suggested that Ukraine's government was plotting a series of terrorist attacks across Russia, according to the Interfax news agency.

“The Russian side can’t ignore this,” he is reported to have said.

Ukraine's three-year old conflict flared up in late January. The fighting centered on the Ukrainian-held town of Avdiivka, 10 miles North-East of the separatist controlled Donetsk. It saw the return of heavy weaponry such as ‘Grad’ and Uragan rocket launchers, all banned under the Minsk agreement.

Both sides accuse the other of deliberately reigniting the conflict. Independent monitors suggest they share responsibility.

In the weeks immediately before the uptick, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission reported encroaching by Ukrainian forces onto the so called “grey zone” between contact lines. The mission concluded that Russian-backed forces were behind the escalation of January 29.

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