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Thousands March in Kiev in Protest Against Donbass Peace Plan With Russia

By Reuters

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Many Ukrainians feel betrayed. **Peter Sivkov / TASS**

Thousands of people marched through central Kiev on Monday to protest against President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's deal with Moscow to grant special status to a pro-Russian rebel-held region of eastern Ukraine as part of efforts to end a five-year conflict there.

Around 20,000 people, including war veterans, took part in the rally 'No capitulation' against what they say are unacceptable concessions by Zelenskiy over the Donbass region. Ukrainian, Russian and separatist negotiators agreed last month that Kiev would grant the territory controlled by the separatists a special status and hold elections there.

Ukraine also agreed to call back its forces from the current contact line with separatist fighters. The peace plan was previously rejected by the government. Zelenskiy has said he would "never betray Ukraine" and "any red line will not be crossed."

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But many Ukrainians say these measures are a betrayal by Zelenskiy, who took power in April after a landslide election win. The war in eastern Ukraine has killed more than 13,000 people since April 2014.

"We are for peace, but we want it to be done differently. We also want our boys not to die, but we want our land to remain our land and that there are no enemies on our land," protester Ludmyla Linnyk said.

"We have little information about this and it suggests that something is being prepared that we don’t like," said Pavlo Musiyenko, who was at the rally with his wife and child.

The deal also opened the way for a resumption of top-level peace talks to end the conflict, which helped send Russia's ties with the West to post-Cold War lows in 2014.
Earlier this month Zelenskiy said he would discuss a peace deal for Donbass in four-way talks with Russia, Germany and France.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko told Reuters on Monday the leaders could meet in Paris in mid-November if Kiev and pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine can maintain a ceasefire.

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