

Two Killed in Ukraine Separatist East

By [AFP](#)

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Ukraine and its Western allies accuse Russia of sending troops and arms to support the separatists.
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A Ukrainian soldier and a separatist fighter have been killed in the latest clashes in the conflict-ridden east of the country, the two sides said.

The Ukrainian army has been locked in a long-running conflict with separatist fighters in the eastern Donetsk and Lugansk regions since 2014 after Moscow annexed the peninsula of Crimea from Kiev.

Ukraine's military said on Monday that over the past 24 hours separatist fighters had launched six attacks on its troops with grenade launchers and heavy machine guns.

"As a result of the detonation of an unknown enemy device, one soldier of the Joint Forces was fatally wounded," the military said in a statement.

Another soldier received a shrapnel wound, the statement added.

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The Lugansk separatists' media said on Sunday that one of their fighters had been killed "as a result of targeted sniper fire".

After an uptick in violence at the beginning of the year, Russia amassed around 100,000 troops on Ukraine's borders in April, raising fears of a major escalation in the conflict.

Russia later announced a pullback but both Ukraine and its ally the United States said the withdrawal was limited.

The conflict, which has claimed more than 13,000 lives, has seen at least 55 Ukrainian soldiers killed since the start of the year compared with 50 in all of 2020.

The separatists say more than 30 of their fighters have died.

Ukraine and its Western allies accuse Russia of sending troops and arms to support the separatists, which Moscow denies.

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