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# European Monitors Resume Eastern Ukraine Mission After Protests

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**Ukrainian National Guard (CC BY-SA 2.0)**

Europe's main security monitoring mission in conflict-torn eastern Ukraine said Tuesday it has resumed operations after protesters blocked entrance to their hotel.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) said Sunday that groups of armed men prevented members of its mission from exiting the hotel in the separatist-controlled city of Horlivka.

They reportedly demanded that the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) secure the release of one of their members held by Ukrainian governmental forces.

"The Forward Patrol Base in Horlivka is an OSCE/SMM Office, enjoying immunities and privileges. Restriction of access to and from the Office should be considered a violation of such immunities and privileges," the OSCE mission statement said.

Reuters reported Monday that protesters had left the Horlivka hotel after negotiations with

the OSCE mission. The news agency identified the captured separatist fighter as officer Andrei Kosyak, who was detained near the front line last Wednesday.

Ukraine says Kosyak was a Russian citizen carrying out an undercover reconnaissance mission for the separatists, but the pro-Moscow separatists say he was helping to oversee the ceasefire mediated by France and Germany, according to Reuters.

The OSCE/SMM said in a later statement that it was able to conduct a patrol of the conflict zone on Monday afternoon after a padlock and chain had been removed from the hotel gates.

Its monitors were still prevented from observing the conflict at two checkpoints in the separatist-controlled Donetsk and Luhansk regions, the OSCE/SMM said Tuesday.

The OSCE established and has expanded the eastern Ukraine monitoring mission since the deadly conflict between government forces and pro-Russian separatists broke out in March 2014.

Earlier in October, Russian, French and German leaders agreed to work toward arranging a face-to-face meeting of leaders to discuss the conflict.

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