

Ukraine Border Service Says No Sign of Russian Troops

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Russia is not amassing its forces on the immediate border with Ukraine, the country's border service [said](#) Monday as Western leaders continue to sound the alarm over possible aggression.

The comments come after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Russia has gathered nearly 100,000 troops near its border and that Western countries had shared information about active Russian troop movements with Kiev.

“We’re not recording any neighboring country’s equipment or military movement directly near the border,” Ukrainian state border service spokesman Andriy Demchenko said.

“If any actions are taking place, they may be tens or even hundreds of kilometers from the state border,” the Russian state-run TASS news agency quoted Demchenko as saying on Ukraine's 24 Kanal channel.

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said the U.S.-led alliance spotted “large and unusual

concentrations of Russian forces” at Ukraine’s border in recent weeks. Western officials also accuse Moscow of using the escalating migrant crisis on the Polish-Belarus border to “[distract](#)” from its activities near Ukraine.

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The Kremlin has dismissed the concerns as unfounded, instead complaining about increased NATO activity in the region.

Ukraine remains locked in a festering conflict with pro-Russia separatists in the east of the country that started seven years ago.

French President Emmanuel Macron expressed “willingness to defend the territorial integrity of Ukraine” to Russian President Vladimir Putin in a telephone conversation Monday.

Putin responded by saying that negotiations were "made difficult" by the Ukrainian authorities, the Elysee said. It added that this line of reasoning was "often" used by the Russian leader.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said last week it would be a "serious mistake for Russia to engage in a repeat of what it did in 2014," when it seized Crimea from Kiev.

And on Monday, Germany's foreign ministry urged Moscow to exercise "restraint" at the Ukrainian border.

AFP contributed reporting.

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