

Ukraine Separatists Urge Russia to Send Modern Weapons

By [AFP](#)

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Denis Pushilin, Head of the Donetsk People's Republic. **Nikolai Trishin / TASS**

A Ukrainian separatist leader on Thursday urged Russia to send modern weapons to the breakaway statelets to help them defend themselves against Western-backed Kyiv forces.

Denis Pushilin spoke after Russia's ruling party urged the Kremlin to start arming the separatist-held regions with tensions soaring between Moscow and the West.

"First and foremost, we need to counter the Bayraktars," he told pro-Kremlin spin doctor Vladimir Solovyov in an online interview, referring to Turkish-made drones.

Solovyov said Russia was capable of supplying separatists with next generation weapons instead of Kalashnikov assault rifles and Soviet-era machine guns.

Pushilin said: "We need to talk about the weapons you mean."

Pushilin, the self-declared leader of the Donetsk People's Republic, accused Kyiv authorities of continuing to prepare for an offensive and stocking up on ammunition and fuel.

On Wednesday, a senior member of United Russia, Vladimir Vasilyev, said the governing party had asked the country's leadership to start arming Ukraine's separatist-held regions.

Related article: [Russia Ruling Party Urges the Kremlin to Arm Ukraine Separatists](#)

The United States and its EU allies accuse Russia of seeking to upend European stability by threatening an invasion of Ukraine, a former Soviet republic striving to join NATO and other Western institutions.

Moscow denies plans to invade the country, where in addition to annexing Crimea, it has been backing separatist forces in the east since 2014. The conflict has already claimed more than 13,000 lives.

The West and Kyiv accuse Moscow of fuelling an insurgency by sending weapons and troops across the border.

Russia has always denied such claims, but Wednesday's statement could mark a change in Moscow's official stance.

There was no immediate official reaction from the Kremlin.

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