

Kremlin Says Ukraine Rebels Have Asked Russia for 'Help' Against Kyiv

By [AFP](#)

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The Ukrainian Territorial Defense Forces, the military reserve of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, take part in a military drill outside Kyiv on Feb. 19, 2022. **Sergei Supinsky / AFP**

The Kremlin on Wednesday said the heads of east Ukraine's rebel republics have asked Russian President Vladimir Putin for "help" to "repel aggression" from the Ukrainian army.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the separatist republics "ask the president of Russia for help in repelling the aggression of the armed forces in Ukraine." The statement was carried by Russian state news agencies.

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The West has been warning that Russia could launch an attack on Ukraine at any moment, with tens of thousands of troops stationed at its borders.

Peskov said Putin had received a letter from the heads of the Donetsk and Lugansk republics, which he recognized as independent this week.

"The actions of the Kyiv regime testify to the unwillingness to end the war in Donbas," Peskov quoted the letter as saying.

He said the heads of the republics had asked for Putin's help "on the basis" of friendship treaties they signed with Moscow this week.

The friendship agreements Putin signed with the rebels opened the door to the presence of the Russian army on their territory.

On Tuesday, Russian lawmakers gave Putin approval for using the Russian army abroad.

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