

Kiev Wants Moscow to Help Keep Joint Border Safe

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Citing a recent surge in organized crime along its border with Russia, Kiev proposed to Moscow that the two adversaries join forces in order to stabilize the situation.

"Due to a significant deterioration of the situation on the Ukraine-Russia border, which has been marked by an intensification of cross-border activities carried out by organized crime groups, [Ukraine's] Foreign Ministry has sent a note to its counterpart in Russia," a source from Ukraine's Foreign Ministry told RIA Novosti.

Increased criminal activity along the border poses a threat both to nearby civilians and to Ukrainian border guards, the note said.

Any refusal by Russia to participate in a joint operation would be viewed as a violation of the terms of bilateral agreements between the two nations, the Foreign Ministry source told RIA Novosti, without specifying which bilateral agreements specifically were being referred to.

Tensions have soared between Russia and Ukraine since the Feb. 22 ouster of former President

Viktor Yanukovich.

On April 17, Russia agreed with Ukraine, the U.S. and the European Union on a number of measures aimed at de-escalating the Ukraine crisis. The parties agreed that all illegally armed groups should be disarmed, control over all buildings seized by pro-Russian separatists should be relinquished, and protesters should retreat from occupied sites throughout the country.

The parties further urged the acting government in Kiev to launch a nationwide dialogue on constitutional reform.

Following the talks, both Moscow and Kiev have blamed each other for renegeing on their obligations under the agreement.

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