

Putin Holds 4-Way Call With Leaders of Germany, France and Ukraine

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Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko (C) looks on as German Chancellor Angela Merkel (L) talks to Russian President Vladimir Putin at an event in early June commemorating the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

The presidents of Russia, Germany, France and Ukraine have held a four-way phone call to discuss the situation in Ukraine, where Kiev is struggling with a pro-Russian rebellion in the east.

Russian President Vladimir Putin called for a temporary ceasefire agreed Monday between Kiev and some separatist rebel groups to be extended beyond Friday to allow time for more talks, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Wednesday.

Ukraine's newly-elected president, Petro Poroshenko, welcomed Moscow's move to rescind a mandate for military intervention in Ukraine in defense of its Russian speakers, which a loyal parliament granted Putin in March.

"At the same time, the president stressed that today Ukraine expects real action from Russia

that will be conducive to further stabilization of the situation," a statement on Poroshenko's website said.

It added that Poroshenko had urged Putin to prevent arms flows from Russia to the separatist fighters in Ukraine.

Russia strenuously denies accusations from Kiev and the West that it has allowed pro-Russian fighters to cross into eastern Ukraine along with heavy weaponry to confront government forces.

German government spokesman Steffen Seibert said the leaders had agreed that talks between Ukraine, Russia and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe should be continued, with the aim of working out a mechanism to monitor the ceasefire and border security.

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