

Russia Wants Germany, France to Pressure Kiev on Peace Plan

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Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko inspects the construction of fortification in Donetsk region, Ukraine.

Russia wants the leaders of Germany and France to put more pressure on Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko to implement a February peace plan for eastern Ukraine, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Wednesday.

Poroshenko will meet German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Francois Hollande in Berlin on Monday in a bid to end a new wave of violence in eastern Ukraine between Russian-backed rebels and Ukraine's armed forces.

Kiev blames the rebels for violating a shaky truce. The West says Moscow has been driving the rebellion there since April last year, feeding it with serving Russian troops, arms, intelligence and funds. Moscow denies that.

"It is necessary in our view to mount additional pressure on Kiev to convince them that they have to implement the agreements and obligations agreed in Minsk," Lavrov said, referring to

the peace deal brokered by Germany and France.

He was speaking during a visit to Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula annexed by Moscow from Kiev in March 2014, before unrest spread to eastern Ukraine.

"We expect that on Aug. 24 ... Germany and France, who are the guarantors of the implementation of the Minsk agreement, will do everything to ensure it is carried out in full," Lavrov said.

Moscow says Kiev has failed to deliver on multiple provisions of the peace plan, signed in Minsk, Belarus, in February, and that the Ukrainian authorities must hold direct talks with representatives of the self-proclaimed rebel "republics" of Donetsk and Luhansk, which are backed by Russia.

The Ukrainian authorities have been unwilling to do that, negotiating with the rebels via a former Ukrainian president.

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