

# In Photos: 10 Years Ago, the War in Donbas Began

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In April 2014, an uprising by Russia-backed forces in eastern Ukraine marked the outset of the conflict in the Donbas between Russia and Ukraine. Shortly after the Kremlin's March 2014 annexation of Crimea, a group of fighters led by Russian military commander Igor Girkin, also known by his alias Strelkov, joined pro-Russian separatist forces in the Donetsk region of Ukraine. The Ukrainian city of Sloviansk became a point of heavy fighting between the Ukrainian armed forces and pro-Russian separatists who, in April 2014, declared the sovereignty of the Donetsk People's Republic. The Luhansk People's Republic declared its independence from Kyiv at the end of that month. Russia, which recognized the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk "people's republics" in 2022 — and later annexed them — used the Donbas conflict as a pretext for its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Ten years after the fighting began, the Donbas — a major center of the coal industry and metallurgy, previously populated by 6 million mostly Russian-speaking people — remains a grim theater of warfare. Here's a look back at some of the events of 2014:



Evgeniy Maloletka / AP / TASS

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