

Moscow and Washington Welcome Ukraine Ceasefire



Moscow, September 6 (RHC)-- Russia and the U.S. have welcomed the ceasefire agreement between the Ukrainian government and the pro-Russia forces after five months of fighting in eastern Ukraine.

President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said on Friday: "The Russian presidential office welcomes the signing of the protocol in Minsk." He added that the agreement was the result of initiatives by Putin and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, noting: "Moscow hopes all the provisions of the document and the agreements reached will be thoroughly observed by the parties and that the negotiating process will continue until the crisis in Ukraine is fully resolved."

U.S. President Barack Obama also welcomed the ceasefire, but expressed skepticism over determination of pro-Russia militias and Moscow to implement the deal. Speaking to reporters at a news conference as he was leaving a two-day NATO summit in Wales on Friday, Obama called on his European allies to agree on new sanctions against Russia that could be suspended if the truce is violated.

The ceasefire was signed after two hours of negotiations in the Belarusian capital city of Minsk on Friday between former Ukrainian president, Leonid Kuchma, who represented the government in Kiev, and rebel leaders, Igor Plotnitsky and Alexander Zakharchenko.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko ordered troops to stop all hostilities by 15:00 GMT and instructed the Foreign Ministry to oversee monitoring of the ceasefire along with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Following the agreement, Plotnitsky stressed that ceasefire does not mean a change in their goal to split from Ukraine. Ukraine's mainly Russian-speaking regions in the east have witnessed deadly clashes between pro-Moscow forces and the Ukrainian army since Kiev launched military operations to silence pro-Russians in mid-April.

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