

Ukraine's Fighting Intensifies Ahead of Ceasefire, Killing 26



Kiev, February 13 (RHC) -- Hostilities between government troops and pro-independence rebels in eastern Ukraine flared up with a new vigour in the past day, killing 26 people and wounding scores of others, authorities said Friday.

The surge in fighting came as the warring sides accused each other of pushing an offensive to make territorial gains ahead of an agreed ceasefire scheduled to take effect on Sunday.

The intensified fighting, some of the heaviest and deadliest in two weeks, occurred just hours after Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, Russian President Vladimir Putin, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Francois Hollande reached a peace agreement Thursday in Minsk, the capital of Belarus.

The deal calls for a ceasefire from Feb. 15 and withdrawal of heavy weapons from the frontline, and also covers election timelines, border control and prisoner exchange.

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