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[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

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## Ukrainian Armed Forces work on major offensive on Donbas

2/8/2017



Donbass is bracing for a major war: Kiev authorities are about to begin military operations in the breakaway region, local media report, citing military-diplomatic sources in Moscow, Donetsk and Luhansk.

Official military representatives of the People's Republic of Donetsk and the People's Republic of Luhansk made similar statements on February 7. Representatives of the Donbas militia said

that their information was based on intelligence reports and numerous instances of large-scale deployment of armed groups and military hardware to the demarcation line.

At the same time, special observers at the OSCE monitoring mission reported violations of the ceasefire, the use of multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS) and heavy artillery by the warring parties. Recent sporadic battles along the line of defense of the two republics is most likely a preface to a large-scale war that may erupt in the Donbas in the near future, experts and representatives of the military command of the people's republics said.

Military and diplomatic sources at the People's Republic of Donetsk said yesterday that there were not less than nine artillery divisions and six MLRS battalions deployed from the rear areas to the contact zone with the People's Republic of Donetsk.

A preliminary analysis shows that it goes about more than 200 units of guns with a caliber of 122 mm (one Ukrainian artillery battalion, as a rule, has 24 guns) and not less than 36 "Grad" and "Uragan" MLRS. For their maintenance during the period from January 10 to January 23, Kiev sent 16 trains with ammunition to Donetsk. A train like this usually has 30-40 cars. One car carries nearly 800 rounds for 122-mm howitzers and a little less for MRLS systems.

One shall assume that the Ukrainian Armed Forces have deployed not less than 400,000 units of ammo for artillery weapons in the recent two weeks. Such a large number of artillery and ammunition is enough to support a full-fledged offensive of the troops to get 15-25 kilometers closer to Russian border.

Military experts believe that the Ukrainian Armed Forces will not be making a direct offensive on Donetsk. Instead, they will strike a major blow on the sparsely populated area to the south of Donetsk to cut the city from Novoazovsk, seize a military airport in Torez before moving in the direction of the village of Snezhnoye towards the border with Russia.

At the same time, Ukraine has been strengthening its armed group to the north of Mariupol. The Ukrainian military command has already deployed the Donbas battalion in the region, as well as three battalions of Azov regiment. To crown it all, Kiev has strengthened four brigades in the Donbas region, including an air assault group.

Most likely, Ukraine will launch the general offensive in the Donbas from two strategic directions - Mariupol and Kharkov. The goal of the operation is to approach the border with Russia and seize the currently uncontrolled checkpoints there.

Most recent developments in the Donbass have most likely caused President Putin to initiate a sudden inspection of the combat readiness of Russian aerospace forces, initiated by President Putin.