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Ukraine threatens to abolish peace plan with pro-Russians

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Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko says Kiev will reconsider its commitment to a ceasefire pact with pro-Russia forces after they held their own elections in the country's east.

On Monday, Poroshenko described the recent presidential and parliamentary elections in the self-proclaimed republics of Donetsk and Lugansk as “a gross violation” of a September truce deal between Ukraine and pro-Russians, to which Moscow is also a signatory.

On Tuesday, Poroshenko said he and the country's security chiefs would “re-examine” Kiev's commitments to the agreement, which could include “abolition” of a significant element in the truce that offered the pro-Russians autonomy within Ukraine's existing borders.

The comments came as the newly-elected president of Donetsk, Alexander Zakharchenko, accused Kiev of rejecting peace, saying, “Ukraine does not want peace, as it claims. Obviously it is playing a double game.”

Moscow, meanwhile, has said it “respects” the results of the local elections in eastern Ukraine, adding that the vote would help re-establish “normal life in the region.”

Russia has also urged Ukraine to end its military operations in the east and engage in negotiations with pro-Russians on equal terms.

“This work can bring results only on condition of equal dialogue based on mutual respect, with Kiev renouncing military operations and the notorious 'anti-terror operation',” said Russian deputy foreign minister, Grigory Karasin.

The two mainly Russian-speaking regions of Donetsk and Lugansk have been the scene of deadly clashes between pro-Russia protesters and the Ukrainian army since Kiev’s military operation started in mid-April in a bid to crush the protests.

Violence intensified in May after the two flashpoint regions held local referendums in which their residents voted overwhelmingly in favor of independence from Ukraine and joining the Russian Federation.

On September 5, a truce agreement was signed by representatives of Ukraine, Russia, the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), and the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR) in Minsk, Belarus, in an effort to halt the war in eastern Ukraine.