



Ukraine Says Russian Forces Among Separatists as Battles continue

Source: Bloomberg

Ukraine began an offensive against separatists in its eastern regions, recapturing an airport amid claims Russian special forces were supporting the anti-government groups.

Units from Ukraine's Interior Ministry yesterday ousted pro-Russian activists who'd seized the airfield in Kramatorsk, though there were conflicting accounts on casualties. While there were no reports of violence overnight, two Ukrainian soldiers were kidnapped, according to the Interfax news service. US Representative Mike Rogers, chairman of the House Intelligence committee, accused Russia of "sabotage."

"There are Russian citizens who are, again, military and intelligence operatives in eastern Ukraine fomenting this trouble," Rogers said yesterday in an interview on CNN. "They are recruiting, and there's some level of training."

The airport operation marked Ukraine's first foray against armed activists holding government buildings in cities near the Russian border. Efforts to contain the insurgency risk escalating tensions with Russia, which warned of a potential civil war. NATO says Russia has 40,000 troops massed on Ukraine's border after its annexation of Crimea last month.

With tensions running high, the US and its European allies are threatening a new round of penalties against Russian interests if the crisis continues. Envoys from Ukraine, Russia, the US and European Union are scheduled to hold talks tomorrow in Geneva on the situation.