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## Ukraine launches 'anti-terrorist operation' in the east

Ukrainian forces set up checkpoints as acting president announces operation to root out 'separatists' in pro-Russian east



Ukrainian soldiers sit on top of military vehicles in a field about 44 miles from Slovyansk Photo: Maxim Dondyuk/AP

By **Roland Oliphant, Izyum, Ukraine**

11:51AM BST 15 Apr 2014

**Ukraine** has begun what it calls an "anti-terrorist operation" to root out pro-Russian "separatists" in the east of the country, The Telegraph can confirm.

Up to 12 armoured personnel carriers flying Ukrainian flags were guarding the road at a check point around a mile south of the city of Izyum.

It is thought to be the first evidence of a Ukrainian military operation to re-assert authority in the east of the country.

Locals told The Telegraph that the troops had arrived at around midnight on Monday. The operation included members of the Ukrainian army, police and the interior ministry.

There were no signs there had been any fighting. The troops were checking all vehicles travelling south.

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Earlier on Tuesday, Ukraine's acting president, Oleksandr Turchynov, accused Moscow of having "brutal plans" that extended far beyond Donetsk, where militants have proclaimed a breakaway republic and seized government buildings.

"They want to set fire not only to the Donetsk region but to the entire south and east - from Kharkiv to the Odessa region," he told parliament.

But he sounded a note of caution as he announced the launch of a "full-scale" military operation against the separatists, insisting it must proceed "gradually, responsibly and in a measured way".

Mr Turchynov insisted that that Donbass - the informal name of the Donetsk region - had a vast majority that was happy to be rid of the old leaders and become part of a broader Europe.

"The Donbass is in colossal danger," he said.

"Besides the Russian special special forces, besides terrorists, Donbass also has hundreds of people who have been deceived by Russian propaganda," he argued.

"And besides them are hundreds of thousands of completely innocent Ukrainians. That is why an anti-terrorist operation must be carried out responsibly."

Mr Turchynov's impassioned charges against Ukraine's historic master came only hours after a "frank and direct" exchange on the crisis between US President Barack Obama and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.



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