

Ukraine: More Military Defections - 50 Ukrainian Soldiers Join Federalists in Slaviansk

By [Global Research News](#)

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Fifty Ukrainian soldiers sent to the eastern town of Kramatorsk for military operations against pro-federalization protesters have defected to the side of the demonstrators, local self-defense activists told RIA Novosti Wednesday.

“We have seen that these people are neither separatists nor terrorists, but just ordinary people and we refuse to fight them,” one of the soldiers told RIA Novosti, as the military men took down Ukrainian flags and directed their vehicles to nearby Slaviansk.

The soldiers who switched allegiances are all from Dnepropetrovsk, and came from six crews of airborne combat vehicles, several crews of infantry combat vehicles and one armored carrier.

Some of them raised Russian flags and Air Force banners. Several of their vehicles are now stationed near the Slaviansk City Council, which has been under the control of federalization advocates for several days.

Local residents are taking pictures against the backdrop of the combat vehicles and talking freely with their crews.

Several military units in Kramatorsk still remain loyal to Kiev, including tanks. In Kramatorsk the protesters also control the city council, and have erected several roadblocks. No shooting between security forces loyal to Kiev and the opposition have been reported. Protesters still control Slaviansk, with no military loyal to Kiev present in the area.

The Ukrainian army started a special operation Tuesday to crack down on self-defense activists in eastern Ukraine. The operation targeted the cities of Kramatorsk and Slaviansk in the Donetsk region.

First Deputy Prime Minister Vitaliy Yarema said Wednesday the country’s parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, had signed off on operation.

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