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**Kerry and Lavrov Hold 'Frank' Ukraine Talks**

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U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met in Geneva Monday to consolidate the two-week old Ukrainian cease-fire.

A week ago, Kerry again accused Russia of not being honest about its involvement in the civil war in eastern Ukraine. Washington has repeatedly said Moscow is militarily aiding the separatist rebels of and Luhansk.

Kerry tweeted that the two foreign ministers had frank discussions about foreign policy in several areas:

### **Ongoing Ukraine crisis**

The most recent United Nations figures show 6,000 people have died in the past year in eastern Ukraine and hundreds have been killed in the past month. The U.N. report also speculated that the real number of deaths could be much higher. They estimated that at least 1.25 million people have been displaced since the conflict began.

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said the figures represent the "merciless devastation of civilian lives and infrastructure."

The U.N. Assistant Secretary General for Human Rights Ivan Simonovic said at the report's launch, "The deliberate targeting of civilian areas may constitute a war crime and if

widespread and systematic, a crime against humanity."

A cease-fire has been in place for the past couple of weeks, but there have still been [intermittent clashes](#) in the past few days.

### **Russia under fire**

After the meeting with Kerry, Lavrov called on Ukraine to dissociate itself from "extremists," and said that the Ukrainian government should support economic recovery in eastern Ukraine.

He also called the [killing of Boris Nemtsov](#) Friday as a "heinous crime." Nemtsov was a Russian opposition politician who was shot near the Kremlin. He had been organizing an anti-war rally and set to publish a report that revealed Russian involvement in the eastern Ukraine civil war.

"This is a heinous crime which will be fully investigated within the full framework of the law to ensure the perpetrators are brought to justice," Lavrov said.

Nemtsov's allies have accused the Kremlin of ordering the assassination.

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