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**Russia Opens Legal Proceedings Against Ukrainian Military Leadership**

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The Russian Investigations Committee (SKR) opened on Wednesday a lawsuit against the Defense Minister and Chief of Staff of Ukraine for military actions against civilian infrastructure in the coal region of Donbass.

SKR sources noted that they have accumulated enough evidence to accuse the Ukrainian Defense Minister Stepan Poltorak, and his chief of staff, Viktor Muzhenko, of violating Article 356 of the Criminal Code of this country by ordering artillery strikes on civilians.

Much of said military actions were against civilian property, as it happened in last week against a school in the Ukrainian southeast, and never against military targets, highlights the Russian organization.

In addition, Poltorak and Muzhenko, the Russian side has accused the former head of the Ukrainian Army Anatoli Plushnikov and the current commander of the forces, Sergei Papko of violating repeatedly this year the Agreement of the Contact Group of Minsk.

Such arrangement stipulated a ceasefire, starting in February 15, 2015, in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions, which proclaimed their independence from Kiev, having held referendums in March 2014, approved by the majority of their populations.

The agreement also included a withdrawal of heavy military materiel to more than 100 kilometers from the frontlines in these locations, located in the Donbass coal basin, where nearly nine thousand people were killed, most of them civilians.

Coinciding with the 25th anniversary of the independence of Ukraine, the SKR considered that it has in its power documents to show concretely that the artillery strikes against the civilian population were conducted by direct order of the aforementioned officials.

The Ukrainian armed forces and the National Guard, composed mostly of neo-fascists who supported the coup in Kiev in February 2014, attacked 183 civilian targets in Donbass using artillery, causing seven deaths and 74 wounded, this year alone.

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