

## **Ukrainian President Sees Slavyansk Capture as Turning Point**

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The liberation of Slovyansk is the start of a breakthrough in the battle for Ukraine's territorial integrity, President Petro Poroshenko said, according to his press office.

"The state flag of Ukraine flies once again over a town that the insurgents regarded as an impregnable fortress. It is not total victory, and it is not yet time for celebration," Poroshenko said. "But the fact that Slovyansk has been cleared of a band of fiends who are armed to the teeth is of immense symbolic importance. It is the start of a breakthrough in the battle against gunmen for the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and for a return to normal life in Donbas as an integral part of our great, powerful European state."

Poroshenko said that in Slovyansk, "hostages have been freed, a massive amount of arms has been captured, and civilians have held a spontaneous rally in support of the Ukrainian troops".

"I have already issued all the necessary instructions for sending humanitarian aid to residents of Slovyansk and other population centres which urgently need it. Planes and convoys of vehicles carrying foodstuff have already left for Slovyansk. Bread, water, sugar and tinned meat will be delivered today. I have also ordered a resumption in electricity and water supplies so that life can get back to normal in the town. Pensions, stipends and other state benefits are to be paid immediately. Infrastructure is to be restored and schools repaired, so that classrooms are renovated by the time children go back on September 1," he said. "I reaffirm the government's commitment to helping restore housing damaged as a result of terrorist aggression."

The president has also ordered the operation to liberate Donetsk and Luhansk regions to continue.

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