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Violence Spreads Beyond Ukraine's East, 46 Killed in Odessa

By Jason Ditz

May 2, 2014

At least 46 people were killed and an estimated 200 others were wounded today when the southwestern Ukrainian port city of Odessa erupted in protests and violence between factions.



It began, as so much violence in eastern Europe does, with a soccer rally. A rally for the local Ultras Odessa football team, a team favored by many in the Right Sector, was held today.

Other protests broke out among locals expressing sympathy for eastern demonstrators after the Ukrainian military attacked the protester-held cities of Slovyansk and Kramatorsk. The two rallies, with two very distinct viewpoints, quickly ran afoul of one another, and clashes resulted.

The direct fighting only left a handful of people killed, but a lot of injuries. The Right Sector marchers then moved against a small protest camp set up in a park, killing several more there.

The big death toll came when the far-right demonstrators moved against the Trade Union Hall, which the pro-eastern protesters were organizing out of. They set the building on fire, trapping scores within. At least 38 were confirmed killed in this incident.

While violence has been the order of the day in eastern cities, especially those under military attack, this is the first major violence to break out in the western half of the country, suggesting the anger at the interim government is spreading.