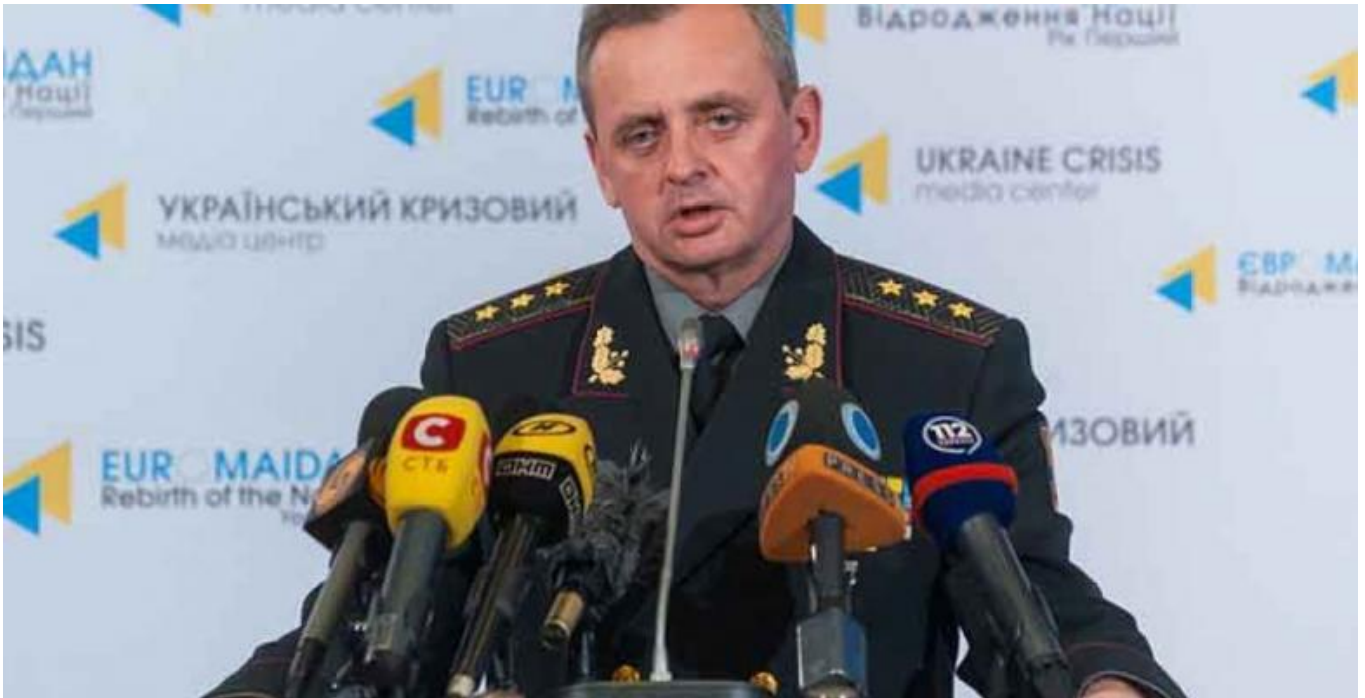

Ukraine Announces Demobilization in Armed Forces

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Kiev, Nov 2 (Prensa Latina) Ukraine completed a sixth wave of demobilization in the Armed Forces, and will send only professionals to the region of conflict in Donbass, said Viktor Muzhenko, Chief of Staff of the Ukrainian military.

During a meeting with President Peter Poroshenko, Muzhenko said that those serving in the troops deployed in Donbass have been changed to a contract regime.

'The armed forces must be composed of well-prepared and armed professionals and volunteers,' said Poroshenko in response to reports that many men in Ukraine have fled abroad to avoid being recruited and sent to the conflict zone.

The exodus of men of ages between 18 and 50 years has increased as the conflict in Donetsk and Lugansk has intensified.

Ukrainian authorities extended the call to military service beyond 18 years to extend military enrollment beyond the age of 45, in order to address the shortage of staff in the punitive operation against the aforementioned rebel regions.

Although there have been repeated violations, the ceasefire in Donbass and withdrawal of heavy war materiel from the front line is still in force, but analysts suspect that Kiev is readying an offensive with a better-equipped army.

The number of professionals in the military reached 90,000 between 2014 and 2016, the government announced.

Poroshenko signed in last October 26th a demobilization law for those who were enrolled in August 2015, leaving only professionals in the Ukrainian coal-mining region of Donbass.

However, Alexander Turchinov, Secretary of the National Security Council and one of the main figures in the coup of February 2014, said recently that should the conflict break out again, the state will carry out a new mobilization.
