

KIEV, October 31. /TASS/. Ukraine's Interior Minister Arsen Avakov has admitted presence of foreign mercenaries in volunteer battalions that are taking part in the military operation in eastern Ukraine.

"There are volunteers in the Donbass battalion and other battalions who are helping to defend our state," Avakov told journalists on Friday. Some of them, he said, are seeking to obtain Ukrainian citizenship.

Taking into account their merits to Ukrainian state, President Petro Poroshenko is likely to grant their request for citizenship, Avakov added.

In July Russian Foreign Ministry demanded that Sweden, Finland, the Baltic states and France conduct a thorough investigation into alleged participation by mercenaries from these countries in hostilities in eastern Ukraine.

The ministry said this while commenting on a story in Italian publication Il Giornale that said the mercenaries took part in a military operation as part of the so-called Azov battalion in eastern Ukraine, whose activity is financed and led by Ihor Kolomoisky, a tycoon and Dnipropetrovsk Region governor.