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Prisoners' Exchange in East Ukraine Halted as Separatists Say Kiev Cheated

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Ukrainian servicemen stand at a checkpoint in Schastya, near the eastern Ukrainian town of Luhansk.

The exchange of prisoners between the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic and authorities in Kiev has been stalled over the rebels' allegations of foul play, Interfax reported Tuesday.

Specifically, the rebel republic claims that Kiev forces have been returning prisoners sans documentation.

"Exchanges have been stopped until the Ukrainian side prepares and brings identification documents for those individuals exchanged and located in Kharkiv. For us it is an unacceptable tactic when they give people back to us without their documents," Darya Morozova, chairwoman of the self-proclaimed republic's committee on war prisoners, was cited as saying.

"When they give us the captives, their documents remain with the investigators, and then later they [investigators] put these people on wanted lists. So there is no freeing of the

prisoners, they cannot leave Donbass. This is a violation of a range of agreements, including the amnesty," Morozova told Interfax.

Earlier, on Sept. 27, authorities of the self-proclaimed republic said they were stopping the exchange after the Ukrainian authorities had started to deceive them.

Out of 174 people handed over by the Ukrainian side, the rebel authorities said, only 30 of them were actually participating with armed groups in the republic, Interfax reported.

A day after this claim, however, the exchange resumed, with Donetsk's self-proclaimed authorities trading 30 Ukrainian soldiers for 60 of their own fighters.

The exchange of prisoners was part of a cease-fire agreement signed by all sides in Minsk on Sept. 5.

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