

Russia Seeks Crimea Land Route for Savchenko Release – SBU Official

By [The Moscow Times](#)

March 22, 2016



Ukrainian military pilot Nadezhda Savchenko

An official from the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) claimed Russia had been asking for a land route to Crimea in exchange for releasing Ukrainian pilot Nadezhda Savchenko, according to an interview with the independent Novaya Gazeta newspaper published Monday.

Yuriy Tandyt, an adviser to the SBU chief, said Moscow was unwilling to exchange Savchenko for Russian servicemen captured in eastern Ukraine because Russian authorities “wanted more.” The request for a land route to Crimea was put forward by an official “close to the Kremlin,” Tandyt said, Novaya Gazeta reported.

“We need you to also meet us halfway,” Tandyt quoted the Russian official as saying. “We need a stable connection to Crimea, so we could carry cargo there, passengers.”

Tandyt said he told the Russian official that Ukraine had no plans to “trade a princess for half

a kingdom” at a time when scores of Western politicians and activists have been calling for Savchenko's release. But he maintained that Ukraine was “ready for any compromises.”

Russia accuses Savchenko of abetting the killing of two Russian journalists in eastern Ukraine, where Moscow-backed separatists are fighting Kiev government forces. A city court in southern Russia has begun sentencing proceedings.

The head of Russia's presidential human rights council, Mikhail Fedotov, said Monday that prisoner exchange will only be possible after the sentence comes into force.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/03/22/russia-seeks-crimea-land-route-for-savchenko-release-sbu-official-a52224>