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'Ukrainian Terror Plot' in Crimea Planned to 'Destroy Tourism' — Russian Media

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A "Ukrainian terror plot" foiled by Russian forces on the disputed Crimean peninsula was designed to destroy tourism in the region, Russian media outlets reported today.

Russia's Federal Security Service announced Wednesday that they had stopped a "terrorist plot" being prepared by the Ukrainian military. Kiev has denied all of the allegations.

According to Russian media reports, seven armed Ukrainian intelligence officers, dressed in Soviet camouflage gear, traveled across the Perekopsky Gulf to Crimea in a fleet of small motorboats on the night of Aug 6. The men evaded detection from Russian border patrol guards and came ashore near the town of Armyansk, Russia's Kommersant newspaper wrote Thursday.

Three security officers located the group and called in reinforcements before firing on the group. An FSB officer was fatally wounded the ensuing fire fight alongside two of the men. The remaining five were subsequently captured alive. The majority of were Crimean residents

and several carried Russian passports, Kommersant reported.

On questioning, the men reportedly revealed that they were one of a number of sabotage groups sent to Crimea by Ukrainian intelligence. Their aim had been to set off a series of non-fatal explosions in Crimean resorts which would have "killed tourism" in the region.

Russian President Vladimir Putin accused Ukraine on Wednesday night of "resorting to terrorism" in an attempt to distract the Ukrainian people from endemic corruption in the government, the Interfax news agency reported.

Putin also said that the alleged Ukrainian covert action meant it was now pointless to convene the Normandy Group, an organization formed last year in an attempt to implement a peace deal in eastern Ukraine. The group, made up of Ukraine, Russia, France and Germany, was due to meet during the G20 Summit in China next month.

Ukraine has strongly denying the Kremlin's allegations. "[We] absolutely condemn this Kremlin-organized provocation and deny all these groundless accusations," the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry said in a statement. It accused the Kremlin of "rolling out its hybrid military operation to justify its occupation of Crimea and its further aggression against Ukraine."

The Ukrainian parliament has also discussed convening the U.N. security council in light of the incident, Ukraine's representative to the U.N., Vladimir Elchenko, said in a statement on Ukrainian television.

"If we feel it is necessary we will do it immediately... even in the middle of the night," he said.

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