

Moscow Accuses Ukraine of Kidnapping Two Russian Servicemen

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Valentyn Ogirenko / Reuters

Russia's Defense Ministry has accused Ukraine of kidnapping two Russian servicemen on the annexed Crimean peninsula.

Agents from Ukraine's Security Services (SBU) detained Ensign Maksim Odintsov and Sergeant Alexander Baranov in Russian-held territory and transferred them to Ukraine on Nov. 20, the Defense Ministry [told](#) the RIA Novosti news agency.

Officials labeled the detention as "yet another crude provocation" and said that the SBU would try to fabricate charges against the two men.

The SBU claim that Odintsov and Baranov formerly served in the Ukrainian army and switched sides after Russia's annexation of the Crimean peninsula in March 2014. The two servicemen were detained on charges of desertion while attempting to cross the border into

Ukraine, an SBU spokesperson [told](#) the Interfax Ukraine news agency.

Odintsov and Baranov's detention follows a string of reported arrests of supposed Ukrainian "saboteurs" and "terrorists" in Crimea. The Ukrainian Defense Ministry has denied any connection to the incidents.

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