

Putin Urges Prisoner Swap in Talks With Ukraine Separatists

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Vladimir Putin / Kremlin Press Service

President Vladimir Putin [spoke](#) with leaders of the breakaway republics in eastern Ukraine Wednesday, urging them to exchange prisoners with the Ukrainian government.

The Kremlin has been accused of fomenting the 2014 conflict in Ukraine between pro-Russian separatists and Kiev following the toppling of a Moscow-friendly president. Earlier this year, Putin [signed](#) executive orders ruling that local identification documents issued by the self-declared “People’s Republics” of Donetsk and Luhansk be recognized in Russia.

Viktor Medvedchuk, Ukraine native and Putin’s close friend, urged the Russian leader on Wednesday to ask the Donetsk and Luhansk leaders for a prisoner swap.

The state-run TASS news agency cited the Kremlin's spokesperson as saying that the Putin held talks with Alexander Zakharchenko of the Donetsk region and Igor Plotnitsky in Luhansk.

The separatist leaders broadly supported Medvedchuk's initiative, according to the Kremlin's [statement](#) later in the day.

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