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Russia, Ukraine Exchange Prisoners

By AFP

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Ukrainian Vice Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk. **UNIAN**

Russia and Ukraine have exchanged prisoners, Kyiv and Moscow confirmed Thursday, in what Ukraine said was the first swap of soldiers since Moscow ordered troops into Ukraine one month ago.

"Following an order from President Volodymyr Zelensky, the first fully-fledged exchange of prisoners of war has taken place," Ukrainian Vice Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk wrote on Facebook.

"In exchange for 10 captured occupiers we rescued 10 of our servicemen," she said, referring to Russian and Ukrainian troops.

Vereshchuk also said that 11 Russian civilian seamen rescued near the Black Sea port city of Odesa were exchanged for 19 Ukrainian civilian ship crew members held by Moscow.

"I confirm the information regarding the exchange of 10 Russian servicemen detained on

Ukrainian territory for 10 Ukrainian servicemen. And there was also an exchange of Russian civilian sailors for Ukrainian civilian sailors," said Russian human rights ombudsman Tatiana Moskalkova.

Russia's foreign ministry said earlier this week that Moscow had completed two prisoner swaps since it launched its invasion of Ukraine late last month.

Moskalkova said nine Russian prisoners were exchanged for the mayor of Melitopol, a city in southeastern Ukraine captured by the Russian army.

Vereshchuk on Wednesday confirmed the Melitopol swap but denied any others had taken place.

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