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Moscow Accuses Ukraine of 'Staging' New Footage of Dead Civilians

By AFP

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Burned cars in Bucha, Kyiv region. **president.gov.ua**

Russia on Tuesday accused Ukraine of staging new civilian deaths in a number of locations in an effort to pin the blame on Moscow.

The Russian Defense Ministry made the assertion after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky demanded tough new sanctions on Moscow over killings in the town of Bucha that have prompted international condemnation.

The Russian Defense Ministry said on Tuesday that the Ukrainian military recorded a fake video that purported to show "peaceful civilians allegedly killed by the Russian Armed Forces."

The video was made on Monday evening in the settlement of Moshchun some 20 kilometers (12 miles) northwest of Kyiv and was designed to be distributed through Western media,

Moscow said.

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"Similar events are now being organized by the Ukrainian special services in Sumy, Konotop and other cities," the Russian Defense Ministry said, referring to cities in north-eastern Ukraine.

The ministry did not say how it obtained the information in its statement.

At the weekend, dozens of bodies were discovered in Bucha near Kyiv after the withdrawal of Russian troops. Ukrainian officials said some had their hands bound behind them.

Ukraine has blamed Russian forces, with Zelensky describing the killings as "war crimes" and "genocide."

Moscow denies any responsibility, saying that the images are fake or that the deaths occurred after Russian forces pulled out of the area.

The Kremlin repeated the denial on Tuesday, adding the West wanted to "smear" the Russian army.

"We still insist that any accusations against the Russian side, against the Russian military are not just groundless," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

"This is a well-directed show. Nothing else. A tragic show."

He said Russia would continue to promote its version of events. "We won't sit idle," he added.

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