

Russia Says Prevented Ukraine Officers Fleeing Mariupol By Air

By [AFP](#)

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The Russian Defense Ministry building [Pixabay](#)

The Russian army said Tuesday it had shot down two Ukrainian helicopters trying to evacuate the leaders of a nationalist battalion defending the embattled port of Mariupol.

"This morning, April 5, around Mariupol, a new attempt by the Kyiv regime to evacuate leaders of the nationalist Azov battalion was aborted. Two Ukrainian Mi-8 helicopters, trying to reach the city from the sea, were shot down by portable anti-aircraft systems," Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said.

He said Moscow had on Tuesday morning proposed that Ukrainian fighters lay down their arms and leave the city "via an agreed route" to territory under Kyiv's control.

He said the Ukrainian army had "ignored" the proposal.

"Since Kyiv is not interested in saving the lives of its soldiers, Mariupol will be freed from

nationalists," said Konashenkov.

Last week, he said the Russian army had shot down a Ukrainian helicopter over the Sea of Azov that had come to evacuate commanders of the Azov battalion, which has been fiercely defending Mariupol for weeks.

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