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Russian State TV Broadcasts Prisoner Plea From 'Captured' Britons

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Shaun Pinner. **vesti.ru**

Two men identified as captured British soldiers fighting for the Ukrainian army made a plea for a prisoner exchange in a video aired by Russian state television on Monday.

In the interviews broadcast on state channel Rossia 24, the men can be seen appealing to British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to exchange them for captured businessman, politician and Putin ally Viktor Medvedchuk.

Rossia 24 identified the two Britons as Shaun Pinner and Aiden Aslin, but did not specify where they were being held. The outlet also claimed that the pair were among those who surrendered to Russian forces during fighting in the besieged Ukrainian city of Mariupol.

"A lot has gone on over the last five-six weeks that I'm not fully aware of," the man identified as Pinner says on camera. "Obviously, I understand that Mr. Medvedchuk has been detained and we look for exchanging myself and Aiden Aislin for Mr. Medvedchuk."

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Since the start of the war on Feb. 24, as many as 20,000 foreign volunteers have reportedly traveled to Ukraine to fight in the country's so-called "international legion" against Russian forces.

Aslin's mother has previously spoken in the British press about her son's military activity in Ukraine and said that she recognized him in videos of prisoners of war. On a page believed to be his Twitter account, Aslin writes that he has been a member of the Ukrainian marines since 2018.

Pinner's family also said in a statement that the former British army soldier had joined the Ukrainian marines before the war began, that he had a Ukrainian wife, and that he had considered Ukraine his adopted country for the past four years.

Separately on Monday, Ukraine's security service, the SBU, published another call for a prisoner swap — by Medvedchuk himself.

In the video, the captured politician says he would like to be swapped for the "defenders and residents" of Mariupol, who "don't have an opportunity to leave the city through a safe humanitarian corridor."

Medvedchuk — who has close ties to Putin and says the Russian president is his daughter's godfather — previously co-founded a pro-Russian political party which won seats in the Ukrainian parliament. In March 2021, he was charged with selling military secrets to Russia and placed under house arrest.

He escaped from home confinement soon after the war began but was recaptured by Ukrainian special forces last week.

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