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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Ukraine Shows Video of Detained Putin Ally Calling For Mariupol Swap

By AFP

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Viktor Medvedchuk. **A still from video**

Ukraine on Monday aired a video showing Viktor Medvedchuk, a detained pro-Russia tycoon and ally of President Vladimir Putin, seeking to be exchanged in return for an evacuation of civilians and troops from the besieged port city of Mariupol.

Mariupol has become a symbol of Ukraine's unexpectedly fierce resistance since Russian troops invaded the former Soviet state and pro-democratic country on Feb. 24.

"I want to ask Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky to exchange me for Ukrainian defenders and residents of Mariupol," he said in the video published by Kyiv's security services, wearing black clothes and looking directly into the camera.

Related article: Zelensky Offers to Swap Pro-Putin Tycoon for Captured Ukrainians

Medvedchuk, who escaped from house arrest after Russia's invasion and was detained last week, said the troops and residents there "do not have the possibility of a safe exit through humanitarian corridors."

Medvedchuk is one of Ukraine's richest people and is known for his close ties to Putin. He is also a politician.

He says Putin is the godfather to his youngest daughter, Darya.

Embed:

> Медведчук звернувся до президентів України та РФ з проханням обміняти його на захисників і мешканців Маріуполя
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> ⛔⛔ https://t.co/38idVfRTSl pic.twitter.com/4IvIzdouJe
>
> — СБ України (@ServiceSsu) April 18, 2022

The Kremlin had earlier rejected the idea of exchanging him for Ukrainians detained by Russia, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky floated the idea of a swap.

Separately on Monday Russian state TV broadcast a video Monday of what it described as "Britons" captured fighting for Ukraine demanding that Prime Minister Boris Johnson negotiate their release.

The two men shown in the video asked to be exchanged for Medvedchuk, who had been accused of treason and attempting to steal natural resources from Russia-annexed Crimea and of handing Ukrainian military secrets to Moscow.

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