The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia-Backed Separatists Claim to Hold 8,000 Ukrainian POWs

May 26, 2022



Ukrainian servicemen who surrendered at the Azovstal iron and steel works are seen at a temporary accommodation center in the village of Olenivka. **Russian Defence Ministry / TASS**

A separatist official in eastern Ukraine has claimed there are 8,000 Ukrainian prisoners of war in the parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions that are under the control of Russian forces.

Rodion Miroshnik, the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic's ambassador to Russia, told pro-Kremlin television host Vladimir Solovyov on Thursday that "literally hundreds" of prisoners were arriving in the region each day.

His claims could not be independently verified.

"There are a lot of prisoners [in the Luhansk People's Republic]," he said. "Of course, there are more of them on the territory of the Donetsk People's Republic, but we also have enough. The total figure now is somewhere about 8,000."

The figure is likely to include the 2,439 Ukrainian soldiers who reportedly surrendered last

week after defending the Azovstal steel plant in the strategic Ukrainian port city of Mariupol.

Donetsk leader Denis Pushilin has claimed the Azovstal defenders will face an "international tribunal," while Kyiv has said it would seek a prisoner swap to return them to Ukraine.

Russia has not given a clear indication of the soldiers' fate.

Russia established diplomatic relations with both the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics in late February after President Vladimir Putin recognized their independence in the run-up to the invasion of Ukraine.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/05/26/russia-backed-separatists-claim-to-hold-8000-ukrainian-pows-a77806