

Pro-Russian Separatists Uphold Foreigners' Death Sentences

By [AFP](#)

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A pro-Russian separatist leader in eastern Ukraine said Sunday he would not alter the death sentences handed to two Britons and a Moroccan for fighting with the Ukrainian army.

"They came to Ukraine to kill civilians for money. That's why I don't see any conditions for any mitigation or modification of the sentence," Denis Pushilin, the leader of the separatist Donetsk region, which tried them, told reporters.

Pushilin said the court had "issued a perfectly fair punishment" to the three fighters.

He also accused British Prime Minister Boris Johnson of ignoring their fate and failing to contact the separatist authorities.

Pushilin was speaking at a press conference attended by AFP in Mariupol, the capital of the breakaway area, as part of a trip organised by the Russian defence ministry to the battle-

scarred Ukrainian city which was captured by Russian and separatist forces in May.

On Saturday, Johnson's spokesman said he was "appalled" by the death sentences handed down to Britons Aiden Aslin and Shaun Pinner and Moroccan Brahim Saadun.

"It is clear they were Ukrainian armed forces members and are therefore prisoners of war," and not mercenaries as the separatist authorities in Donetsk accuse them of being, the spokesman said.

According to the families of Aslin and Pinner, the two men have been living in the country since 2018.

On Friday, the United Nations expressed concern over the death sentences handed down against the prisoners by pro-Russian rebels.

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