

Two U.S. Volunteers in Ukraine Feared Captured by Russia

By [AFP](#)

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U.S. army soldiers line up at the Vay Adam Military Training Base near Hajduhadhaz, northeastern Hungary, Wednesday, June 15, 2022. The American unit carries out a joint patrol with Hungarian troops in County Szabolcs-Szatmar-Bereg bordering Ukraine. **Zsolt Czeglédi/MTI via AP/TASS**

Two Americans who volunteered to support Ukraine have gone missing and are feared to have been taken prisoner by Russia, officials and family members said Wednesday.

Captive Americans would add another layer of complexity to efforts by the United States, which is pumping billions of dollars into Ukraine but trying to steer clear of direct confrontation with Russia.

Alexander Drueke and Andy Huynh, both U.S. military veterans who had been living in Alabama, lost contact with their families after combat in Ukraine.

Drueke's mother reached out earlier this week, said her local congresswoman, Terri Sewell.

"According to his family, they have not heard from Drueke in several days," Sewell said in a statement.

"We will continue to do everything in our power to assist in locating him and finding answers for his family."

White House spokesman John Kirby said he could not confirm the disappearance of the two Americans but said, "If it's true, we'll do everything we can to get them safely back home."

He said that the United States discouraged Americans from traveling to Ukraine, which has endured a nearly four-month war against invading Russian forces.

"It is a war zone. It is combat. And if you feel passionate about supporting Ukraine, there's any number of other ways to do that that are safer and just as effective," Kirby told reporters.

The Telegraph, which first reported their disappearances, quoted an unnamed fellow fighter who said the two men were captured after running into a larger Russian force during a June 9 battle northeast of Kharkiv.

Drueke's mother, Lois Drueke, said that her son told his family that he was teaching Ukrainian troops how to use U.S.-made weapons.

"Alex felt very strongly that he had been trained in ways that he could help the Ukrainians be strong and push Putin back," she told The Washington Post, referring to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The two are the first Americans believed to have been captured or harmed in Ukraine, which Putin invaded in February.

Two British nationals have been reported killed in the fighting and another two Britons are facing the death penalty after being captured and convicted as mercenaries by a pro-Russian court.

President Joe Biden earlier Wednesday announced another \$1 billion in military aid to Ukraine but has said that U.S. forces will not directly engage Russia, a fellow nuclear power.

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