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U.K. Making Little Effort to Save Citizens Sentenced to Death in East Ukraine – Russian Envoy

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British citizens Aiden Aslin (L) and Shaun Pinner (R) and Moroccan Saaudun Brahim (C) attend a sentencing hearing at the Supreme Court of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) in Donetsk, eastern Ukraine. **EPA / TASS**

British officials are making little effort to free two of its citizens sentenced to death by eastern Ukrainian separatists for fighting alongside Kyiv's forces, Russia's ambassador to Britain told Reuters on Friday.

A court in the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) last month sentenced British citizens Aiden Aslin and Shaun Pinner, as well as Moroccan national Saadun Brahim, to death on charges of "mercenary activity" and attempted "forcible seizure of power." Kyiv and London maintain that the men were enlisted in the Ukrainian military as legitimate soldiers.

"We had a formal request here in London and in Moscow about these two guys — that they exist — and a phrase like 'we put all responsibility on Russia for them'," Ambassador Andrei

Kelin said in an interview with Reuters.

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“There was no demand for mediation, no demand for their release or anything like that. 'Let's talk about their fate and what can be done in this situation.' Nothing,” he added.

Kelin added that London hasn’t asked Moscow to pressure DNR leaders to release Aslin and Pinner.

Britain's foreign ministry did not respond to Reuters’ request to comment.

DNR head Denis Pushilin previously accused outgoing British Prime Minister Boris Johnson of ignoring Aslin and Pinner's fate and of failing to contact the separatist authorities.

Thousands of foreign nationals have volunteered to help fight alongside Kyiv’s troops since Russia sent troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Aslin, 28, and Pinner, 48, were already living in Ukraine at the time of Russia’s invasion, according to their families. They were captured by DNR forces in April while defending the besieged city of Mariupol.

Separately on Friday, the DNR lifted its moratorium on carrying out the death penalty.

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