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16 Russians Killed, 9 Missing in Israel-Hamas War – Envoy

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An Israeli soldier mans a checkpoint near the kibbutz of Sasa near the border with Lebanon. **Jalaa Marey / AFP**

Sixteen Russian nationals have been killed and nine remain missing in the war between Israel and Hamas militants, Russia's Ambassador to Israel Anatoly Viktorov said Tuesday.

All 16 of those killed also had Israeli citizenship, the state-run TASS news agency quoted Viktorov as saying.

One dual Russian-Israeli citizen is listed among the hostages taken by Hamas, Viktorov added during a press conference.

The diplomat said the Russian Embassy in Tel Aviv has fielded more than 5,000 calls and emails in the 10 days since the conflict broke out.

"We maintain constant communication with the citizens of our country who are there [in Israel and Palestine]," Viktorov said. "We're making active efforts to minimize the threat to

the lives and health of our compatriots."

He noted that the Russian Embassy does not plan to carry out emergency evacuations of its citizens.

"More than 300 people signed up for outbound flights in anticipation that they may happen in the future. But I think some of them have already taken regular flights," Viktorov said.

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Hamas fighters stormed through the heavily fortified border with Israel on Oct. 7 in what became the bloodiest attack in the Jewish state's 75-year history.

More than 1,400 Israelis were killed in the attack, while at least 2,750 Palestinians have been confirmed dead in Israel's retaliatory air strikes on the Gaza Strip.

More than 1 million people have been displaced inside the densely populated Palestinian territory in anticipation of an Israeli ground offensive. Around half a million Israelis have been evacuated and displaced in Israel.

In a phone call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday, President Vladimir Putin said Moscow has taken steps to "promote normalization" and find a "peaceful settlement" to the conflict.

Observers viewed the talks as a sign of the Kremlin's efforts to maintain influence in the region.

Russia has maintained traditionally good relations with both Israeli and Palestinian authorities but has not explicitly condemned the Hamas attack.

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