Russia, Ukraine Exchange Fallen Soldiers' Remains

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Russia and Ukraine said Friday that they have exchanged the bodies of 132 fallen soldiers, just two days after Moscow accused Kyiv of killing dozens of its own servicemen by shooting down a Russian warplane.

Moscow received the remains of 55 soldiers, according to Russian lawmaker Shamsayil Saraliyev, the RBC news website reported.

Meanwhile, Ukraine repatriated 77 bodies, its Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War said on the messaging app Telegram.

The bodies will be transported to law enforcement officials and forensic experts so that they can be identified, the Ukrainian agency added.

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"The preparations for the repatriation exchange had been underway for a long time," the coordination center said, crediting several of its government agencies and the Red Cross for facilitating the exchange.

On Wednesday, Moscow and Kyiv said a scheduled prisoner swap fell through when a Russian Il-76 military transport plane crashed in the Belgorod region near the border with eastern Ukraine.

Russia, which blames Ukraine for the crash, says there were 65 Ukrainian prisoners of war on board but it has not provided any evidence to back up the claims.

While Ukraine has not denied outright that it downed the plane, officials in Kyiv have questioned key aspects of Russia's narrative, such as whether any Ukrainian servicemen were killed.

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