The Moscow Times
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Says Captured Colombian Who Fought for Ukraine

June 06, 2024



Russian Defense Ministry

Russia's Defense Ministry said Thursday that its forces captured a Columbian man who purportedly fought as a mercenary on the side of Ukraine.

"Angel Cardenas Montilla came to Ukraine following an advertisement on TikTok inviting mercenaries to fight against Russia," the Defense Ministry said in a statement. It did not say where the man was captured.

In an interrogation video released by the Russian military, Cardenas Montilla, speaking in Spanish, identified himself as a former police officer and a father of four who received minimal combat training in Ukraine. He added that he was "mistreated" and "lied to" by the Ukrainian authorities.

Cardenas Montilla, who had bruises on his face and a swollen eyelid in the video, said he was the only survivor out of the nine Colombians who were with him just before being captured. He urged his fellow Colombians to avoid traveling to Ukraine and joining its military.

He also praised the Russian military and his treatment while in captivity. It was not clear whether Cardenas Montilla's interrogation was filmed under duress.

The Kremlin frequently accuses Kyiv of recruiting foreign mercenaries to fight against Russian forces. Moscow itself has faced accusations of luring foreigners from predominantly poor nations to fight against Ukraine.

Colombia has condemned Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. But President Gustavo Petro has opposed sending weapons to support Ukraine and has spoken in favor of a negotiated resolution to the conflict.

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