Israeli PM's Military Secretary Visits Moscow to Discuss Hamas Hostages

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Monday that his senior military adviser visited Russia to discuss the return of Israeli hostages held by Hamas militants.

"The Prime Minister's Military Secretary, Maj.-Gen. Roman Gofman returned this morning from a visit to Moscow, the goal of which was to advance the hostages deal," the office said in a statement.

Gofman, who is originally from Belarus, was said to have talked with Russian officials about the fate of Alexander Lobanov, a dual Russian-Israeli citizen who was among 251 people taken hostage during Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel.

On Saturday, the Israeli military recovered the bodies of six hostages, including Lobanov's, in the Gaza Strip. Around 100 hostages remain in captivity, dozens of whom the Israeli military says are likely dead.

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Huge demonstrations erupted in Israel on Sunday night in an outpouring of grief and fury over the six hostages who were found dead over the weekend, with calls to hold a nationwide strike on Monday to pressure the government to secure the release of the surviving hostages.

The Kremlin has not commented on Gofman's trip to Moscow. Russian Ambassador to Israel Anatoly Viktorov expressed [condolences](#) over Lobanov's death and vowed to continue working toward returning Alexander Trufanov, another Russian–Israeli hostage.

Moscow, along with dozens of other countries, has condemned Israel's conduct in its brutal war on Gaza in retaliation to the attack by Hamas militants last year. At the same time, Russia has strengthened military and political ties with Iran, a traditional ally of Hamas.

Gofman, who moved to Israel in the 1990s, was the highest–ranking officer wounded in the Oct. 7 attack, which resulted in the deaths of 1,205 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures.

Israel's war on Gaza, meanwhile, has so far killed at least 40,691 people in Gaza, according to the local health ministry. The UN human rights office says most of the dead are women and children.

AFP contributed reporting.

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