The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Ukraine Says Mayor Jailed by Russia Died by Torture

By AFP

December 04, 2024



Yevhen Matveyev **Yevhen Matveyev / Facebook**

Ukraine said Wednesday that the body of a mayor captured by Russian forces in the Zaporizhzhia region at the start of the full-scale invasion in 2022, who allegedly died in their captivity, had been returned by Moscow.

Moscow seized swathes of the Zaporizhzhia region in the days after the invasion began, including the town of Dniprorudne, and arrested its mayor Yevhen Matveyev, Kyiv says.

"He was held captive by the occupiers for two years and eight months and tortured to death. During the last exchange, his body was returned to Ukraine," Zaporizhzhia regional governor Ivan Fedorov said.

There was no immediate response to the claims from Moscow.

Russian forces swept through the industrial region in the south of the country and claimed to

have annexed the territory in September 2022.

Dniprorudne, which lies on the Dnipro River, had an estimated pre-war population of 17,736.

Related article: Ukraine's Kherson Targeted in Months-Long Russian Drone Campaign – FT

Fedorov described Matveyev as a "true patriot."

"During the occupation, he did not leave the city or the people, and did everything to ensure the life of the community," he said on social media.

Fedorov was himself briefly held by Russian forces in March 2022 when he served as the mayor of the southern city of Melitopol that fell to Moscow.

In March 2022, then-Ukrainian foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba called for an international response to Matveyev's disappearance.

European Council President Charles Michel also called for the mayor's release.

In late March 2022, Kyiv sounded the alarm over the disappearance of 14 local officials from territories captured by Russian forces.

Kyiv and Moscow still regularly exchange prisoners of war as well as the bodies of killed soldiers and civilians. The last reported swap was late last month.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/12/04/ukraine-says-mayor-jailed-by-russia-died-by-torture-a87226