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Zelensky Says Ukrainian Troops Captured Chinese Nationals Fighting for Russia

By AFP

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@V_Zelenskiy_official

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Tuesday that his armed forces had captured two Chinese citizens fighting alongside Russian troops, adding that he would seek an explanation from Beijing and a response from Ukraine's allies.

"Our military captured two Chinese citizens who fought in the Russian army. This happened on the territory of Ukraine — in the Donetsk region," Zelensky said in a post on social media.

"We have the documents of these prisoners, bank cards and personal data," he added, sharing a video that appeared to show one of the detained men.

There was no immediate comment from Moscow or Beijing.

China presents itself as neutral in the conflict and has denied supplying lethal aid to either side. But it remains a close political and economic ally of Moscow, and NATO has labeled Beijing a "decisive enabler" of Russia's invasion, which China has not condemned.

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Zelensky said Ukraine had evidence that "many more Chinese citizens" were fighting for Russia and that he had instructed Ukraine's foreign minister to immediately contact Beijing for clarification.

He said that the capture of the two men and Moscow's alleged involvement of China in the conflict are "a clear signal that Putin is going to do anything but end the war," Zelensky said.

He also called for a response from the United States, Europe and "everyone in the world who wants peace."

"I think the United States should pay more attention to what is happening today," he said at a press conference in Kyiv.

Zelensky added that Chinese nationals were not the only foreigners fighting on Russia's side, pointing to the Kremlin's deployment of North Korean troops in southwestern Russia's Kursk region.

"The North Koreans fought against us in the Kursk region, the Chinese are fighting on the territory of Ukraine. And I think this is an important point that we need to discuss with our partners, I think urgently," he said.

Ukraine, which sent its then-foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba to China last year, has been seeking closer ties with Beijing. Zelensky this week appointed a new ambassador to China.

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