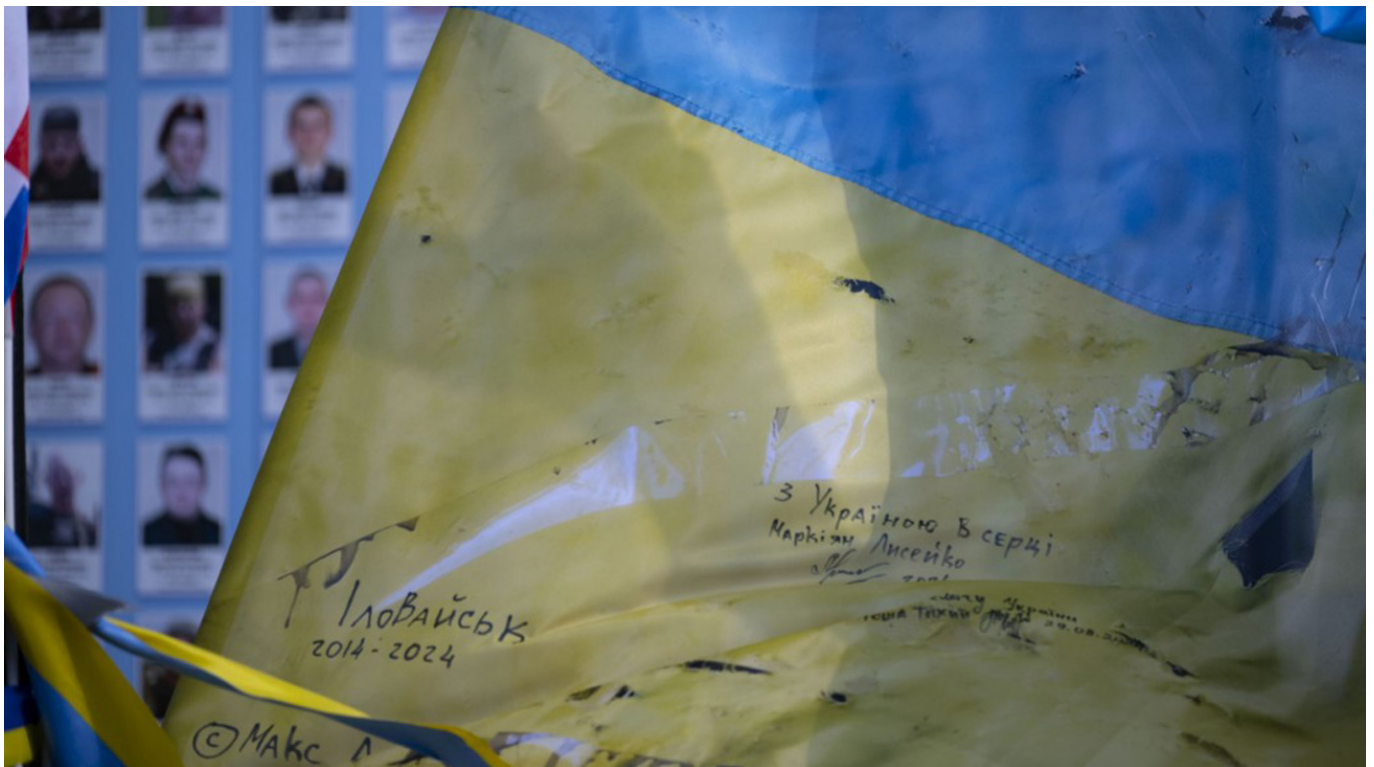


Ukraine Denies Claims Major Exchange of War Dead Has Begun

June 06, 2025



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Ukrainian authorities on Friday [denied](#) claims from pro-Russian officials that the two countries had begun a major operation to return the remains of fallen soldiers.

“Statements by representatives of the aggressor state claiming that the return of bodies or repatriation efforts have supposedly begun following the Istanbul agreements do not reflect reality,” Ukraine’s Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War said in a statement on Telegram.

Earlier on Friday, Vladimir Rogov, a pro-Kremlin official in the occupied Zaporizhzhia region, [said](#) that Russia received the bodies of 42 soldiers in exchange for the remains of 503 Ukrainian troops. Moscow did not publicly confirm that claim.

Russian and Ukrainian delegates met in Istanbul on Monday, where they failed to reach a ceasefire in the war but [agreed](#) to a new prisoner swap and the return of 6,000 bodies of dead soldiers each.

“Preparations are still underway for the exchange of severely ill and wounded individuals, young people and the return of the bodies of fallen defenders,” Ukraine’s Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War said. “Any unilateral statements or actions by representatives of the aggressor state are nothing more than another attempt to manipulate a sensitive and important issue.”

Russia and Ukraine have regularly exchanged prisoners and the remains of fallen troops since the early months of Moscow’s full-scale invasion in February 2022. Since October, the two sides have carried out at least nine body exchanges involving 500 or more soldiers.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [said](#) in February that over 46,000 Ukrainian troops had been killed in the war since early 2022. Russia has not updated its official military death toll since 2022, but independent media [place](#) the number of confirmed Russian troops killed at more than 111,000.

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