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Ukraine Says Received Russian Bodies in War Dead Exchanges

By AFP

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Kyiv received the bodies of 20 Russian soldiers instead of Ukrainian ones during exchanges of war dead with Moscow, President Volodymyr Zelensky said in remarks made public Saturday.

He accused Russia of "not checking" who they were sending, and suggested Moscow might be doing it on purpose to conflate the number of Ukrainian bodies they had.

The repatriation of fallen soldiers and the exchange of prisoners of war has been one of the few areas of cooperation between the warring sides since Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

Moscow and Kyiv agreed earlier this month during talks in Istanbul to exchange the bodies of 6,000 soldiers each.

"It has already been confirmed during repatriations that the bodies of 20 people handed over

to us as our deceased soldiers are Russian," Zelensky said in remarks released on Saturday.

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"Sometimes these bodies even have Russian passports," he added.

An "Israeli mercenary" fighting for Moscow was also among those sent, he said.

Tens of thousands of soldiers have been killed on both sides since the war began. Neither country regularly releases information on military casualties.

Zelensky said there were currently "695,000 Russian troops" on Ukrainian territory.

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