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Russia and Ukraine Swap 84 Prisoners Each Ahead of U.S. Summit

By AFP

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Russia and Ukraine exchanged 84 prisoners each on Thursday, the latest in a series of swaps that have freed hundreds of captives this year and one that comes a day before presidents Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump are set to meet for a high-level summit in Anchorage, Alaska.

The Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement on Telegram that the United Arab Emirates mediated the swap and that the released Russian servicemen were receiving "psychological and medical assistance."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said the freed Ukrainians included both military personnel and civilians, some of whom had been held since 2014, 2016 and 2017. He said "defenders of Mariupol," referring to the occupied port city, were also among those released.

Zelensky shared photos of smiling soldiers wrapped in Ukraine's blue-and-yellow flag and pledged that "there will be more exchanges."

Large-scale swaps have been the only tangible result of three rounds of peace talks between Russian and Ukrainian delegations in Istanbul from May to July.

Last month, the two sides agreed to exchange 1,200 prisoners each, and a Russian negotiator said Moscow had also offered to return the bodies of 3,000 Ukrainian soldiers.

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