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Russia Seeks Return of 31 Kursk Residents Held in Ukraine

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Russia's Human Rights Commissioner Tatyana Moskalkova. **Sergei Fadeichev / TASS**

Russia and Ukraine have exchanged a list of 31 civilians held by each side for a potential swap, Russia's Human Rights Commissioner Tatyana Moskalkova said on Monday.

Moskalkova claimed Ukraine continues to hold 31 residents of Russia's southwestern Kursk region, which briefly came under Ukrainian occupation during a cross-border incursion last August.

According to the state-run news agency TASS, Moskalkova said she had sent authorities in Kyiv the list of Kursk civilians and received a list of 31 Ukrainian civilians for a "mutual repatriation without any conditions."

"We've agreed with [Ukrainian human rights ombudsman] Dmytro Lubinets on talks this week to determine a specific date [for the exchange]," she was quoted as saying.

There was no immediate confirmation from Ukraine about the discussions for a possible

exchange.

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Moskalkova has accused Ukrainian forces of forcibly moving more than 1,000 Kursk residents before Russian troops regained control of the region earlier this year.

Relatives of missing residents in Kursk previously estimated that up to 3,000 people were caught in the occupied areas. Authorities initially said 500 were unaccounted for but later raised the number to more than 1,100.

Moskalkova's announcement came days after Russia and Ukraine exchanged 84 prisoners each. Both sides have carried out a series of large-scale swaps following direct peace talks in Istanbul in May and June.

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