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FSB Says It Killed Members of Ukrainian Sabotage Group in Bryansk Region

August 20, 2025



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Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) said Wednesday that its agents killed and detained members of a Ukrainian sabotage group in the western Bryansk region, claiming that they were involved in terrorist attacks inside the country.

"Three saboteurs were killed and three others were detained during a security operation," the FSB said in a statement on its website.

A video shared by state-run news agencies showed three men lying on the ground in a wooded area, each identifying themselves as members of a unit connected to Ukraine's Special Operations forces.

The video then cuts to FSB agents examining three bodies and a cache of weapons. In its statement, the Russian intelligence agency said it seized U.S.-made assault rifles, Czech explosives and a "large number" of NATO-standard grenades and ammunition.

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In an interrogation video, one of the captured men, who identified himself as the group’s commander Oleksandr Zhuk, claimed that the unit had been trained by British, Canadian and other European instructors. The FSB alleged that the group was trained “under the direct supervision of Western intelligence personnel” in Ukraine, as well as in NATO countries Lithuania, Estonia and Norway.

The man identified as Zhuk said Ukraine’s military intelligence agency HUR deployed the group in the Bryansk region earlier this month “to carry out a series of terrorist acts at key Russian transportation sites.” The FSB statement claimed a radio station seized at the site of its security operation was intended for communication with HUR headquarters in Kyiv.

It was unclear whether the man spoke under duress, but the formal language he used suggested that his confession may have been at least prepared in advance. It was also not immediately possible to verify the FSB’s claims.

Zhuk also said the Ukrainian special forces group was involved in an explosion on a Bryansk region bridge in May, as well as a freight train derailment in the Belgorod region last September.

The FSB’s investigative unit launched a criminal probe into sabotage and said it would seek to place the three surviving men in pre-trial detention.

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