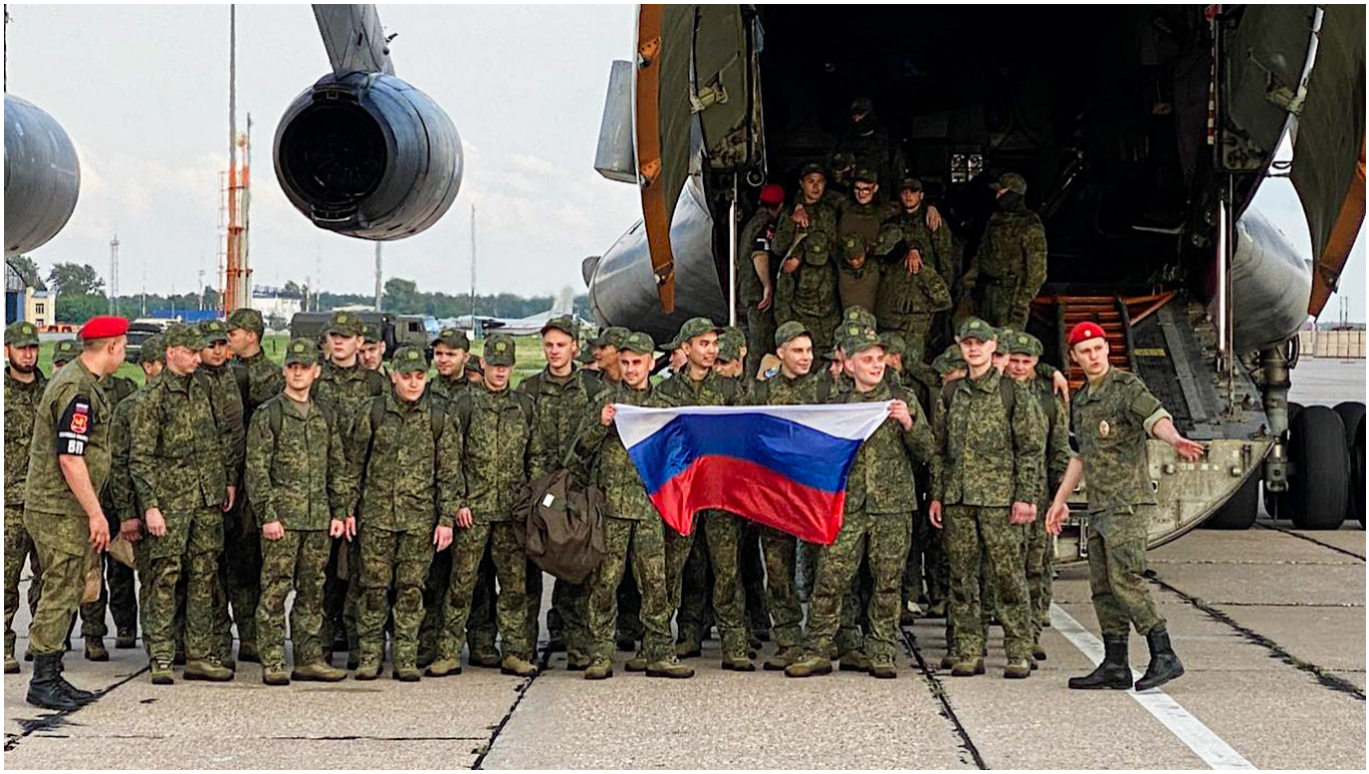
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Russia and Ukraine Exchange Captured Soldiers, Civilians in New Swap

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TASS

Russia and Ukraine on Thursday exchanged 185 captured soldiers each in the latest prisoner swap agreed during bilateral talks in Istanbul in July, Russia's Defense Ministry announced on social media.

The military also said "20 civilians were returned" without providing further details.

"Russian military personnel and civilians are currently located on the territory of the Republic of Belarus, where they are receiving the necessary psychological and medical assistance," the ministry added.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky confirmed the exchange, posting pictures of the released Ukrainians, wrapped in national flags, smiling and their heads looking freshly shaved.

"Alongside our defenders, civilians are also returning home — 20 of our people. Everyone will

definitely receive all the support they need," Zelensky said on social media.

"Since the start of the full-scale invasion, we have already brought over 7,000 of our people home," he added.

Large-scale prisoner exchanges were the only tangible result of three rounds of peace talks between Russian and Ukrainian delegations in Istanbul between May and July.

The two sides have also conducted several rounds of repatriation of fallen soldiers, the exchanges being the only areas of cooperation between Ukraine and Russia amid the war.

Tens of thousands of soldiers have been killed on both sides since Russia launched the invasion in 2022, though neither side regularly publishes data on their own casualties.

AFP contributed reporting.

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