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Russia and Ukraine Release Nearly 200 POWs Each

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@V_Zelenskiy_official / Telegram

Ukraine and Russia released hundreds of prisoners of war on Friday, with officials in Kyiv saying that the exchange was a "continuation" of a swap held earlier this month.

Russia's Defense Ministry told state media that both sides released 193 POWs. It said the Russian soldiers would be sent to Belarus to undergo mental health and medical evaluations.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky shared photos of the released soldiers, whom Ukraine's Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War identified as soldiers between the ages of 24 and 60, some of them with injuries.

"Most of those released were illegally held in Chechnya. Criminal cases were fabricated against them in violation of the Geneva Convention," the Coordination Headquarters said.

Friday's exchange follows a "175-for-175" swap on April 11, which was brokered by the United Arab Emirates just ahead of a brief Orthodox Easter truce. That deal also included the

return of the remaining seven residents of Russia's Kursk region who had been held by Kyiv following the 2024 Ukrainian incursion of the border region.

Russian Human Rights Commissioner Tatiana Moskalkova and her Ukrainian counterpart, Dmytro Lubinets, have maintained a rare open channel of communication to verify the status of POWs and detained civilians, even as broader diplomatic efforts to end the war remain frozen.

Last month, Russia and Ukraine released 500 POWs each in a two-day exchange mediated by the United States and the UAE. The warring sides have carried out dozens of exchanges of prisoners and fallen soldiers since last spring.

Talks to end the conflict, now in its fifth year, have stalled since the United States and Israel launched their war against Iran in February.

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