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Russia and Ukraine Release 160 POWs Each

By AFP

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Russian soldiers released in a prisoner swap on June 26, 2026. **Screen capture / Russian Defense Ministry**

Russia and Ukraine each released 160 prisoners of war on Friday, with Russia's Defense Ministry saying that the United Arab Emirates mediated the exchange.

"We continue bringing Ukrainians home from Russian captivity. Today, 160 service members were released," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky wrote in a post on X.

He added that "all of them had been held captive since 2022" and posted pictures of the men wrapped in Ukrainian flags, smiling and embracing each other.

Russia's Defense Ministry confirmed the exchange and said it had received 160 of its captive soldiers.

"The returned Russian servicemen are currently in the Republic of Belarus," it said.

Since the start of the Russian invasion in 2022, exchanges of prisoners and the remains of fallen soldiers have been one of the few areas of cooperation between Moscow and Kyiv.

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