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Russia Says Ukraine Rejects Local Ceasefire for Handover of Soldiers' Bodies

By Reuters

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Chief of Russian Armed Forces Valery Gerasimov during the Friday meeting with President Vladimir Putin. **kremlin.ru**

Ukraine has refused to halt the shelling of the town of Kostiantynivka in the east of the country to allow Russia to hand over the bodies of fallen Ukrainian soldiers, the Russian Defense Ministry said on Sunday.

Russian military commanders told President Vladimir Putin on Friday that Moscow's forces had taken control of Kostiantynivka, though Ukraine denied the claim, saying its forces remained in control of the town.

Kostiantynivka is a key locality whose capture Moscow has long sought in its military campaign in the Donetsk region.

Russia said it had proposed a six-hour ceasefire in and around Kostiantynivka on Monday to facilitate the handover of Ukrainian servicemen's bodies and had given Kyiv until 09:00 GMT on Sunday to respond.

Ukraine's Defense Ministry and General Staff did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment.

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