

Vatican Envoy Discusses Humanitarian Issues, Visits POWs in Russia, Foreign Ministry Says

By [Reuters](#)

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Cardinal Matteo Zuppi **Vatican Media**

Papal envoy Cardinal Matteo Zuppi discussed humanitarian issues in the Ukraine war in talks with Russian officials and visited Ukrainian prisoners of war, Russia's Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday.

Zuppi's three days of talks coincided with an appeal by Pope Leo to Russia and Ukraine to sit down and discuss how to end the four-year war. The pontiff also decried national leaders who he said were "beginning to speak about nuclear weapons and wars that are becoming ever more destructive."

The Foreign Ministry said Zuppi met Kremlin foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov and other Russian officials and discussed prospects for a settlement as well as humanitarian issues,

including prisoner of war exchanges and displaced children.

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The statement said Zuppi, head of the Italian bishops conference, also discussed conditions in the Russian-occupied town of Oleshky in Ukraine's Kherson region, where Ukrainian officials said Kyiv's military used drones last weekend to deliver food and medicine to civilians.

The Foreign Ministry statement said Ukraine was blocking all attempts to provide supplies to the town's residents. Ukrainian officials say Russian forces are preventing them from leaving the town.

The ministry statement said Zuppi was permitted to visit prisoners of war and "was personally able to talk with Ukrainians and see for himself that Russia strictly follows all the relevant humanitarian standards."

It said the visit "confirmed the constructive and regular nature of the Russian-Vatican dialogue and the willingness of both sides to continue cooperating on humanitarian issues."

Zuppi last visited ✎Moscow in October 2024 to discuss prospects for ending the war launched by Russia's 2022 invasion of ✎its neighbor.

Zuppi has also held talks in Kyiv with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

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