

U.S. cannot confirm Ukrainian POWs were on board Il-76 - White House

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The United States is not in a position to confirm the reports that a Russian Il-76 military transport aircraft that crashed in the Belgorod region on January 24 was carrying Ukrainian prisoners of war.

National Security Council Coordinator John Kirby said this at a briefing on Wednesday, according to an Ukrinform correspondent.

"We have seen the reports, but we are not in a position to confirm them," he said, asked to comment on Russia's claims that Ukraine shot down a military transport plane carrying Ukrainian POWs.

Kirby also added that the United States was doing the best it could to try to get more clarity and more information on the crash of the Russian plane.

According to Russian Telegram channels, an Il-76 plane, which is used to transport equipment and troops, crashed in the Belgorod region on January 24. Russian media reported that 63 people were on board the plane and that all of them died. Sources in the Ukrainian Armed Forces stated that this aircraft was carrying a batch of S-300 air defense missiles. The Russian army is using these missiles for the massive shelling of the Kharkiv region and other Ukrainian regions bordering Russia.

At the same time, the Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine said that a prisoner swap between Ukraine and Russia was scheduled for January 24, but this did not happen. Later, the intelligence agency added that as part of preparations for the prisoner swap, Russia did not inform Ukraine about the need to guarantee the safety of the airspace in the area of the city of Belgorod in a specific timeframe, as was repeatedly done in the past. This may be a sign of Russia's deliberate actions aimed at creating a threat to the lives and safety of prisoners of war.

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