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Over 70 Unidentified Soldiers Buried in Ukraine

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Authorities in both regions, which are located near the conflict-affected regions of Donetsk and Lugansk, collected DNA samples from the bodies in an attempt to identify them.

About 1,000 government troops have been killed in clashes with pro-Russian separatists in the eastern Ukraine since the beginning of the armed conflict four months ago.

Another 1,700 soldiers have gone missing and are being anxiously sought by their families, Vasili Vovk, head of investigations for the Ukrainian Security Service, told local television channel TSN.

He added that some 700 troops are being held by the separatists as prisoners of war.

Some 1,200 soldiers have already been released by the rebels after both sides agreed to a ceasefire on Sept. 5 in the Belarusian capital of Minsk.

On Monday, the separatists gave their estimate of the number of militia members and civilians killed over the past four months at more than 4,000.

The United Nations had stated that 3,000 people have been killed since April in the eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Lugansk, where more than eight million people resided before the outbreak of the conflict.