



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

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PRESS RELEASE

CLARIFICATION ON REPORTS REGARDING BATSWANA ALLEGEDLY RECRUITED INTO RUSSIAN WAR

GABORONE, 26th February 2026: The Government of the Republic of Botswana has noted a press report published in The Botswana Guardian online publication dated Friday, 27 February 2026, under the headline "Batswana recruited into Russian war possibly dead." The article attributes the information to the Ambassador of Ukraine to Botswana, His Excellency Dr Oleksiy Syvak.

The Government wishes to state unequivocally that it has not received any official communication confirming the information cited in the article.

Through the Ministry of International Relations, and in collaboration with international law enforcement mechanisms including INTERPOL, the Government continues to engage relevant authorities to establish the facts and determine the whereabouts of the three identified Batswana currently believed to be in the Russian Federation in connection with the Russia–Ukraine conflict.

Diplomatic engagement on this matter remains ongoing. In December 2025, the Minister of International Relations, Honourable Dr Phenyio Butale, held discussions with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr Sergey Lavrov, in Egypt, during which this issue was formally raised. Subsequent written communication has been transmitted through established diplomatic channels, requesting cooperation and assistance from the Russian authorities.

Given the transnational dimensions of the case, Botswana is also working closely with international partners and counterparts in the Republic of South Africa. At this stage, no verified information has been received confirming the location or status of the individuals concerned.

The Government remains fully committed to safeguarding the welfare and interests of Botswana abroad. All appropriate diplomatic, legal and law-enforcement avenues are being actively pursued to establish the status of the affected individuals. The Ministry of International Relations and relevant officials continue to engage the families with due sensitivity and care.

It is worth recalling that in December 2025, the Government successfully facilitated the safe return of another Botswana in a separate but related matter. This underscores Botswana's unwavering commitment to the protection of its citizens wherever they may be.

The public will be informed of any verified developments through official channels.

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