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*Neo-Nazi terror threat grows as Ukraine fighters jailed in France*



**The arrest of two heavily armed French neo-Nazis returning from Ukraine highlights a looming problem for NATO states sponsoring the proxy war, and their conspiracy of silence on the nature of the threat.**

On April 24th 2023, two French neo-Nazis were jailed for 15 months, nine of which were suspended, for possessing assault rifle ammunition. The pair had returned to Paris from Ukraine two days earlier, and were arrested at customs.

Both were on the radar of French domestic spying agency DGSI, which held files on them for endangering state security. According to the French outlet Mediapart, one was a veteran of Chasseurs Alpins (Alpine Hunters), France's elite mountain infantry force. He was thrown out of the military after his neo-Nazi sympathies were exposed online. The other is a notorious local far-right activist.

As in many other Western countries, hundreds of French citizens have traveled to Kiev to take up arms against Russia since it invaded Ukraine in February 2022. According to the DGSI, at least 30 of the French foreign fighters are known fascists.

This shocking outflow has failed to generate any English-language media interest, however, save for March 2022, when far-right militant Loïk Le Priol was deported home from Hungary en route to Ukraine, to face charges of murdering Argentinian rugby player Federico Martín Aramburú in Paris.

It was inevitable that some of the French Neo-Nazis who managed to make the journey to Kiev had pre-existing links with **Azov Battalion**, Ukraine's notorious Neo-Nazi paramilitary. In **January 2022**, Paris banned the white supremacist group Zouaves. Its members had **violently attacked** anti-racist protesters disrupting a rally for far-right presidential candidate Eric Zemmour the previous month. The movement's leader, Marc de Cacqueray-Valmenier, traveled to Ukraine in **December 2019** to meet with representatives of Azov, and attend its training camps.

Since the war in Ukraine began, **Ouest Casual**, a still-extant Telegram channel linked to Zouaves, has published a steady stream of tributes to Ukrainian soldiers, repeatedly denouncing the "Asiatic contingents of Soviet imperialism once again sweeping across Europe," and "Putin's Islamist dogs," in reference to Chechen fighters. **Bordeaux Nationaliste**, a violent Neo-Nazi group closely linked to Zouaves, has regularly organized collections of equipment for the fight.

### **Washington creates a powder keg in Kiev**

The two newly jailed Neo-Nazis were reportedly "asked all day" by police following their arrest why they carried military equipment, possession of which is absolutely illegal under French law, into the country. An obvious answer is that the pair were planning to bring the terror of Ukraine's battlefields back home with them.

In **November**, Alex Rubinstein reported for The Grayzone on how Italian police had arrested five members of the local neo-Nazi group, Order of Hagal, which maintains operational ties to Azov Battalion. They were stockpiling weapons, including ammunition, tactical gear, and a grenade launcher, and planning terror attacks. A sixth member, then-fighting alongside Azov in Ukraine, remained wanted.

The neo-Nazis had been monitored intensively by Italian authorities since 2019. One – reported to be "dangerously close to far-right Ukrainian Nationalist groups" – was planning an attack on a police station in Naples, while the fugitive Azov fighter had a shopping mall in the same city in his crosshairs.

In an intercepted **January 2021 conversation**, the former boasted he "would make a massacre like the one in New Zealand," referring to the Christchurch spree shooter who murdered 51 Muslims two years earlier. **That individual** had emblazoned his flak jacket and the cover of his manifesto, which mentioned Ukraine, with Azov's ubiquitous "black sun" logo.

As a **2020 investigation** by West Point Military Academy's Combating Terrorism Center found, that manifesto became a popular online currency among Ukrainian paramilitary groups, and was even translated into Ukrainian and sold as a book by a 22-year-old living in Kiev. The Center noted that Ukraine "holds a particular attraction for white supremacists–ideologues, activists, and adventurers alike," explicitly due to the emergence of Azov and other state-backed fascist elements.

It was the first time since the defeat of the Nazis that "an overtly far-right white nationalist militia" anywhere in the world was "publicly celebrated, openly organizing, and [had] friends in high places." Support from Petro Poroshenko's government and Ukrainian security services – "despite well-documented reports of human rights abuses" – was "electrifying to far-right individuals and groups in Europe, the United States, and further afield," the investigation noted. Fascists duly flocked in droves to Kiev to join Azov, and/or receive training.

The US and its international vassals have been keen to encourage and facilitate the proliferation of neo-Nazism in Ukraine. Throughout the Cold War, the CIA and MI6 adopted a **covert policy** of encouraging ultra-nationalist elements in Ukraine to undermine communist rule. In the years after the US-backed 2014 Maidan coup, numerous far-right militias received high-level military training from Washington, London, and Ottawa. Support from the West **has only increased** since Russia's invasion.

Two groups that received extensive practical and material support from NATO states in recent years are **Centuria** and **Right Sector**. The indicted members of Italy's Order of Hagal **reportedly maintained** "direct and frequent" contacts with both, along with Azov, seeking "possible recruitment into the ranks of these fighting groups," according to local media.

### **Well-established blowback from US covert ops in Europe**

Since the West initiated its covert program of supporting violent extremists in order to weaken and destabilize its geopolitical foes, blowback has come in various forms.

Throughout the Bosnian war in the 1990s, the US supported Mujahideen fighters. **They arrived** on CIA "black flights" from all over the world, especially Afghanistan, and received a seemingly endless flow of weapons, in breach of a United Nations embargo.

**Quickly gaining** a reputation for excessive brutality against enemy soldiers and civilians alike, and false flag attacks on their own positions and public spaces in order to precipitate Western intervention, their presence was pivotal to the Bosnian Muslims' war effort. US Balkans negotiator Richard Holbrooke **has stated** they "wouldn't have survived" without the Mujahideen's assistance.

**Under the terms** of the 1995 Dayton Agreement, Mujahideen fighters were required to leave Bosnia. **Immediately after** it was signed, Croat forces fighting alongside British and American mercenaries in the country began assassinating the group's leadership to send the Islamists scattering. Some fled to Albania along with their US-supplied weapons, where they joined the incipient Kosovo Liberation Army, another **Western-backed** entity filled with hardcore jihadists.

Others **were intercepted** with the assistance of the CIA, and deported to their countries of origin to stand trial for serious terror offenses. This was perceived as a gross betrayal by the Mujahideen's senior overseas leadership, which included Osama bin Laden.

In August 1998, two US embassies in East Africa were simultaneously bombed in a suicide attack. **A day earlier**, the bin Laden-linked Islamic Jihad published a threat, explicitly referring to US involvement in the extradition of the group's "brothers" from Albania. It warned that an appropriate "response" was imminently forthcoming:

"We are interested in briefly telling the Americans that their message has been received and that the response, which we hope they will read carefully, is being [prepared], because we – with God's help – will write it in the language that they understand."

The embassy attacks marked the beginning of bin Laden's jihad against the US, which one way or another culminated in 9/11. Two of the purported hijackers, Nawaf al-Hazmi and Khalid al-Mihdhar, were veterans of the Bosnian war. As *The Grayzone* **recently reported**, both may have been knowingly or unknowingly working for the CIA on the day of the attacks.

Today, an even more egregious betrayal is almost inevitably impending – namely, the US ending its support for Kiev's war effort. Across the West, weapon stocks are almost spent, political and public pressure to exit mounts daily, and officials are **openly expressing grave doubts** about Ukraine's ability to stage a successful counteroffensive, let alone recapture any lost territory in the process.

On April 24th, *Politico* **reported** that if the long-awaited counteroffensive failed, the Biden administration would end its backing outright and compel Kiev to begin negotiations with Moscow, sweetening this bitter pill by "framing it to the Ukrainians as a 'ceasefire' and not as permanent peace talks." Of course, as the Ukrainian military's operation is wholly dependent on that support, even a temporary cessation would result in total collapse, leaving Russian forces to steamroller through Ukrainian territory effectively unopposed.

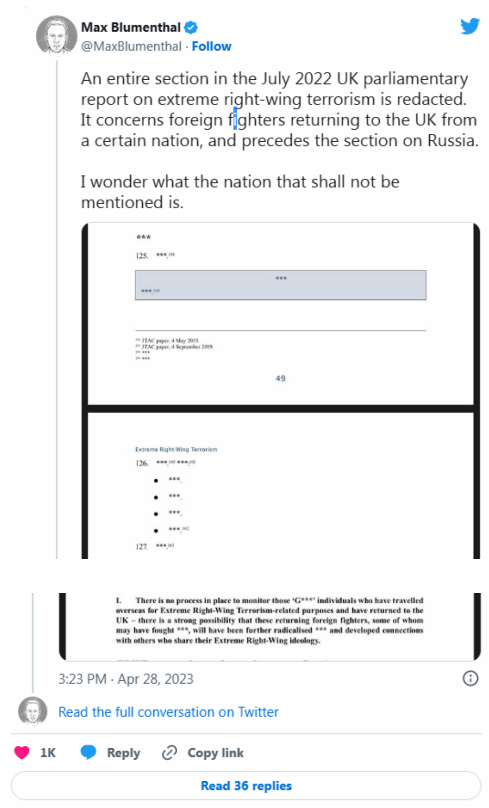
## The conspiracy of silence on foreign fighters in Ukraine

The total number of homegrown and foreign fascist fighters in Ukraine is not known, but is likely to be vast. When the US pulls out of the proxy war, they would have every reason to flee. They will bring with them battlefield experience, and in many cases elite Western military training. High-end weapons and ammunition will be available in abundance on the black market, due to the massive wellspring of arms shipments to Kiev over the course of the conflict.

In July 2022, Europol warned that “the proliferation of firearms and explosives in Ukraine could lead to an increase in firearms and munitions trafficked into the EU via established smuggling routes or online platforms,” and “this threat might even be higher once the conflict has ended.”

That same month, a report from the British parliament’s Intelligence and Security Committee contained a brief section on the risk of Britons who had traveled overseas for “extreme right-wing terrorism purposes” having been “further radicalised” by the experience, and “developed connections with others” who share their violent ideology.

While the country they visited, and whom or what they “may have fought,” was obscured with asterisks, it is beyond doubt this section referred to fighters returning from Ukraine. The Committee ominously warned there was “no process in place” to monitor these individuals upon their arrival.



It is hard to imagine that Western intelligence officials are not aware that the powder keg they created in Kiev could erupt on their own soil. However, it also appears clear they have taken a vow of omerta on the issue, even redacting sections in their own public reports on the

plague of returning foreign fighters. At the same time, they campaign zealously against the threat of homegrown right-wing extremism.

Since taking office, the Biden administration has repeatedly warned of imminent “racially or ethnically motivated” terrorist attacks by US citizens. It has even published a dedicated **national security strategy** to address the “challenge.”

Yet, **the indictment** of two American neo-Nazis in February this year generated virtually no media interest, and went largely unremarked upon by US officials. The pair, leaders of Atomwaffen – also known as the National Socialist Resistance Front – planned to destroy electrical substations serving the majority Black city of Baltimore, Maryland, in a bid to deprive residents of heat and light during Winter.

This eerie silence may be at least partially explained by **Atomwaffen’s relationship** with Azov Battalion, which has hosted members of the group in Kiev. One Atomwaffen figure, Caleb Cole, **was sentenced** in January 2022 by the US Department of Justice for plotting with accomplices to intimidate Jews and journalists. It turned out that Cole had previously visited Ukraine to attend the country’s annual neo-Nazi black metal festival known as **Asgardsrei**, which is held in a state-owned venue and features influential Azov activists on stage.

As Western pundits **airbrush** Azov’s openly fascist agenda in order to justify military aid to Ukraine, they are also obscuring the threat posed by foreign fighters returning home in droves after months in the trenches with the group.

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