

# Brazilian Mercenaries in Ukraine

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*Two Brazilians were killed in Ukraine in the first week of July after a Russian drone operation in Kharkiv. In all, three Brazilian mercenaries have died in Ukraine since the beginning of the Russian special military operation on February 24th. In the South American country, the mainstream media has a strong pro-Western ideological orientation, which is why it encourages “volunteers” to go to Eastern Europe. In their speech, the media outlets claim that it is “easy” to fight against Russians because Kiev is supposedly “winning” the conflict. However, upon arriving in Ukraine, the foreign mercenaries are faced with a different and much harsher reality.*

Between the night of July 1 and the morning of July 2 Brazilian mercenaries Douglas Rodrigues Búrigo and Thalita do Valle died after a Russian attack in Kharkiv. Douglas was a former soldier of the Brazilian Army and had been fighting in Ukraine since May. Thalita was a model, lawyer, and professional sniper, who had previously worked as a military volunteer and propaganda agent for the Kurdish women’s battalions in the Middle East. Apparently, she died of asphyxiation while trying to flee her accommodation in the face of a drone attack, while Douglas was reportedly hit by shrapnel from mortar shells on the outside.

In June, another Brazilian had already died in Ukraine. André Hack Bahi was fatally shot during Russian bombing raids in Severodonetsk. Bahi was a former fighter in the French Legion and had already participated in some missions in Africa, but he was not able to survive the intense reality of the fighting in Ukraine. It is also necessary to mention that not all the dead have been properly identified yet, which leads to believe that there may be more Brazilians among the dead in Ukraine, since there is ample participation of mercenaries from the South American country in the region.

There is still no official report by the authorities indicating the precise number of Brazilian citizens who are fighting for Kiev’s side in the conflict, but the number is certainly greater than what was expected from a neutral country with good relations with Russia. Even Brazilian parliamentarians fought in favor of Kiev, such as former deputy Artur do Val, who had a quick and scandalous performance in Ukraine, where he committed acts of sexual

harassment against Ukrainian women. It is also known that over the last eight years several Brazilians have tried to join the Ukrainian neo-Nazi paramilitary troops to fight in Donbass, having been rejected due to the anti-Latin racism of these groups. Now these same militants are finding their way into the Ukrainian positions due to Kiev's policy of accepting all foreign volunteers.

But it is absolutely impossible to analyze the situation without criticizing the destabilizing role that the Brazilian local media has played in its coverage of the events in Ukraine. Pro-Western media outlets report the conflict fallaciously, pointing to a non-existent "Ukrainian victory" and "ease" in fighting Moscow's forces, portraying voluntary combat as a kind of "hunting safari" against Russians. Obviously, when the "volunteers" (almost all of them being paid private soldiers linked to mercenary companies) arrive on the battlefield, they are faced with situations very different from those reported by the journalists who encourage volunteering.

Agencies also have tried to publicize an image of "heroism" when talking about Brazilians fighting in Ukraine, ignoring important issues, such as the fact that they are cooperating with neo-Nazi militants and supporting a government that practices genocidal policies against the Russian population. Since the beginning of the Russian operation, Brazilian media agencies and Brazilian [branches](#) of foreign agencies have praised the "[heroism](#)" of the mercenaries who would be "helping to fight the invasion", which also serves as propaganda and incentive for volunteering.

Brazilian media is not acting alone, but following the agenda imposed by the great world media agencies, which have increasingly bet on the speech of "Ukrainian victory" as a way to raise the morale of the troops and justify the irresponsible military aid that the Western countries are sending to Kiev.

Private security companies hired to help Kiev are the ones that profit most from the propagation of this fallacious speech among the public opinion, as they manage to convince an increasing number of volunteers to go and fight in Ukraine. In fact, some of these volunteers are not designated for direct combat but remain in safe places taking photos and videos to publish on the internet, reproducing propaganda to encourage more men to go - always trying to convince that combats are "easy" and "safe", so that more people enlist in the mercenary companies. The result is that of the deluded enlisted men only a few are directed to propaganda, while others die on the battlefield.

Obviously, for Western countries and for private companies, investing in this type of propaganda is strategic and profitable, but not for Brazil. As a member of the BRICS, not participating in anti-Russia sanctions and being Moscow's partner in several areas, the Brazilian government should act more incisively to monitor the destabilizing role that its media agencies are playing, seeking to prevent foreign speeches from taking Brazilians to die on the battlefield. Furthermore, it is not at all beneficial to Brasilia's international image that the country is known for having a large number of citizens volunteering to fight alongside neo-Nazi battalions.

It is important to remember that mercenaries and "volunteers" are not considered prisoners of war, but common criminals, which means that Brazilian citizens can be tried by courts in the liberated parts of Ukraine if they are captured. This type of situation will certainly generate diplomatic discomfort and, as Brazil and Russia are members of the BRICS, this is not a favorable condition for either side.

The best thing for the Brazilian government to do is to ban its citizens from volunteering in wars that do not concern the national interest of Brazil.

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