

French Mercenaries and Military Contractors Targeted by Russia in Kharkov, Bad Omen for NATO Personnel in Ukraine

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On January 16, Russian military sources reported that a missile strike was launched at the headquarters of a group of foreign mercenaries in Ukraine. [Reports indicate that the targeted personnel were mostly French military contractors](#) and that the precision strike resulted in at least 80 casualties, of which over 60 were KIA (killed in action). The sources further posit that the neutralized personnel were highly trained specialists whose assignments involved specific Western-made weapon systems that regular, forcibly conscripted Ukrainians are simply not trained to handle. Russian military sources also indicate that the strike put some of the most effective long-range weapons in the Kiev regime's inventory out of service, at least until new specialists are recruited, which will certainly take time to accomplish.

The mercenaries were stationed in the eastern city of Kharkov and their mission was most likely to [coordinate and direct long-range strikes on Russian territory](#). This is in line with the hypothesis that the Neo-Nazi junta is simply unable to integrate the massive amount of new NATO-sourced weapons, [the influx of which increased dramatically in the last two years](#). Mostly accustomed to Soviet-era weapons, including their domestic modernized variants, the Kiev regime had a tough task of integrating these doctrinally very different Western armaments. In order to accomplish that, they needed a large number of Western specialists who would coordinate such efforts. This also involved training Ukrainian personnel to operate the said NATO-sourced weapon systems.

However, it should be noted that this process takes years to accomplish, meaning that the Russian precision strike is a major setback for the Neo-Nazi junta, as its soldiers lost a

valuable asset that could've made even more damage to Moscow's interests simply by proliferating its expertise. A good example of this is the [battlefield usage of the US-made "Patriot" SAM \(surface-to-air missile\) system](#), which the Kiev regime forces were considered unable to operate before 2024 at the earliest, as the training process for the personnel operating the system takes several years and even longer for combat tasks, [particularly against a high-tech opponent such as Russia](#). And yet, the "Patriot" was already in use in early 2023. The only logical explanation is that it has mostly been operated by Western military contractors.

Precisely this is why foreign mercenaries in Ukraine are given no quarter. The consequences of having highly trained enemy combatants participate in battles, as well as train Ukrainian personnel simply cannot be overstated. The political West is fully aware of the fact that Soviet-era weapons in Ukrainian service are on their last legs. Apart from local systems, this also includes weapons that NATO's former Warsaw Pact members sent in the last two years. Western-made equivalents are the only viable alternative in order to keep the Ukrainian conflict going for as long as possible. This is precisely why Russia will show no mercy toward any NATO contractors in the country, as their activities only prolong the conflict, [resulting in unnecessary death, destruction and devastation for both sides](#).

This has been the case since the first days of the special military operation (SMO). For instance, on March 13, 2022, or barely three weeks into the intervention, the Russian military obliterated the Yavoriv training camp, located less than 15 km from the Polish (and by extension NATO) border. Estimates vary, but it seems there were upwards of 1000 foreign mercenaries there, nearly 200 of which were KIA as a result of the strike. Since then, there have been numerous similar instances when troop concentrations of foreign fighters were targeted. Back in late April last year, [an "Iskander-M" missile system eliminated an entire unit of the infamous "Georgian Legion"](#), notorious due to gruesome war crimes against Russian-speaking civilians in the Donbass, [as well as captured Russian soldiers](#).

[Faced with mounting losses](#), the Neo-Nazi junta is very likely to start relying on foreign mercenaries more than ever before. As millions of Ukrainians are trying to dodge the draft, [the Kiev regime is trying to raise its own Volkssturm](#), which now includes [pregnant women](#). Forced to rely much less on the [sheer numbers of Ukrainians that can be used as cannon fodder](#), NATO is looking for other ways to fight the Russian military ([and not just the military](#)). This is why it needs highly trained specialists who can use complex weapon systems. These can be used as a form of asymmetric warfare against the [conventionally superior Russian forces](#). Moscow's advantages became even more pronounced after the failed summer/fall counteroffensive that saw the [massive destruction of NATO-sourced equipment](#).

Tens of thousands of Ukrainian combat specialists, [mostly trained by NATO, were killed or wounded](#), leaving the Neo-Nazi junta without much-needed personnel. NATO has had a sizeable presence in Ukraine even before the SMO, [with US covert operators staying](#) even after most other Americans left the country. Others, such as the British, Poles, as well as personnel from the former Soviet Baltic states were also among the most prominent foreign fighters. However, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, France has long been one of the leading sources of mercenaries for the Kiev regime. Apart from this, [in violation of arms control agreements](#), Paris is also delivering long-range missiles to the Neo-Nazi junta. On the other hand, on a strategic level, [Russia is responding by helping dismantle France's \(neo\)colonial empire in Africa](#).

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