

Israel Is Still Arming Ukrainian Nazis

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Israeli anti-tank weapons are being used by Nazi soldiers in Ukraine.

A video published by [Ukraine’s Azov Battalion](#) on Twitter this week showed one of its fighters firing an anti-tank missile. In the tweet Azov claimed it had hit a Russian vehicle.

[Israeli media on Wednesday identified](#) the missile system in the Azov video [as a Matador](#), a weapon developed by a consortium involving [Rafael](#), a state-owned Israeli arms manufacturer.

!! Полк «Азов» продовжує знищувати ворожу техніку
pic.twitter.com/1B2RvgKNXE

— АЗОВ (@Polk_Azov) [April 19, 2022](#)

The weapon seen in the video does [match with](#) established [photos](#) of the Matador.

Yahoo News [reported last month](#) that Ukraine had bought 5,100 of the missile systems from a German manufacturer – the same firm that jointly developed the Matador with Rafael.

[Matador is a portmanteau](#) of “man-portable anti-tank, anti-door” since it is also used to blow holes in walls when fighting in urban areas.



An Israeli soldier trains with a Matador anti-tank missile. The same weapon recently featured in an Azov Battalion video from Mariupol. ([Wikimedia Commons](#))

Tested in Gaza

The Matador's "wall opening function is particularly valued" by Israeli soldiers, *The Jerusalem Post* [reports](#). Israel has used the weapon in "heavily built-up environments such as the Gaza Strip," the newspaper adds – a euphemism for how Palestinian homes have almost certainly been attacked with the weapon.

The video posted by Azov this week was also filmed in an urban environment. Azov's headquarters has long been in the southeastern port city of Mariupol, part of the largely Russian-speaking eastern Donbass region of Ukraine.

Mariupol has been the scene of intense fighting since the Russian invasion that began on 24 February. Both [Russian](#) and [Ukrainian](#) sources this week said the city was on the verge of falling to Russian forces.

On Thursday morning Russian defense minister Sergey Shoigu [said that most of the city had been captured](#). The last 2,000 Ukrainian fighters in the city remain holed up in the Azovstal steel plant, he said.



Israeli anti-tank weapon Matador on display during Israel's 2014 "independence day" celebrations of the 1948 destruction of Palestine. ([Wikimedia Commons](#))

Azov has been a magnet for far-right volunteers who have flocked to Ukraine from around the world in recent months. On Monday, two British citizens captured [in Mariupol](#) by Russian forces [appeared in handcuffs on Russian TV](#).

Captured volunteer Aiden Aslin was wearing an Azov Battalion t-shirt with its distinctive Nazi symbol the *Wolfsangel*.

"Big Israel"

The Azov Battalion itself is named after the Sea of Azov, which Mariupol overlooks.

Azov emerged out of the far-right street gangs and football hooligans that formed the vanguard of the 2014 coup against the elected Ukrainian government. The coup regime then integrated Azov into its regular armed forces.

Despite recent [attempts by corporate media](#) to whitewash Azov's image, the group is widely accepted to be a far-right Nazi group – one with the state's backing.

In 2018 [The Electronic Intifada revealed](#) that Israel was licensing Tavor-style special forces rifles in Ukraine which were being used to arm the government's Nazi brigade.

Посол України в Державі Ізраїль Геннадій Надоленко спростовує fake news в ізраїльській газеті "Haaretz".
The Ambassador of Ukraine to the State of Israel Hennadii Nadolenko refuted fake news in the Israeli newspaper "Haaretz".
pic.twitter.com/hWDTYX455H

— Ukr Emb in Israel (@UKRinIsrael) [July 10, 2018](#)

The Ukrainian ambassador to Israel wrote a letter in response expressing "deep concern"

over our report claiming it relied on “unproven evidence” and “biased information.”

But a letter from the Israeli defense ministry’s arms export agency, as well as photos and videos from Azov’s own online presence proved otherwise.



Ukraine’s Nazi Azov Batallion on parade in 2017. (Azov.org.ua)

As the letter we [published as part of our original report](#) explained, the Israeli defense ministry said it was “careful to grant licenses” to arms exporters “in full coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government entities.” The letter – sent in response to a query by human rights lawyer Eitay Mack – did not deny arming Ukrainian Nazis.

The Ukrainian ambassador to Israel denied there had been any weapon supply from Israel “since 2014.” But in a related tweet, he seemed to contradict himself by [admitting](#) that the Tavor-style rifles were produced “under the licenses of IWI” – Israel Weapon Industries, an Israeli arms manufacturer whose licenses all must be approved by the Israeli government.

IWI’s Tavor rifles have been [used](#) by Israeli snipers to fire on Palestinians protesting near Gaza’s boundary with Israel in recent years.

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky is a [big supporter of apartheid Israel](#).

He has [hailed a “big Israel”](#) as the model for his country and said in his [speech to the Israeli parliament](#) last month that both countries face the same threats.

But in the speech he also criticized Israel for not sending enough weapons to Ukraine. Israel has close relations to both Ukraine [and Russia](#) – where [many Israeli citizens actually come from](#).

Palestinian lawmakers in the Israeli parliament [boycotted Zelensky's speech](#) in protest of his pro-Israel stance. "Zelensky's speech was a Zionist one par excellence, hitting its bottom when he gave Israel the historical status of victim," lawmaker Ahmad Tibi posted on Twitter.

Although the corporate media puts a lot of emphasis on Zelensky's Jewish heritage, the president appears to be a hostage to domestic far-right and anti-Semitic forces.

Elected in 2019 on a platform of peace with Russia, the former comedian did a swift U-turn when [threatened by Azov and other far-right militias](#). They prevented him from carrying out his election promise of implementing the Minsk peace agreements for de-escalation of the civil war that has been ongoing in the east of Ukraine since the 2014 coup.

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