

Nazis among Kiev's National Guard: USA Today

By [RT](#)

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

An Azov Battalion sergeant has confessed to USA Today of praising Nazi ideology. He also pledged a march on the Ukrainian capital after the war. A spokesman for the pro-Kiev brigade insists this is a 'personal choice' of no more than a fifth of the unit.

USA Today [visited](#) the Azov Battalion stationed in the southern Ukrainian city of Mariupol and spoke to a number of servicemen of the unit, which is sponsored by Ukrainian oligarch Igor Kolomoysky.



Azov battalion soldiers take an oath of allegiance to Ukraine in Kiev's Sophia Square before being sent to the Donbass region (RIA Novosti / Alexandr Maksimenko)

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A drill sergeant who identified himself as Alex told the newspaper that he supports Nazi-style strong leadership for Ukraine but does not share Nazis' genocide agenda against Jews, as long as minorities "*don't demand special privileges.*"

Alex insisted that once the war is over, he and others from the Azov Battalion will go back to Kiev to oust the corrupt government and nationalize the property of wealthy oligarchs.

Officers of higher ranks in the battalion denied the presence of a large number of neo-Nazis among servicemen.

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"I know Alex is a Nazi, but it's his personal ideology. It has nothing to do with the official ideology of the Azov," said Andrey Dyachenko, a spokesman for the Azov Battalion. However, he did state that "*only 10 percent to 20 percent of the group's members are Nazis.*"



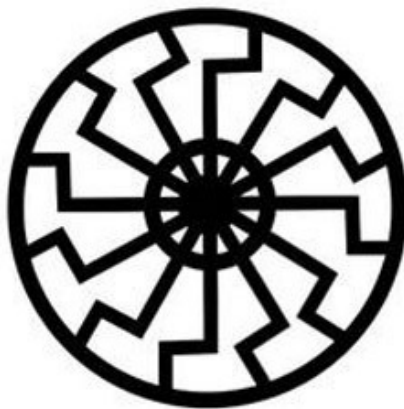
Students of the Azov battalion are dispatched to the conflict zone in southeastern Ukraine (RIA Novosti / Alexandr Maksimenko)

The Azov Battalion's deputy commander, Oleg Odnorozhenko, insisted that the drill sergeant does not speak for the group. *"If he has his own sympathies, it's his own matter,"* Odnorozhenko said, adding that Alex *"will be dealt with severely for his lack of discipline."*

"Ideas like going to Kiev to change the government in an illegal way should be nipped in the bud," Odnorozhenko said, adding that Alex is a *"good drill sergeant and a good instructor for tactics and weapons skills,"* so his future in the unit is probably as bright as it gets.



Emblem of the Azov Battalion formed by Kiev's junta.



Nazi Black Sun.



Emblem of the SS Division Das Reich.

A member of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in Kiev, Col. Oleksy Nozdrachov, defended the Azov fighters as patriots. *"They are volunteers who decided to sacrifice their lives to the country,"* he said.

"They are tough and fierce in battle who stand and fight and won't give up soil."

Kiev-controlled volunteer battalions and the Ukrainian Security Service are involved in an increasing number of human rights violations, including torture and forced disappearances of those suspected of *"separatism,"* the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said in a December 2014 report.

READ MORE: [UN rights watchdog accuses Kiev forces of torture, inhumane treatment of civilians](#)

The report – which covered a period of just one month, from November 1-30 – said the Office of the Military Prosecutor had not taken any actions to investigate the *"considerable"* number of allegations of human rights violations, *"including looting, arbitrary detention and ill-treatment by members of certain voluntary battalions such as Aidar, Azov, Slobozhanshchina and Shakhtarsk."*

In September last year, another international report confirmed that war crimes – including abductions, executions, and extortion – were committed by the Ukrainian Aidar volunteer battalion in the Lugansk region in eastern Ukraine.

READ MORE: [Crimes of Ukrainian Aidar battalion confirmed in Amnesty Int'l report – Russia](#)

The recent interview is not the first time that Ukraine battalion volunteers have openly supported Nazi ideology. Last year, troops from the Ukrainian Azov and Donbass battalions were reportedly noticed wearing swastikas and SS badges.

According to a video on German TV station ZDF, Ukrainian soldiers were shown wearing swastikas and the "SS runes" of Adolph Hitler's elite corps. The footage was shot by a camera team from Norwegian broadcaster TV2.

A year ago, BBC Newsnight journalist Gabriel Gatehouse visited Kiev to investigate the links between the new Ukrainian government and Neo-nazis. Having reported *"groups of armed men strut through the [Maidan] square with dubious iconography"* – including German symbols used by SS divisions during WWII – the British journalistic investigation found that *"the most organized and perhaps the most effective were a small number of far right groups,"* adding that *"when it came to confrontation with the police, it was often the nationalists who were the loudest and the most violent."*

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"National Socialist themes are popular amongst some of us...I like the idea of one nation. A clean nation...Not like under Hitler, but in our own way, a little bit like that," a member of Ukraine's Right Sector told the BBC reporter, who concluded that "the influence of the far right in Ukraine is growing."

In February, Right Sector leader Dmitry Yarosh said the party's paramilitary units in eastern Ukraine will continue *"active fighting"* despite the ceasefire, as the radical movement did not recognize the Minsk peace deal agreed upon by Ukraine, France, Germany, and Russia after 16 hours of talks.

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