

Finland's NBI Suspects Arms Sent to Ukraine Might be in Criminal Hands

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) says their preliminary intelligence suggests some weapons sent to Ukraine might have fallen into criminal hands in Finland.

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Finland's National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) said it has received preliminary information that criminals in Finland might have captured military arms, such as assault rifles, meant for Ukrainian forces.

"Weapons shipped [by various countries] to Ukraine have also been found in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands," NBI Detective Superintendent Christer Ahlgren told Yle.

International media outlets have reported that the European law enforcement agency Europol has anticipated criminal gangs stashing weapons in border areas. This past summer Europol issued a [statement \(siirryt toiseen palveluun\)](#) warning 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.

"We've seen signs of these weapons already finding their way to Finland," Ahlgren said.

The NBI has not released more details about weapons trafficked to Finland, saying that investigations are ongoing.

The routes and contacts for trafficking illegal weapons from Ukraine to Finland are, however, already in place, according to Ahlgren.

"Three of the world's largest motorcycle gangs—that are part of larger international organisations—are active in Finland. One of these is Bandidos MC, which has a unit in every major Ukrainian city," he explained. "We know that contacts and routes are being warmed up, so that they're in place."

Since the war in Yugoslavia, Balkan countries have dealt with illegal arms trafficking.

“Ukraine has received a large volume of weapons and that’s good, but we’re going to be dealing with these arms for decades and pay the price here,” Ahlgren said.

He also pointed out that the war in Ukraine has created more work for law enforcement, but this has not translated into additional police funding, according to a government report published this past February.

Police are, for example, tasked with following up on a growing number of [drone sightings](#) near critical infrastructure.

“Decision makers have forgotten that the war in Ukraine has also increased police work,” he said, alluding to Finnish entry points.

Today security checks are mandatory for airport staff but similar screenings are not required for dock workers, giving criminals a backdoor in Finnish ports, according to Ahlgren. “Criminal organisations have their networks in Finnish commercial ports. Stopping this is in everyone’s interest.”

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Featured image: NBI Detective Superintendent Christer Ahlgren stands near the port of Vuosaari in Helsinki at the end of October 2022. Image: Silja Viitala / Yle

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