

Revealed: Russian Neo-Nazi Leader Obtained UK Missiles in Ukraine

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Sergei Korotkikh acquired anti-tank launchers from Britain, despite being accused of beheading a migrant when he led a neo-Nazi group in Russia. UK-supplied weapons have reached a range of far-right forces in Ukraine, our investigation finds.

A neo-Nazi accused of murdering immigrants has filmed himself in possession of five anti-tank rockets that Britain supplied to Ukraine, an investigation by *Declassified UK* has found.

Sergei Korotkikh can be seen with UK-made missile launchers in three videos posted to his Telegram channel. Campaign Against Arms Trade said the discovery is "very troubling".

It adds to evidence that some weapons sent by Britain to Ukraine have ended up in the hands of extremist forces. *Declassified* recently uncovered another [case](#) where a jihadist convicted of torture had received UK missiles.

The revelations do not justify Vladimir Putin's claim that his illegal invasion is 'de-Nazifying' Ukraine. The Kremlin has neo-Nazis among its own troops, and Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelensky is Jewish.

But while Russian forces have rightly received significant scrutiny in the UK media, there has been scant coverage of who exactly in Ukraine is receiving Britain's multi-billion pound arms package.

On Monday, Rishi Sunak pledged hundreds more missiles and armed drones in a meeting with Zelensky at Chequers.

National Socialist Society

Declassified has been investigating Sergei Korotkikh, who is originally from Belarus. Around 20 years ago, he founded a Russian neo-Nazi group – the National Socialist Society.

It spread fear in Moscow by targeting darker-skinned guest workers from the Caucasus and central Asia.

The group was banned and its members [convicted](#) of dozens of racist murders.

Korotkikh is alleged to have killed two migrants in 2007, beheading one of the victims – Shamil Odamanov – on camera beneath a swastika flag.

He denies the allegations, which featured in the multi-award winning documentary *Credit for Murder* by Israeli director Vlady Antonevich.

Korotkikh was even reported to have links to Russian intelligence and police, who may have [recruited](#) him as an agent shortly after the killings.

He would not be charged with murder until 2021, by which time he had long since left the country.

Defending Ukraine

Korotkikh's murky past in Russia did not stop him being welcomed to Ukraine. He moved there in 2014 when the country was split over its relationship with Moscow.

He joined the Azov battalion, a neo-Nazi militia founded by Ukrainian far-right activist Andriy Biletsky to fight against pro-Russian separatists in the Donbas.

Biletsky reportedly once said he wanted to “lead the white races of the world in a final crusade...against Semite-led Untermenschen [subhumans].”

Korotkikh quickly acquired Ukrainian citizenship in a [ceremony](#) conducted by the then president, Petro Poroshenko. Meanwhile the Azov battalion was integrated into Ukraine's National Guard.

When Russia launched its full scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the majority of Azov's serving soldiers were surrounded at their stronghold in Mariupol.

Azov veterans in other cities rapidly formed new units, including elite sections within a Territorial Defence Force (TDF) in the capital Kyiv, which Korotkikh joined. TDFs allowed reservists and volunteers to resist Russia in paramilitary-style groups, nominally under the control of Ukraine's military.

‘Incomparable male pleasure’

On the day the invasion began, Korotkikh [said](#) he had enough small arms, but “would like to get something anti-tank, and something heavy. And preferably a couple of dozen MANPADS [portable surface-to-air missile launchers]. So that their helicopters do not want to fly here.”

Anticipating the outbreak of war, British ministers had hurriedly sent Ukraine thousands of NLAWs, a sophisticated anti-tank weapon. They [cost](#) around £20,000 each and can even

target aircraft.

Korotkikh initially had trouble finding them. He complained: “I have been running around the city since 9am in an attempt to get weapons, but they didn’t arrive anywhere...There are none of the much vaunted British anti-tank systems at all. I can’t find a trace of them. They are not here.”

But within two weeks of the invasion, some of these missiles were in his arsenal. On 6 March 2022, Korotkikh posted a [video](#) of him travelling inside a van with two NLAWs at his feet.



Korotkikh gives a talk with NLAWs stored behind him. (Photo: Botsman_ua / Telegram)

He wrote: “We have so many weapons that we are literally littered with shells and rockets. There is, of course, a special buzz when you literally ride the NLAW.” On camera, he described having NLAWs as “incomparable male pleasure”.

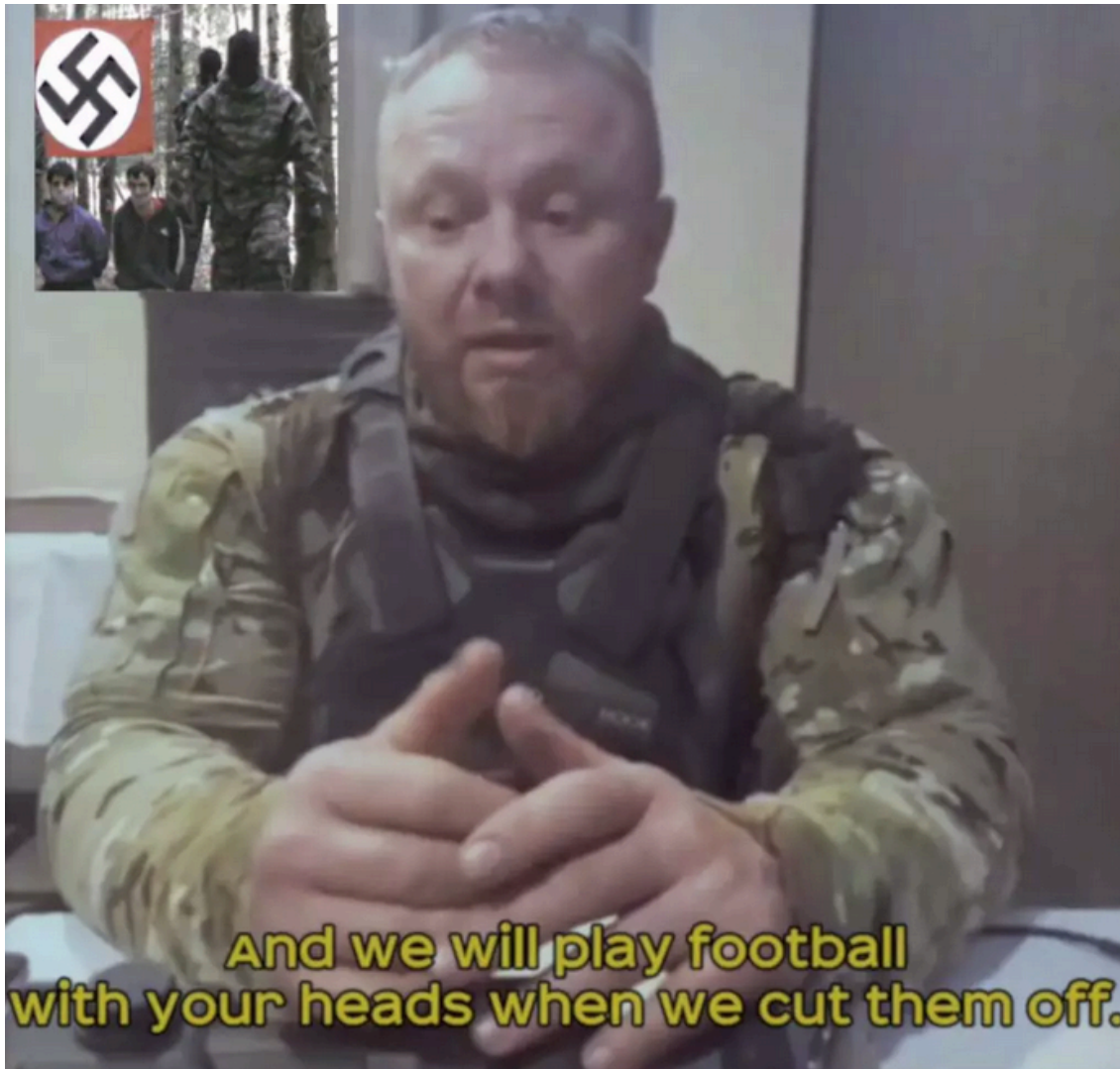
A few hours later, he posted a [scene](#) from the movie *Hot Fuzz*, where police find a farm shed full of weapons. He commented: “In every house in Ukraine after the war” with a grinning emoji.

Korotkikh appears to have used a Kyiv sports club as his arms depot, posting a [video](#) the next day with two NLAWs propped up against the wall behind him. By the end of March, footage shows he had at least five NLAWs [stored](#) in a gym.

‘Play football with your heads’

Throughout this time, he posted gruesome and racist messages on Telegram. In one, he shared a [photo](#) of a severed head in a crate, writing: “The Ukrainians, unlike the Russian command, are trying to return Putin’s soldiers to their families. It is not always possible to return the whole thing, but, nevertheless...”

In another [video](#) addressed to Chechen troops deployed by Putin to invade Ukraine, he said: “We will play football with your heads when we cut them off.”



Korotkikh describes how he will treat Chechen invaders, in language reminiscent of the 2007 execution (inset) of which he is accused. (Photos: Telegram / Wikimedia)

Other posts show Korotkikh [criticising](#) Russia for allegedly using Arab mercenaries from Syria and "black cannon fodder from the Central African Republic", saying: "Kyivan Rus against the Asian Horde. The masks have been dropped. This only makes it easier for real white Europeans to fight."

The posts confirm that his hatred of Russian minorities has persisted, viewing the war in Ukraine as a battle for white supremacy. In other photos on his Telegram channel, which has 55,000 subscribers, he can be seen wearing a Black Sun symbol – originally from Nazi Germany – on his body armour.

'Not good enough'

The NLAWS in Korotkikh's arsenal can be traced back to those supplied by Britain. A reference number, 1H2/Y31/S/12/GB/5126, is visible on the box of one launcher.

It matches codes printed on other crates that Ukrainian media said were [delivered](#) by the UK in February 2022.

The only other country known to have supplied NLAWS to Ukraine by March 2022 was Luxembourg, which sent [100](#) – a tiny fraction of the 5,000 shipped from Britain.

NLAWS were designed by Swedish company Saab and assembled by Thales in Belfast.

Partially obscured writing on Korotkikh's NLAW boxes are from a reference code that reads: GM NLAW K170A2 SAAB BOFORS DYNAMICS AB 1 225 613.

A Saab spokesperson said: "There is extensive export legislation in both Sweden and the UK which govern our activities and which we adhere to. We are not providing further comment on individual matters".

Linda Åkerström, from the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society, which monitors arms firms like Saab, commented: "Even if you fully support exporting arms to Ukraine in light of the brutal Russian attack, there is also the need to acknowledge the risks involved. Arms ending up in the hands of criminals is one of them. The risk that arms will flow out of Ukraine to other armed conflicts or into criminal activities once that war stops is real and must be addressed."

Dr Sam Perlo-Freeman, a researcher at Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT), told *Declassified*: "The potential for western arms supplied to Ukraine to fall into the wrong hands – whether far-right pro-Ukrainian forces, criminal gangs, or diverted to conflicts in other countries, has been a major concern from the beginning.

"This very troubling case shows that the UK government is not doing enough to guard against this. While the EU and US have taken some measures to monitor what happens to arms to Ukraine, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has refused even to confirm or deny if it has any such measures or plans. This is not good enough.

"The UK government must set out clearly what it is doing to prevent diversion of weapons supplied to Ukraine, which will likely become a far greater problem for Ukraine and the rest of Europe when this horrific war eventually ends."

Thales and the UK MoD were asked to comment.

Azov grows

Despite Putin claiming to 'de-Nazify' Ukraine, Azov-affiliated units have spread since his illegal invasion.

Azov veterans quickly formed an important combat unit in Kharkiv, known as Kraken. It was the first force in the besieged city to receive NLAWS, with one of its leaders, Konstantin Nemichev, [seen](#) learning how to use the weapon.

Korotkikh stressed the movement's importance, commenting: "We all came from our beloved Azov. I am especially pleased to say this now. Yes, I am one of the founders of Azov. And our brotherhood is now the backbone of defence in Kharkiv, the Dnieper, Sumy and other cities. And of course, in our 'kingdom' Mariupol. Proud of the Azov Brotherhood! #our_war."

The post from 1 March 2022 was accompanied by a photo of Korotkikh holding an Azov flag with another man, who had a sniper rifle.

He wrote: "Meet Shark! An interesting type, for four years he was the commander of the Azov battalion. Resigned a month and a half ago. And here he is again the commander of

the special forces group ...(you will find out the name of the group after)".

Korotkikh did not name the new squad, but it looks like the Azov unit that helped defend the cities of Kyiv and Irpin. His subordinates entered Bucha soon after the retreat of Russian troops who had massacred civilians.

The unit from Kyiv began to call itself an Azov Special Operations Force before being [reformed](#) this year as the 3rd Separate Assault Brigade, which is fighting on the frontline in Bakhmut.

The Brigade describes itself as "formed on the same principles as the legendary 'Azov' and the entire Azov movement." Last week the original founder of Azov, Andriy Biletsky, claimed to be in [command](#) of the Brigade's tactical units and took [credit](#) for a high-profile breakthrough of Russian lines in Bakhmut.

All of the commanders featured on the Brigade's [website](#) are either veterans of the Azov movement or other far-right Ukrainian groups like Right Sector and Centuria.

The Brigade said it is actively recruiting "stormtroopers" to become a "universal death machine". Its soldiers often appear armed with British weaponry, and the Brigade's banner [image](#) on Facebook shows one of their soldiers aiming an NLAW.

'Rigorous risk assessments'

British defence minister James Heappey has previously [admitted](#) to MPs "it is highly likely that members of the Azov battalion have had access to UK supplied anti-tank weapons," but he claimed "rigorous risk assessments" and "appropriate mitigation measures" had been undertaken.

Heappey partly [justified](#) British arms reaching Azov militants by saying: "Since being made a part of the Ukrainian National Guard in 2014, the battalion has made some efforts to de-politicise. All founding members left the battalion and formed a political party."

Biletsky was elected to parliament in 2014 but lost his seat at Ukraine's last election in 2019. Far-right parties only scraped 2% of the vote in that poll.

But Biletsky's recent claims to be commanding Azov-affiliated armed units in Bakhmut indicates that Azov founders are still heavily involved in Ukraine's military - and remain an important power bloc in the war torn country.

That, coupled with figures like Korotkikh having access to British arms, could give UK police and MI5 cause for concern about potential blowback.

Before the war, the Azov movement was a magnet for far-right activists across Europe, including some from the banned British neo-Nazi group National Action. One of its organisers, Mark Jones, visited the Azov battalion's headquarters in 2017.

Jones was later jailed in Britain under the Terrorism Act. Police found a photo of him giving a Hitler salute in the execution room of Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany.

Others have suggested Azov members are just cosplaying Nazism. Mark Ayres, a British

army veteran and convicted thief, joined the Kyiv Azov unit “by accident” after the invasion.

He told Sky: “They’re not the monsters and psychos that I would envisage neo-Nazis to be – I mean they’re not all like that. A lot of them are decent guys, just with stupid views.

“I say [sic] to my mate: ‘I don’t understand how you can say you’re a neo-Nazi when you’re a f*****g decent bloke, with decent morals.’

“And he’s like: ‘Well, I’m not really...’. It’s just like they’re playing at it. They’re caught up in wanting to belong to something that catches them in. It’s so stupid.”

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Featured image: Sergei Korotkikh inspects an arms cache. (Photo: Botsman_ua / Telegram)

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