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SUMMARY:

The war against Ukraine contributes to the internationalisation of rightwing extremism. This poses a threat to Europe, including countries of the Western Balkans. The links between the far-right in the Balkans and Russia are of concern, given the geopolitical situation in the Balkans and the exacerbation of pro-Russian narratives. The far-right in the region has shown an increase in voters, parties, and movements supporting Russia, which necessitates close attention due to the potential for radicalisation and violence. This trend further testifies to a changed political and ideological environment, in which the issue of democracy is increasingly and openly contested. While the far-right in most Balkan countries is not a significant political factor, its boundary with mainstream political parties is thinning. Russia's war in Ukraine enhances the transnational right-wing radical milieu, potentially leading to growth and radicalisation through propaganda, networks, and military training. The far-right politics in the Balkans often aligns with the EU-Russia geopolitical conflict, especially through its reliance on anti-Western rhetoric. Individuals from the Balkans have traveled to Ukraine to take part in the war on the pro-Russian side since 2014. Since 2022, joining the pro-Russian forces in Ukraine is a cause widely advertised on Telegram channels in the Balkans and it seeks to connect Russia's military and political goals with local grievances and pre-existing narratives regarding Kosovo. The war enhances possibilities for the far-right in the Balkans to cooperate with pro-Russian forces in the battlefield in terms of spreading propaganda and maintaining a support network.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper reveals some risks that policymakers, institutions, and other stakeholders should consider when developing threat assessments and CVE policies.

- Strengthen diplomatic engagement with the Balkan countries: Conduct diplomatic dialogues to emphasize the importance of Euro-Atlantic integration, democratic values, and regional stability.
- Engage in regional formats or bilateral relations with the concerned parties. Provide capacity building support to Balkan countries in countering far-right extremism. Support training programs for law enforcement agencies, intelligence personnel, and civil society organisations, focusing on identifying and mitigating risks posed by far-right extremism.
- Enhance intelligence sharing and cooperation with Ukraine and relevant intelligence agencies in the Balkan countries. Establish a regular dialogue with agencies that monitor and regulate online platforms that are used to advertise for and recruit individuals from the Balkans to join pro-Russian forces in Ukraine.
- Improve the prosecution of foreign fighters from the region who have joined the war through fostering greater cooperation between Ukraine and Western Balkan states.

INTRODUCTION

Russia's war on Ukraine continues to reverberate throughout the Western Balkans. It has reopened wounds from the Yugoslav Wars, raised fears of destabilization, and negatively affected its economies and political decisions. The key security threats, while being linked only indirectly to Russia's influence in the Balkans, concern preexisting structural issues, including unresolved bilateral and internal disputes. Nevertheless, the invasion of Ukraine came at a moment when nationalist rhetoric had reached levels unprecedented since the 1990s. The outbreak of the war in Ukraine brought several questions, among them: will the geopolitical upheaval in Ukraine and in Europe spill over to the Balkans? Are the Western Balkans (WB) at risk of becoming a "second front"?

Today, a year and a half into the war, the situation between Russia and the West can be defined as a combination of radicalized distrust and inertia: the war has lost its novelty, it has become a part of life and in a way has been routinized, following less gains and losses of territory in the battlefield in 2023. The strong Ukrainian resistance, the united response of the West, and the largely unprepared Russian army has prevented the Kremlin from focusing significant energies on the WB at the moment. While Russia has lost its bid to control energy supplies through the South Stream project, it has resorted to more direct efforts to influence public opinion across the region and to enhance alliances with some political elites, most noticeably in Serbia and BiH.

Russia's war in Ukraine is a triggering moment for the far-right across the WB. It has attracted volunteers, mercenaries, small-scale militias, and other non-state actors, some of whom with links to the far-right radical milieu in the Balkans. Such actors have been involved in the conflict with direct participation – fighting in the battlefield; or through building and maintaining a support base – spreading propaganda online, organizing support activities at the local level to increase the visibility of local far-right groups.

The network of actors and organisations involved through direct actions and/or pro-Russian propaganda concerning the war in Ukraine is multilayered and manifested through:

- 1) Far-right groups, both pre-existing and newly emerged, most of whom are internationally linked to other groups in different countries;
- 2) Local parties that play the role of proxies of the Russian interests in the region;
- 3) Individual actors who have become particularly visible since February 2022, either through joining the war as 'foreign fighters' or spreading propaganda that seeks to consolidate support for Russia throughout the region.

Foreign fighters with far-right extremist orientations have been part of the war theatre in Ukraine on both sides since 2014. Ukrainian units that previously were open to including foreigners in their ranks, are less willing to mobilise extremists from the international far-right radical

milieu following the 2022 Russia's invasion. Units such as the Azov Regiment (known as the Azov Brigade since February 2023) employ recruitment strategies that are more nationally focused and do not seek to mobilise supporters throughout the global far-right to fight.

On the contrary, joining the pro-Russian forces in Ukraine is a cause widely advertised on Telegram channels and seeks to connect Russia's military and political goals with local grievances and pre-existing narratives among the far-right. While in 2022-2023, the number of Balkan foreign fighters who joined the war in Ukraine is smaller compared to 2014, they are more vocal and occupy significant if outsized space in political and social discourse, particularly on social media. Their voices on social media are recognizable and impactful on channels and groups supporting Russia's cause in Ukraine. They seek to reframe the geopolitical and security situation in the region, magnifying pre-existing pro-Russian narratives that rest on notions of "Slavic brotherhood".

This paper argues that the success of mobilization of supporters for Russia's cause in Ukraine depends largely on framing the war through the dual, deeply interconnected narratives of 'Slavic brotherhood' and resistance against the West — narratives that, as of late 2023, are finding increasingly fertile soil to grow further in mainstream social and political discourse. This paper, consequently, traces connections between the Western Balkan far-right and the war in Ukraine by examining the individual trajectories of actors who have passed into this radical milieu, including their roles in discourse and their relationships with more mainstream actors.

Within the far-right milieu, there is a complex interplay of groups and actors, and the paths some individuals follow have not yet and may never lead them to violent extremism.¹ But in the Western Balkans, the far-right operates in a region beset by history, where the violence, traumas and legacies of past wars continue to be instrumentalized to incite and exacerbate tensions in the present.

A radical milieu is not only a subculture/community that transmits and shapes collective identities, but a social network built on trust, multiple solidarities, and shared worldviews.² Within it, links among actors are developed and strengthened through both online and in-person communication, and the radical milieu becomes a venue of emotional and ideological loyalties where anger can be voiced and grievances shared with like-minded peers, and in some cases manifested through violence.³ To understand the role of actors belonging to the far-right milieu in the Western Balkans, the paper adopts the definition of Violent Right-Wing Extremism as referring to "acts of individuals and groups who use, incite, threaten with, legitimise or support violence and hatred to further their political or ideological goals, motivated by ideologies based

1 Hilary Pilkington, "Radicalization as and in Process: Tracing Journeys through an 'Extreme-Right' Milieu," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, February 9, 2023, 1–27.

2 Stefan Malthaner and Peter Waldmann, "The Radical Milieu: Conceptualizing the Supportive Social Environment of Terrorist Groups," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 37, no. 12 (December 2, 2014): 979–98; Asya Metodieva, *Foreign Fighters and Radical Influencers: Radical Milieus in the Postwar Balkans* (Taylor & Francis, 2023).

3 Pilkington, "Radicalization as and in Process."

on the rejection of democratic order and values as well as of fundamental rights, and centered on exclusionary nationalism, racism, xenophobia and/or related intolerance.”⁴

Still, radical milieus are ever-changing environments, meaning that radicalization does not take place in a constant and singular space, but in a “dynamic constellation of multiple spaces and social relationships that change over time.”⁵ With this in mind, and given that Russia’s war in Ukraine has activated the Western Balkan far-right in new ways, this research set out to examine the role played by far-right actors in the region in the war in Ukraine.

KEY ACTORS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The multilayered milieu of far-right groups and individuals in the Balkans has been growing more noticeably following the 2014 annexation of Crimea and since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the milieu has been a venue for the consolidation of already existing groups and parties, while new activists have emerged. Russia’s cause in Ukraine has been supported by actors who spread propaganda locally, some of them traveled to the battlefield to join the war through military participation. Part of the far-right milieu in the Balkans includes far-right organizations – such as *Narodna Patrola* (People’s Patrol), *Levijatan* (Leviathan), *Nacionalna Avangarda* (the National Vanguard), *Zavetnici* (Of the Covenant), and *Orlovi* (the Eagles) – as well as far-right parties like *Oslobođenje* (Liberation), *Srpska Desnica* (the Serbian Right), and *Zdrava Srbija* (Healthy Serbia), and a number of foreign fighters associated with the now-disbanded Franco-Serbian Unité Continentale.⁶ On the pro-Ukrainian side, this network is considerably smaller, and includes mostly Croatian far-right actors such as the Bad Blue Boys football hooligans, and a handful of foreign fighters.

Far-right groups

The most extreme links between the Balkan Far-right and the actors in the battlefield in Ukraine are manifested through far-right groups that are not politically represented but are active in organizing protests and demonstrations where support for Russia is expressed. Some of these actors pre-date the war, while others have emerged more recently. Most of these have transnational ties to other groups and political parties or other branches of the same group in different countries (for example, Night Wolves motorcycle club that has representation in more than 40 countries was a part of a rally in support of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine that took place in Banja Luka in March 2022).

4 Mirza Buljubašić, “Violent Right-Wing Extremism in the Western Balkans: An Overview of Country-Specific Challenges for P/CVE” (RAN in the Western Balkans Expert Pool, 2022).

5 Pilkington, “Radicalization as and in Process,” 2.

6 These include Dejan Berić, Nikola Jović, and Stefan Dimitrijević. The Unité Continentale was formed in 2014 to fight for the “anti-imperial”, i.e., anti-NATO, cause and fought on the side of Russia in the Donbas. The unit was officially dissolved in 2015. For more, see: Michael Sheldon, “The Small World of French Foreign Fighters,” Digital Forensics Research Lab, 3 February 2019, <https://medium.com/dfirlab/the-small-world-of-french-foreign-fighters-f53799ee3673>.

A more recent entrant to the far-right radical milieu is Narodna Patrola, an extreme far-right organization based in Serbia, which has attracted considerable media attention for its activism against migrants and vocal support of Russia. The group gained popularity on Telegram, where it has about nine thousand followers, and though the exact date it was established is unknown because it was not officially registered, Narodna Patrola came into wider public view at the beginning of 2020. It was then that the group first started holding rallies to protest migrants, in smaller towns in Serbia and then in Belgrade. While Narodna Patrola focuses on this anti-migrant rhetoric, it also has connections to Russian paramilitaries. The group's leader was arrested in February 2023 after mobilizing several hundred far-right actors to protest at the Presidency building in Belgrade, where some protestors wore symbols that clearly demonstrated their support for the invasion of Ukraine, including those of the Russian state-funded "Wagner Group".⁷

In March 2022, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine was gaining momentum, Narodna Patrola played a part in organizing many of the pro-Russia gatherings that took place in Belgrade, including a "solidarity rally" with the Russian people. Russian ultra-nationalist Denis Gariyev, a member of the far-right Russian Imperial Movement (RIM), also supported these actions by Serbians to defend the Russian invasion.⁸ Gariyev, who is head of the paramilitary wing of RIM, was designated a global terrorist threat by the US in April 2020, and was sanctioned by Switzerland in 2023 for having "actively recruited volunteer fighters to join his paramilitary organization in the fight against Ukraine," and providing "paramilitary-style training to white supremacists in the European Union... to rally these types of groups into a common front."⁹ In May of this year, the small neo-fascist group Serbian Action posted a video to their YouTube channel documenting a visit they had made several months before to St Petersburg. Several Serbian Action members travelled there at the invitation of the Russian Imperial Movement (RIM), which has been officially designated a terrorist group in the United States and Canada.¹⁰

Meanwhile, fewer far-right groups and actors in the region have engaged militarily on the side of Ukraine since February 2022; though, sympathies have existed between Croatian and Ukrainian nationalists since even before the 2014 conflict in Eastern Ukraine, extending from a kinship that rests on what they perceive as similar struggles against their larger neighbors Serbia and Russia. Thus, some 20 to 30 fighters from Croatia joined the pro-Ukrainian Azov Battalion in 2014 and 2015.¹¹ The most prominent of these was Denis Šeler, onetime leader of the Bad Blue Boys hooligans, who spent six years fighting with Azov. As supporters of Dinamo Zagreb,

7 "Serbian Far-Right Leader Arrested After Nationalists Try to Storm Presidency In Belgrade," *RFE/RL*, 16 February 2023, <https://www.rferl.org/a/serbia-far-right-knezevic-arrested-vucic-kosovo/32274304.html>

8 Sonja Biserko, et al., *Helsinki Committee Report – Serbia: Captured Society* (Belgrade: Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2023), 140.

9 Swiss Federation, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, Sanctions program: Situation in Ukraine, order of 4 March 2022 (RS 946.231.176.72), version 21 December 2022, 38–39. A number of other European countries have also sanctioned Gariyev or frozen his assets; see: "GARIYEV Denis Valiullovich," Open Sanctions, updated 27 July 2023, <https://www.opensanctions.org/entities/NK-LD4CvWX3CcujWu6sNWnBrw/>.

10 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/sep/15/putin-balkans-war-ukraine-russia-serbian>

11 Michael Colborne, "Croatia Key to Ukrainian Far-Right's International Ambitions," *Balkan Insight*, 18 July 2019, <https://balkaninsight.com/2019/07/18/croatia-key-to-ukrainian-far-rights-international-ambitions/>.

the Bad Blue Boys have ties to far-right supporters of Dynamo Kyiv, who formed the core of what became the Azov Regiment. In the first days after the February 2022 invasion by Russia, *Vecernji list* reported that Šeler helped collect aid for Ukraine, in Croatia. But soon after this, during the Battle of Kyiv, he is believed to have organized and led a group of Croatian fighters in defense of the Ukrainian capital.¹²

Some social media activity suggests that other individuals from the Balkans may also be fighting on the side of Ukraine. In March 2023, for example, the far-right Spanish Telegram channel “Ultras Not Reds” posted a photo claiming to be from the “Dinamo [Zagreb] guys on [the] front” in Ukraine. The same account posted another photo in October 2022, claiming to show a Serbian far-right extremist fighting for the Ukrainians, though this cannot be verified. That said, there has not been a significant influx of foreign fighters from the Balkan far-right into Ukraine to fight on the side of the Ukrainians since the 2022 Russian invasion, even if individual cases have garnered some media attention. The fact is, small far-right units in Ukraine have had “very limited success” in recruiting foreigners into their ranks, from the Balkans and elsewhere, especially compared to 2014.¹³

In fact, Azov – undoubtedly the most high-profile unit in this regard – managed to recruit only an estimated total of 20 to 30 foreign fighters in the year following the invasion, matching just the number of Croatians recruited in 2014 and 2015; and in 2022 and 2023, these fighters have not all been drawn from the far-right.¹⁴ Thus, from 2022 on, any engagement on the side of Ukraine from far-right extremists in the Western Balkans is mostly limited to disseminating propaganda and occasionally sharing fundraising posts on popular regional and transnational far-right Telegram channels. These channels are generally associated Croatian far-right elements, particularly football hooligans, but there are several small Albanian channels and groups that also post pro-Ukraine far-right content.¹⁵

Far-right parties

The matrix of support for pro-Russian forces in Ukraine is much more complex, in part due to the involvement of political parties in the Western Balkans, which act as proxies for Russian interests in the region (*Srpska Desnica* (the Serbian Right), *Oslobođenje* (Liberation) and *Zdrava Srbija* (Healthy Serbia), among others). Parties such as Serbia’s *Oslobođenje* and *Srpska Desnica* promote nationalism and separatism and are openly pro-Russian, and links between actors in the Serbian extreme right and figures in the Kremlin have been strengthened on multiple occasions in recent years. For example, the president of *Srpska Desnica* visited Moscow in 2021, as did members of another far-right party, *Zdrava Srbija* in early 2023.

12 See: Kacper Rekawek, “A Trickle, Not a Flood: The Limited 2022 Far-Right Foreign Fighter Mobilization to Ukraine,” *CTC Sentinel* 15, no. 6 (2022): 6–14.

13 Rekawek, “A Year of Foreign Fighting for Ukraine.”

14 Ibid.

15 This includes the Albanian Third Position, a small, fringe neo-fascist group who have been linked to Azov members in the past.

The ruling party in Serbia – the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) – maintains close ties with a number of far-right organizations, including Srpska Desnica, which some members of the opposition have alleged is a “paramilitary faction of the SNS.”¹⁶ In power for over a decade, the SNS has allowed media spaces to proliferate with far-right narratives, normalizing them in the public discourse; and a year after the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the potential for these narratives to mobilize far-right actors across the region is stronger than it was prior to 2022. This has long been a goal of Russia in the Western Balkans, but it has been a greater focus of Moscow since 2014 and even more so since February 2022. Now, Russia seeks to boost the image of Putin and his government while also activating the extreme right, as a way of reminding Serbian authorities that Russia still has control over instruments of force within the region.

There are no similar links between far-right Croatian political parties and extremist elements in Ukraine. In other words, no party of any significance in Croatia advances a far-right, pro-Ukrainian narrative that could be compared to that advanced by Serbian parties on behalf of Russia. In 2019, the Croatian Sovereignists, a party that currently hold four seats in parliament, was publicly tied to the Azov political arm, the National Corps, and to Denis Šeler – who reportedly planned to help host an Azov conference that never materialized – but these links appear to have dissolved by 2023.¹⁷

Foreign fighters

Most foreign fighters who have departed from the region to the Ukrainian battlefield have emerged from the far-right, and some had previous experience with political militancy. Individuals from the Western Balkans have traveled to Ukraine to take part in the war on both sides. By December 2018, the Ukrainian Embassy in Belgrade estimated that more than 300 Serbian citizens had fought on the side of pro-Russian separatists, and volunteers from Serbia and from the Bosnian entity of Republika Srpska are known to have fought with these separatists in both 2014 and 2022.¹⁸ Meanwhile, fighters from Croatia joined the pro-Ukrainian side in 2014 as part of the extreme right-wing Azov Battalion, which was incorporated into the Ukrainian National Guard that year (and became the Azov Regiment, now Azov Brigade) under the command of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as a way of formalizing the command and funding of the various paramilitary units that fought against pro-Russian separatists in the early years of the War in the Donbas. The Regiment was then integrated into the Ukrainian Army following the 2022 invasion by Russia.

16 “Serbian Right leader tells opposition leader he will ‘end up in Drina river,’” *N1*, 9 November 2019, <https://n1info.rs/english/news/a542507-serbian-right-leader-tells-opposition-leader-he-will-and39end-up-in-drina-riverand39/>.

17 Colborne, “Croatia Key to Ukrainian Far-Right’s International Ambitions.”

18 This is evident from court investigations in Serbia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), where participation in conflict on foreign battlefields is prohibited by law.

Individual actors like Šeler who have become visible as foreign fighters, and others who have acted as propagandists, have worked hand-in-hand to consolidate support throughout the region for either pro-Russian or pro-Ukrainian forces. Indeed, a year into Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the far-right (globally and regionally) remains divided by loyalties on the Ukrainian battlefield. In 2014, longstanding ideological and financial ties between Russia and elements of the European far-right – especially in countries like Germany, France, and Austria – meant that many far-right actors from these countries fought on the side of pro-Russian forces in Eastern Ukraine; and some have continued to do so after the full-scale of invasion in 2022. At the same time, some far-right groups and members of the football hooligan subculture (e.g., prominent international far-right extremist hooligan firms from European clubs like Levski Sofia, Real Madrid, PSG; Telegram Channels like Ouest Casual and the aforementioned Ultras Not Reds) have been and remain pro-Ukraine (and anti-Russia).

After 2014, some Ukrainian far-right groups, such as Azov, engaged in international networking efforts to win over their foreign counterparts to the pro-Ukraine cause.¹⁹ This meant reaching out even to members and senior leaders of organizations that were split on their views of the war in Eastern Ukraine, such as the Nordic Resistance Movement; which, though generally considered a pro-Russian group, has members who have taken a pro-Ukraine stance. Still, since 2022, the situation on the ground in Ukraine has been very different; especially because so many foreigners have enlisted on the Ukrainian side as so-called “international volunteers” after heeding the call of President Zelenskyy in the early days of the war. Other foreigners have joined up as part of various foreign fighting groups, and there are also Ukrainians from diaspora communities in the West who have returned to Ukraine to engage as fighters. However, among all the pro-Ukraine fighters in this most recent mobilization, the number who belong to the far-right radical milieu is very small and their influence is minimal. Meanwhile, foreign fighters on the pro-Russian side are mostly mercenaries from the Wagner Group, or from other similar groups with links to separatist forces in eastern Ukraine and the Russian Army.

Of course, the risk associated with foreign fighting is not only on the battlefield, as fighters may face legal ramifications when they return home. In Serbia, for instance, 32 convictions have been handed down in cases involving foreign fighters charged for their participation on the pro-Russian side in Ukraine from 2015 to 2018; including against 12 members of Unité Continentale. In 2021, a verdict by the High Court in Belgrade was the first of its kind for organizing Serbs to go to Ukraine and fight on the side of Russia. The convicted was linked to Unité Continentale and according to the court ruling, he communicated with Serbs interested in going to fight in Ukraine via social media and then sent them flight tickets from Belgrade to Moscow via e-mail.²⁰ Still, these convictions were all delivered on the basis of plea agreements, and in 28 cases, the defendants received a suspended sentence, while in the four others, they were sentenced to just

19 Michael Colborne, *From the Fires of War: Ukraine's Azov Movement and the Global Far-right* (Columbia University Press, 2022).

20 The Geopost, “The First Verdict in Serbia for Organizing Participation in the War in Ukraine,” The Geopost, December 2, 2021, <https://thegeopost.com/en/news/the-first-verdict-in-serbia-for-organizing-participation-in-the-war-in-ukraine/>.

six months of house arrest.²¹ There are also known to have been a number of foreign fighters from BiH in Ukraine, and a report of the Bosnian Ministry of Security indicates that 11 citizens fought on the Ukrainian battlefield from 2014 to 2019.²² Gavriilo Stević, the first Bosnian prosecuted for foreign fighting in Ukraine, was acquitted in March 2020 when the judge ruled the prosecutor had not proved beyond a reasonable doubt that Stević committed the crimes with which he was charged, as the evidence of his association with pro-Russian forces was based on a single photograph.²³ There has also been one verdict issued in Montenegro in a case involving foreign fighting in Ukraine, when Marko Barović was convicted of participating in the conflict in Eastern Ukraine as a driver and gunman. Barović, who fought alongside pro-Russian separatists in the Donbas for approximately three months in 2015, provided prosecutors with much of the evidence they needed to convict him by frequently posting photographs of himself on the battlefield, in uniform and holding a rifle, to Facebook.²⁴

Every country in the region has criminalized fighting in foreign conflicts and they have adopted legislation concerning participation in a foreign conflict, yet there are no specific, unambiguous legal provisions to recognize and punish of fighters returning from Ukraine, including far-right. The main security concern is that once such individuals are back, in their homelands, they could recruit other volunteers, join extremist groups, and/or provide inspiration for like-minded people. Individual cases are treated quite differently from state to state. Serbia has convicted more than 30 people for participating in the war in Ukraine (prior to the 2022 invasion), and in February 2023, President Vučić warned that the government would act to prevent the participation of foreign fighters in Ukraine and that any Serbian “volunteers” engaged in the conflict would be sanctioned.²⁵ Yet, the suspended prison sentences that have been imposed by Serbian courts on fighters who have returned from Ukrainian battlefields demonstrate that they are not viewed as a significant security risk or threat despite the fact that they often contribute to spreading extremist and anti-democratic narratives.

Two such fighters who have gained some degree of influence on social media during this latest mobilization are known as “Sava” and “Danube” (Dunav), from Serbia, who claimed on their Telegram channel to have joined Russian forces in Ukraine in support of their “brothers”. Their first appearance on social media was in January 2023. Their identities remain unknown, as they are always masked on photos and videos posted on Telegram. But they are supposedly members of the Sudoplatov Battalion, founded in September 2022 as a pro-Russian volunteer unit.

21 See: “Serb Who Joined Russian-Backed Forces In Ukraine Has Jail Sentence Overturned,” *RFE/RL*, 27 January 2023, <https://www.rferl.org/a/serbia-sentence-ukraine-separatists-overturned/32243089.html>.

22 Nevena Bogdanović, “Proveravamo: Iz kojih država Zapadnog Balkana su borci išli u Ukrajinu,” *Radio Slobodna Evropa*, February 22, 2022, sec. Regija, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/zapadni-balkan-ukrajina-ratiste/31716950.html>.

23 See: Semir Mujkic, “Bosnian Acquitted of Going to Fight in Ukraine Conflict,” *Balkan Insight*, 10 March 2020, <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/03/10/gavrilo-stevic-acquitted-of-charges-for-fighting-in-ukraine/>.

24 Marija Ristic, “Facebook Reveals Serbian Fighters’ Role in Ukraine War,” *Balkan Insight*, 27 December 2017, <https://balkaninsight.com/2017/12/27/facebook-reveals-serbian-fighters-role-in-ukraine-war-12-25-2017/>.

25 “Pro-Ukrainian Activists in Serbia File Criminal Complaint against Wagner Group,” *Reuters*, January 19, 2023, sec. Europe, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/pro-ukrainian-activists-serbia-file-criminal-complaint-against-wagner-group-2023-01-19/>.

The Battalion operates in the southern Ukrainian oblast of Zaporizhzhia, which is currently under Russian occupation.

In interviews for Russian media broadcasts and Telegram, they have been described as “Serbian patriots and Russophiles” and lauded for choosing to fight in Ukraine despite Serbian legislation that criminalizes foreign fighting. In online appearances, “Danube” has acknowledged serving in the Serbian Army and working for the police and has admitted participating in protests in Belgrade in support of the Russian invasion.²⁶ He also praised the training offered to volunteers in the Sudoplatov Battalion, which he said taught him more in one day than he learned in six months of military service in Serbia. In an interview posted in January 2023 posted on the Telegram channel Dejan Beric and shared by other right-wing Telegram and YouTube channels, the two claim that they are fighting against the evil empire of NATO, Great Britain, the US; they further claim the war in Ukraine will finish soon and then it is unknown what is going to happen in Kosovo.²⁷

According to Russian media, the Sudoplatov Battalion was founded on the initiative of Yevgeny Balitsky, who was installed to lead the Russian occupation of Zaporizhzhia in October 2022. For years, Balitsky was a member of the pro-Russian Party of Regions, which advocated for the rights of the Russian minority in Ukraine, but in September 2022, he joined United Russia – the party of Russian President Vladimir Putin. In a post on Telegram dated 5 December 2022, the Sudoplatov Battalion reported, much as “Danube” would soon describe it, that its fighters were undergoing “accelerated tactical training;” learning, among other things, to make “combat decisions” and to engage in a “frontal attack on an enemy defending in a trench.” The Battalion’s Telegram channel has just over 2,300 followers, and regularly publishes photos from volunteer trainings, as well as media reports about the unit.

The popularity of Russian ultra-nationalist Andrey Rodionov’s Telegram channel has also helped him generate support for Russian forces in Ukraine since the invasion. Rodionov, founder of the international “Russian-Slavic Unification and Revival” movement (RUSOV), has visited Serbia on several occasions, as well as other countries in the region, and maintains contacts within the Serbian far-right. RUSOV, which was registered as a legal entity of the Russian Federation in April 2012, is a pan-Slavic and neo-pagan organization that claims to have several branches across Russia and one in every Slavic state. In fact, speaking on Radio Belgrade in November 2020, Rodionov referred to RUSOV as a “supra-party organization” that acts globally, and said its presence across the Slavic world has attracted “not only other organizations and movements, but also parties” to join the RUSOV movement, adding “we are spreading our ideas and seeing good results every day.” He noted that cooperation with Serbia was a given, “because Serbs and Russians are not only brothers, but one nation,” and shared his hope that “soon, just as Belarus enters into an alliance with Russia, Serbia will also enter into an alliance with Belarus and

26 *Братья По Оружью. Специальный Репортаж Ольги Курлаевой*, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zz0Lto8DRiA>.

27 “Telegram: Contact @SrbijaRusija,” accessed September 29, 2023, <https://t.me/SrbijaRusija/15549>.

Russia and we will create a federal state.”²⁸ This aligns with the manifesto of the movement, posted on the RUSOV website, which lists among its main objectives the “revival of Great Russia.”²⁹

In October 2022, as Balitsky took control in Zaporizhzhia, Rodionov wrote on Facebook, “How nice that almost the entire former Ukraine is on fire. It is important not to stop. Glory to Russia.” And RUSOV has openly supported Russian expansionism in Ukraine since the start of war in the eastern part of the country in 2014. In January 2015, for instance, the organization posted a video to YouTube of RUSOV members delivering aid to the pro-Russian Prizrak Brigade in Luhansk, a paramilitary unit known for accepting foreign fighters.³⁰ Often, RUSOV uses symbols employed within the Western Balkan and Russian far-right radical milieus, including the *kolorat* (known as the Slavic swastika) and the solar cross (a cross in a circle). On the organization’s Telegram channel, posts frequently show photos of soldiers wearing these symbols, as well as the logo of the Wagner Group, though Rodionov denied in a recent interview that RUSOV has anything to do with Wagner – which was blacklisted by the US at the end of January 2023 as a “transnational criminal organization.”³¹ The Wagner Group has also been credibly accused by United Nations experts of committing numerous human rights violations across Africa, including in the Central African Republic, Libya and Mali.³²

Serbian fighters are known to have joined both the Prizrak Brigade and the Wagner Group in Ukraine, and links between Rodionov and leaders of Serbian far-right groups are well documented. In fact, it was not surprising to see RUSOV flags flying at protests in support of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, organized in Belgrade by far-right groups such as Narodna Patrola, as Rodionov had joined Damjan Knežević of Narodna Patrola in November 2021 in Belgrade to mark the 100th anniversary of the exodus of Russian monarchists from Russia after the October Revolution. Knežević – who was arrested in February 2023 for advocating the violent overthrow and removal of state authorities at a demonstration and served 50 days in jail – had visited Moscow in May 2021, where he met with Rodionov. And before that, in October 2020, Rodionov met with former Yugoslav Army general Božidar Delic, co-founder of the political movement *Ljubav, vera, nada* (Love, Faith, Hope).³³

Considering all these links, it is worth asking why there are fewer people from the Western Balkans far-right milieu departing to join either side of the war in Ukraine since the 2022 invasion, compared to 2014. One reason may be that pro-Russian far-right groups seem to have prioritized local consolidation and propaganda operations in the region, rather than encouraging

28 The interview is available in local language at: <https://www.rts.rs/lat/radio/radio-beograd-2/4162403/andrej-rodionov.html>.

29 See (in Russian language): <https://rusov.org/>.

30 Kacper Rękawek, *Foreign Fighters in Ukraine: The Brown-Red Cocktail* (Routledge, 2023), 29.

31 US Department of the Treasury, “Treasury Sanctions Russian Proxy Wagner Group as a Transnational Criminal Organization,” press release, 26 January 2023, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1220>.

32 “CAR: Russian Wagner Group Harassing and Intimidating Civilians – UN Experts,” OHCHR, accessed September 28, 2023, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/11/car-russian-wagner-group-harassing-and-intimidating-civilians-un-experts>.

33 Biserko, et al., Helsinki Committee Report – Serbia: Captured Society, 140.

foreign fighters to mobilize perhaps with the goal of instrumentalizing these local actors to serve other Russian interests in the short or medium term. Being present in their home countries these groups can easily maintain polarizing ideas related to frozen conflicts and unresolved political disputes. Thus, they can shift public opinion on some issues so that right-wing politicians – like Serbia’s President Vučić – seem mainstream compared to narratives and actions coming from such groups; they are further capable of demonstrating Russia’s influence on matters concerning regional issues.

Another observation, made in 2019 by former Azov fighter Denis Šeler to one of the authors of this paper, is that foreign fighters have simply not proven critical to the efforts of Ukrainians, and particularly units like Azov.³⁴ In other words, there were and are plenty of Ukrainians willing and able to fight, and little operational need for foreign recruits. Moreover, negative international publicity about foreign far-right extremists operating in Ukraine, which pre-dates the 2022 invasion, may have led far-right actors in Ukraine and their proxies abroad to reduce their international recruiting efforts.

There have, of course, been some people from the region who have engaged in Ukraine since the 2022 invasion, many of whom appear to be seasoned foreign fighters; and though local leaders have consistently denied that any have joined far-right units, this has been challenged by stories from the battlefield. For instance, in April 2022, Serbian citizen Stefan Dimitrijević died on the front near Luhansk in Eastern Ukraine. He had joined the pro-Russian far-right Unité Continentale in 2014, before returning to Serbia where he received an 18-month suspended sentence for foreign fighting, but had travelled again to Ukraine following the Russian invasion in 2022.³⁵ And in July 2023, reports emerged of the deaths of two Serbian fighters engaged in Ukraine as Wagner Group mercenaries in Bakhmut, at least one of whom had also first joined the fight in 2014.³⁶ Condolences to their families were offered on Telegram by another Serbian fighter, Dejan Berić, who participated in the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s and then as a sniper on the side of pro-Russian separatists in Donetsk. On Telegram, Berić is very active in posting videos he claims are from the Ukrainian frontlines.

There is some evidence that Bosnian Serb fighters have also engaged on the side of Russian forces in Ukraine since the 2022 invasion. In March 2023, for example, a video appeared on Twitter and on pro-Russian Telegram channels showing two unidentified fighters, allegedly Bosnian Serbs speaking from Donbas, who claimed they had arrived in the winter of 2022/2023 from Banja Luka and Trebinje.³⁷ One explained that they had no previous combat experience or military training but praised the training available to them in the Donbas and called Russians “our

34 Colborne, *From the Fires of War*.

35 See (in local language): Iva Gajić, “Dobrovoljac iz Srbije poginuo boreći se na ruskoj strani u Ukrajini,” *Radio Slobodna Evropa*, 8 April 2022, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/srbija-borci-rat-ukrajina-pogibija/31792619.html>.

36 “A Serb died as a Wagner mercenary in Bakhmut: Six months ago, Vucic claimed that there were no Serbs in Prigozhin’s mercenary group,” *The Geopost*, 6 July 2023, <https://thegeopost.com/en/news/a-serb-died-as-a-wagner-mercenary-in-bahmut-six-months-ago-vucic-claimed-that-there-were-no-serbs-in-prigozhins-mercenary-group/>.

37 The post was shared on Twitter by Istraga.ba, at: <https://twitter.com/IstragaB/status/1642087394563244033?s=20>.

brothers,” saying “it is important... we are here to help.” The other noted that he was motivated to join the war by “patriotism and love for the state.” In October 2023 another Banja Luka-born man appeared in a YouTube video in Russian-occupied Ukraine, discussing his time fighting with Russian forces; the man, with a reported criminal past in Bosnia that included an arrest for insulting Muslims in front of a Banja Luka mosque, claimed that he would only return to Bosnia when everything is “the Russian way.”³⁸

Some Croatian veterans of the Azov Battalion are believed to have fought in the Battle of Kyiv in March 2022 as well. In April 2023, Russian media reported how M. Raul, a citizen of Serbia, was captured in Mariupol, fighting in the ranks of the Azov.³⁹ On pro-Russian channels, he was called “Croatian Ustasha-neo-Nazi”⁴⁰ But units like Azov have become more focused on national recruitment, and the relatively few foreigners they attracted in this recent mobilization have “had very little or nothing to do with any far-right activism or politics in their home countries,” suggesting a focus on skills and capacity over ideology. Further, as Rekawek has observed, even in “Azovian” units inspired by the movement that exists beyond the official Azov Regiment, foreign recruits now include Muslims and African Americans, “atypical for a supposedly ‘white supremacist militia’”⁴¹

FAR-RIGHT NARRATIVES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Narratives that circulate in the far-right milieu in the Balkans are usually disseminated by actors on Telegram, as well as local websites, Facebook groups and YouTube channels. The table below summarizes data on some (a very small number) of the pro-Russian Telegram channels popular in the Balkans. It is worth noting that not all of them have had an increase in the number of subscribers since Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine. For example, many users left the channels БУНТ је стање духа, О Србији по-руски in 2023, while Dejan Beric marked an increase in subscribers in 2023 (only in April 1604 new). Data on subscribers’ gender, shows that 71.1% of those who follow БУНТ је стање духа are men and 28.9% women. In addition, 64% men and 36% women follow Балканская сплетница.

38 “BANJALUČKI BORAC U UKRAJINI: “Vratiću se u Bosnu kada sve bude po ruskom” (VIDEO) | Slobodna Bosna,” accessed October 25, 2023, https://www.slobodna-bosna.ba/vijest/320207/banjaluchki_borac_u_ukrajini_vraticu_se_u_bosnu_kada_sve_bude_po_ruskom_video.html

39 “RUSI ZAROBILI DRŽAVLJANINA SRBIJE U UKRAJINI: Prezime Mu Je Poznato, Borio Se u Mariupolju u Sastavu Pukovnije Azov... (FOTO) | Slobodna Bosna,” accessed September 29, 2023, https://www.slobodna-bosna.ba/vijest/245378/rusi_zarobili_drzavljanina_srbije_u_ukrajini_prezime_mu_je_poznato_borio_se_u_mariupolju_u_sastavu_pukovnije_azov_foto.html

40 “Хорватски Усташ-Неонацист Рауљ Муидџи Попытался Выйти Из Мариупольского Окружения в Футболке нАвоза.

Подробности: Т.Ме/+m3zXxqqaC383NDI6,” ДОНЕЦК ДНР НОВОСТИ СВО ДОНБАСС РОССИЯ НОВОРОССИЯ, accessed September 29, 2023, https://vk.com/wall-50332460_2857309.

41 Rekawek, “A Year of Foreign Fighting for Ukraine,” 16.

Table 1. Pro-Russian Telegram Channels popular in the Balkans

Channel	N of Subscribers	Date of creation
Народна Патрола @narodnapatrola	8180	24.09.2021
БУНТ је стање духа (@buntcg)	68996	17.08.2020
Злые ОрлоВи	8226	02.03.2022
Dejan Beric (@SrbijaRusija)	102231	06.11.2020
Балканская сплетница (@balkanossiper)	35794	04.03.2020
РТ на Балканах (@rtbalkan_ru)	9338	19.08.2022
О Србији по-руски (@ruserbia)	10480	27.10.2017

Data until 30.09.2023, source: TGStat

The war in Ukraine provides a radically new geopolitical and security situation, in which per-existing narratives in favor of Russia and the idea of “Slavic brotherhood” are magnified. Two key narratives circulate through the pro-Russian radical milieu linked to the Balkans: The macro narratives seek “support for Russia”; the micro narrative targets the core of Serbian nationalism summarized in the phrase ‘Kosovo is Serbia’ targeting the core of Serbian nationalist sentiment.⁴²In addition, there is the narrative of “returning the gesture” has been applied in previous foreign defense mobilisation campaigns.

Meanwhile, support on the far-right for the Ukrainian side is often framed in civilizational and even racial terms that characterize the defense of Ukraine against Russia as an effort to “defend Europe” from an eastern “Asiatic” invader; or as a fight against communism, on the premise that Vladimir Putin’s contemporary Russia is merely an extension of the Soviet communist state.⁴³ Ironically, though, far-right extremists active on the Russian side, like RIM, also frame their fight in the language of anti-communism.

42 “Od protesta zbog Kosova i veza sa Rusijom do sumnji za rušenje ustavnog poretka: Šta je ‘Narodna patrola’? - Društvo - Dnevni list Danas,” February 17, 2023, <https://www.danas.rs/vesti/drustvo/od-protesta-zbog-kosova-i-veza-sa-rusijom-do-sumnji-za-rusenje-ustavnog-poretka-sta-je-narodna-patrola/>.

43 Source? (Cf., <https://t.me/ultrasnotreds2/1513>; <https://t.me/ouestcasual2/1416>)

Key to the narratives advanced on both sides of the conflict is the notion of existential threat; either to a group with which certain actors are known to identify, or to a way of life or culture. This is a formula that has been used repeatedly throughout history to mobilize foreign fighters in defense of transnational communities.⁴⁴ It is this threat narrative that can engender a sense of duty among some individuals that motivates them toward violence.⁴⁵ The Serbian fighters “Sava” and “Danube”, mentioned above, appear to have been inspired by rhetoric of this kind, with “Danube” telling a *Russia 24* television reporter in Ukraine:

We came here because we felt there was a huge injustice done to the Russian people, something that previously happened to us (Serbs) in 1999 during the NATO bombing on Yugoslavia. But not only this, (we came) also because of our brotherhood and closeness with Russia. Russians are our bigger Slav brothers, our languages are similar, we share the Orthodox faith.⁴⁶

“Danube” explains that he had been convinced by Putin’s speech at the time of the invasion that the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine was facing “genocide” and noted to *Russia 24* that “[t]he situation looks very similar to what happened on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, what happened to Serbs in Croatia, or Kosovo, it is exactly what the Albanians did to the local Serbian population.” He believed Azov had committed atrocities against Russian-speaking women and children, and associated Azov with NATO and the West, asserting, “There are no Nazis anymore but there is NATO, and its project is promoting Russophobia, and it should be destroyed.”⁴⁷

On the pro-Ukraine side, these far-right narratives are essentially reversed, focusing on parallels between Ukraine’s fight against Russia now, and Croatia’s and even sometimes Kosovo’s struggle against Serbia in the 1990s. On their own, these comparisons are hardly extreme, particularly in the context of political discourse in these countries, where support and sympathy for Ukraine is strong. But within the Western Balkan far-right, this pro-Ukraine stance is combined with a fervent anti-communism and a civilizational framing of the war in Ukraine that echoes language used by Nazi Germany (post-1941) against the USSR, such as the imperative to protect Europe from “Asiatic invaders” and allusions to the so-called Great Replacement conspiracy theory.

44 David Malet, “Why Foreign Fighters?: Historical Perspectives and Solutions,” *Orbis* 54, no. 1 (January 1, 2010): 97–114, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2009.10.007>.

45 Malet.

46 *Братья По Оружью. Специальный Репортаж Ольги Курлаевой.*

47 *Братья По Оружью. Специальный Репортаж Ольги Курлаевой.*

CONCLUSION

Russia's war in Ukraine has strengthened the transnational right-wing radical milieu in the WB and helped its most extreme elements in the region extend the reach of their radicalizing narratives. In parts of the WB, connections between foreign fighting experience and far-right views serves to "mainstream" these far-right narratives.

While far-right groups in the WB are mostly marginalized, in some places, they have been empowered by the normalization of radical rhetoric, especially by now "mainstream" political elites. This creates significant space for further radicalization in the region. It is in this space that issues tied to Kosovo and the Republika Srpska (and to a lesser extent, Montenegro), continue to be instrumentalized by local Russian proxies.

There is a profound risk that these extreme narratives, especially those centred around the dual narratives of 'Slavic brotherhood' and resistance against the West, will continue to be normalized and further become part of mainstream social and political discourse in parts of the Western Balkans. In other words, the risk is less that extremist actors will further become part of the mainstream (though, as noted in this paper, this does take place). The risk is more a radicalization of the mainstream, a risk that mainstream actors will further adopt and promote extremist narratives from positions of greater power, influence and thus capacity to themselves further shape discourse. Given ongoing and indeed increased tensions in the Western Balkans over the course of 2023, the risks that normalized extreme nationalist rhetoric poses across the region cannot be understated.

The global far-right has been divided over which side to take in the war in Ukraine. In the Balkans, Russia's intervention in Ukraine has bolstered the right-wing radical movement, allowing its most extreme elements to spread radicalizing narratives. This has led to the "mainstreaming" of far-right views in certain parts of the Western Balkans, despite these groups being largely marginalized. Notably, some political elites have contributed to the normalization of radical rhetoric, creating fertile ground for further radicalization in the region. Within this context, issues related to Kosovo, Republika Srpska, and to a lesser extent, Montenegro, are exploited by local Russian proxies.

Far-right pro-separatist fighters and activists can benefit from favorable political conditions in countries like Serbia or Bosnian entity Republika Srpska, being openly supportive of Russian interest in the Balkans. Although radical right actors do not enjoy full political and institutional recognition, they are far from excluded from the mainstream political discourse. While the political establishment in Serbia openly opposed recruitment attempts of Wagner throughout the region, their ambiguous and delayed position did not discourage pro-Russian supporters from engaging in various forms of political activism in support of Russia.

Russia's network of dependent political and economic clients has recently contributed to political destabilization efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Montenegro, as well as in the new wave of anti-EU sentiments in Serbia. The war has increased the activism of Russian proxy actors in the region that could destabilize the region. Milorad Dodik's secessionist threats, as well as the tension in North Kosovo, create risks to existing state structures and stability. The tension between Kosovo and Serbia throughout 2023 continue to highlight risks of escalation.

There are still risks of escalation of the Ukrainian war, e.g., by nuclear attack or disaster, the involvement of Belarus or Poland, the extensive degradation of Ukrainian infrastructure, a major refugee crisis and ensuing EU disunity, etc. Such scenarios are not unlikely, and they would increase the security risks to the WB. Internal and bilateral disputes about contested statehood between Serbia and Kosovo, between Bulgaria and North Macedonia, and between BiH's entities continue to hamper progress and periodically create instability.

Several key issues must be addressed by institutions in the Western Balkans, considering dynamics in the far-right radical milieu identified in this report.

Improving the prosecution of foreign fighters who engage in the Ukrainian theater will require greater cooperation between Ukraine and Western Balkan states. For countries like Serbia, which maintains close bilateral ties with Russia and refused to adopt sanctions in response to the Russian invasion, this is improbable. Instead, ties between Serbian and Russian extremists may be more likely to make Belgrade a new base for members of the international, pro-Russian far-right. The ground has been laid by far-right parties and movements in both the EU and Russia, and the benevolence of Serbian state actors toward these parties legitimizes their narratives in the public discourse and enhances their capacity for political mobilization.

In the Western Balkans, there have also been politicians who have implicitly or explicitly encouraged citizens to support the pro-Russian cause in Ukraine. In Serbia, where returning fighters have almost exclusively joined pro-Russian units and have received only suspended sentences upon returning home, one could argue that a permission structure has been created to support foreign fighting by far-right actors on behalf of Russia. Participation in a foreign conflict in some cases involves the commission of a variety of crimes, of which governments often lack sufficient proof. The question remains how governments should differentiate between volunteers and extremists upon their return? And who decides?

Russia's network of political and economic clients has contributed to political instability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and the resurgence of anti-EU sentiments in Serbia. The war has emboldened Russian proxy actors in the region, posing risks to the existing state structures and stability. Threats of secession by figures like Milorad Dodik and tensions in North Kosovo further compound the risks of regional instability.

Additionally, there are ongoing risks of escalation in the Ukrainian conflict, such as the potential for nuclear incidents, involvement of neighboring countries like Belarus or Poland, infrastructure damage, a refugee crisis, and EU discord. These scenarios could heighten security risks in the Western Balkans. Internal disputes over contested statehood among various countries in the region continue to impede progress and periodically trigger instability.

In light of the dynamics within the far-right radical milieu identified in this report, several key issues need attention in the Western Balkans. Enhancing the prosecution of foreign fighters involved in the Ukrainian conflict requires greater cooperation between Ukraine and Western Balkan states. However, this may be challenging for countries like Serbia, which maintains close ties with Russia and has refrained from imposing sanctions in response to the Russian invasion. This situation might make Belgrade a potential hub for international pro-Russian far-right actors. Far-right parties and movements in both the EU and Russia have already laid the groundwork, and the support of Serbian state actors legitimizes their narratives and political mobilization in the public discourse.

Moreover, some politicians in the Western Balkans have implicitly or explicitly encouraged citizens to support the pro-Russian cause in Ukraine. In Serbia, where returning fighters have mainly joined pro-Russian units and received lenient sentences upon returning home, there seems to be a permissive environment for far-right actors to engage in foreign fighting on behalf of Russia. The challenge lies in differentiating between volunteers and extremists upon their return, a decision that governments must grapple with.

APPENDIX 1:



Channel: Russian-Slavic unification and revival

Date: 04.02.2023

Post: "Serbian volunteer "Danube" from the International Movement "RUSOV" on the line of contact. Zaporozhye front."



Date: 27.03.2023

Post: "The right fighters have the right chevrons. Be calm and wait for the Russians - it is written on one of them. Also chevron "RUSOV" and the Russian imperial flag with the letter Z."

"In the photo, a comrade-in-arms of the International Movement "RUSOV", a fighter of the Sudoplatov battalion with the call sign "Shum" in one of the dugouts on the line of contact. Zaporozhye front."



Date 24.03.2023

Post: "On March 24, 1999, the bombing of Yugoslavia by NATO forces began, which continued until June 10, 1999. [...]"

Eternal memory to those who died because of NATO aggression! We will never forget and never forgive! Death to NATO! Brotherly Serbia lived!"



Date: 21.03.2023

Post: "Friends, Happy Spring Equinox! The Russian Sun is rising! In the photo are comrades-in-arms of the International Movement "RUSOV", fighters of the Sudoplatov battalion, including our Serbian brothers. Zaporozhye front."



Date: 11.03.2023, posted by
Rodionov Friends Club 🇷🇺

Post: “The other day, Acting Governor of the Zaporizhzhia region, Yevgeny Balitsky, publicly announced that Serbs fighting in volunteer detachments on the side of Russia would be able to obtain Russian passports.

We will gladly keep the guys who serve with us. There is no need for them to return to Serbia. If they wish and write applications, I think that we will be able to resolve the issue in order to issue them a passport of a citizen of the Russian Federation. Let them live - they paid for this land with their blood. I think it will be fair.” Balitsky said on the air of the Crimea 24 TV channel.

If you would like to join us, please send me a private message. For the Russian Victory!

In the photo, comrades-in-arms of the International Movement “RUSOV”, fighters of the Sudoplatov battalion on the LBS: Serbian brothers “Sava” and “Danube”, me (“Viking”), “Spets” and “Mityai”.”



Date: 04.03.2023

Post: In the early morning of March 1, together with “Beard”, a fighter from Sevastopol “Seva”, as well as Serbian volunteers “Danube” and “Savoy”, I went to the LBS (line of contact) to our comrades-in-arms from the reconnaissance of the Sudoplatov battalion. So, symbolically, the spring of 2023 began for me, and I like it. Russian victory is inevitable! Glory to Russia! Those wishing to join us in the battalion, write to me in private messages. UAV specialists are especially needed.



Date: 18.02.2023

“Friends, let’s be clear.

The international movement “RUSOV”, like the battalion named after Sudoplatov, has nothing to do with PMC “Wagner”. However, the following unites us with the “musicians”: firstly, many of our comrades-in-arms are Wagner veterans, and secondly, we are all Russian soldiers, brothers in arms. And now, when we see pressure on Wagner both inside the Russian Federation and abroad, we officially declare our support for the legendary Russian PMC.

Glory to Russian heroes from Wagner PMC! Evil Russians are with you, brothers, and soon we will be the majority in the Russian Federation! Together we will win and make Russia great again! In the photo, a comrade-in-arms of RUSOV, a fighter of the 112th company of the Sudoplatov battalion, a veteran of the Wagner - the call sign is Quiet.”



Date: 17.02.2023

Post: "The soldiers of the Sudoplatov Battalion "Danube" and "Sava", like all Serbian volunteers fighting in the ranks of the Russian army, are sure that it is necessary to fight for Kosovo and Metohija, and not to conduct treacherous negotiations with the enemies of the Serbian people. And of course they condemn the arrest of Serbian patriots Damnjan Knezevic and Dejan Zlatanovic.

Freedom for Serbian patriots! Kosovo and Metohija - Serbia! Russians and Serbs are brothers!

In the photo, comrades-in-arms of the International Movement "RUSOV" "Beard", "Danube" and "Sava" from the Sudoplatov battalion during training at a military training ground in the Zaporozhye region.

More about this source textSource text required for additional translation information."



Date: 08.02.2023

Post: Serb comrades-in-arms of RUSOV, volunteers from the Sudoplatov battalion "Danube" and "Sava", together with a reporter for "Crimea 24" Yuri Avdeev at a military training ground in the Zaporozhye region. We work, brothers!

Dejan Beric



Поздрав другари, овде можете наручити гардеробу са руским и српским патриотским мотивима

<https://instagram.com/dnr.wear>

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Народна Патрола

Forwarded from БУНТ је стање духа 

Војници Судоплатовског батаљона „Дунав“ и „Сава“, као и сви српски добровољци који се боре у редовима руске војске, уверени су да се за Косово и Метохију треба борити, а не водити издајничке преговоре са непријатељима српског народа. И наравно осуђују хапшења након протеста.

Слобода српским родољубима! Косово и Метохија – Србија! Руси и Срби су браћа!

На фотографији саборци Међународног покрета „РУСОВ“ „Брада“, „Дунав“ и „Сава“ из батаљона Судоплатов током обуке на војном полигону у Запорошкој области.



БУНТ



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5 comments



Народна Патрола

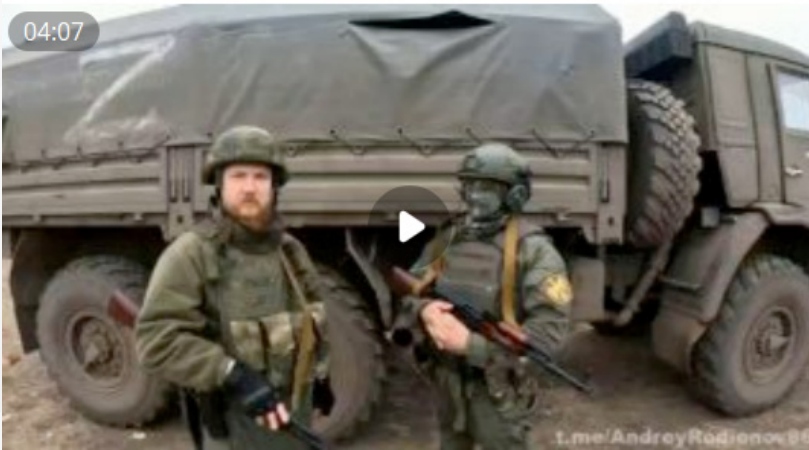
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Познати руско-српски добровољачки покрет Косовски фронт, предвођен својим славним вођом, ветераном војних операција за српску Босну, који је ту задобио више рана, укључујући и тешке, носилац српске медаље „За храброст“

Народна Патрoла

04:07




Joш jeдaн cрпcки дoбpoвoљaц, caвeзник Meђyнaрoднoг пoкpeтa „PУCOB“ ca пoзивним знaкoм „Tрибaл“, cтyпиo je y Cyдoплaтoв бaтaљoн.

Дoбpoдoшли y pycкe poвoвe, cрпcкa бpaћo! Дoгoдинe y Cрбcкoм Пpизpeнy и Pycкoм Киjeвy!

t.me/narodnapatrola


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Народна Патрoла

00:48 🔊




Јyчe je Cрбиjа пocлaлa јacнy пopyкy дa никo и никaд нeћe мoћи дa pacкинe cнaжнe вeзe измeђy Cрбa и Pyca! Пocлaтa je пopyкa дa ћe Cрби yвeк бити yз Pyce, дa cy pycoфoби cтaтиcтичкa гpeшкa y Cрбији, дa Cрби никaдa нeћe oкpeнyти лeђa бpaћи. Ни cви мeдији, ни cви пoлитичapи никaдa нeћe мoћи дa oтpгнy Pycију из cрцa Cрбa! Јeднa кpв, јeднa вepa, јeдaн нaрoд! CРБИ И PУСИ БPАЋA ЗAУBЕК!

👁️ 6694 14:50

 16 comments


Народна Патрола




ЗА ПОБЕДУ!



ВОЖЊА ПОДРШКЕ РУСИЈИ

НЕДЕЉА 13. МАРТ • 16 ч
БЕОГРАД
Паркинг код Сава центра

 **СРБИ ЗА РУСЕ**

Браћа и сестре без ресурса смо сложено послали поруку у целом свету да су Срби и Руси браћа!
Покушаји режима да преко својих сателита да у руској јавности представи како су они организатори националног бунта је пропао са позиција руске државе. Покажимо да је слога могућа. Брат за брата, Срби за Русе!

<https://t.me/narodnapatrola>  34.4K edited 22:18

 20 comments 





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