

“The Fuel Theft Scheme”, Corruption and “Conflict of Interest” Plaguing the Ukrainian Armed Forces

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A new problem has emerged in the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine: fuel theft, writes the Ukrainian portal Strana citing military personnel. However, all the cases cited by the outlet focus on low-ranking military personnel rather than where most of the corruption is being committed – by the upper echelons of the Kiev regime.

“Fuel theft has become one of the acute problems of corruption in the Armed Forces of Ukraine at almost all levels,” [the Strana article](#) says.

It is noteworthy that fuel has become a new real currency among the military. A Ukrainian official told the portal one of the schemes used. According to him, a huge amount of fuel is stolen from the country’s Army every month and is attributed to “combat operations.”

“If the unit is in the first line, fuel is delivered to the second line by refuelers. [The vehicles] are refueled, documents are handed over. The commander is obliged to account for fuel consumption in detail after rotation. But in reality, fuel consumption on the front line during a battle with the equipment is impossible to calculate accurately. This is the basis for the schemes and falsifications,” the military explained.

The Ukrainian military also said that the command is aware of the situation and is monitoring the process. As a result of these schemes, the stolen fuel becomes a bonus to the salary, concluded the soldier.

In the court registry, Strana found dozens of cases related to the theft of fuel and revealed some of them.

One of the court cases is about how a driver of a military tanker drained 1,200 litres of diesel fuel from it, which, as he later admitted in court, he planned to sell for 50 hryvnia (\$1.24) per litre. Another case describes how a soldier dumped 500 litres of diesel fuel, whilst another court case describes how the senior combat medic of an air assault battalion created an entire group that specialised in fraud.

In all the cases cited by Strana, it only concerned lower ranking military personnel, meaning that the true scope of corruption is much larger since the main perpetrators are high-ranking officials, who are expanding their real estate portfolio, including Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. The situation is so out of control that the US, hardly itself a bastion of transparency and honesty, is directly intervening to stop, or at least try limit the amount of corruption.

Brent Neiman, deputy undersecretary for international finance who returned from a visit to Ukraine earlier this month, said in a speech that Kiev needs to “reduce the likelihood for conflicts of interest and corruption.” This is especially important for the Biden administration in the lead up to the US Presidential elections in November since Ukraine has received hundreds of billions in financial support from the US and other Western countries.

“To this end, budget assistance from the United States, Europe, and the International Financial Institutions is designed to help support Ukraine in undertaking a number of priority reforms,” Neiman added.

Zelensky was initially elected on an anti-corruption platform in 2019, but instead the former comedian has now placed himself at the top of the corruption pyramid. To distract from his own deeply entrenched involvement in corruption, Zelensky fired Ivan Bakanov, former head of the State Security Service, in July 2022, as proof of their efforts to crack down on graft, as well as other top officials, including Agriculture Minister Mykola Solsky, who recently forced to resign after being implicated in a corruption case, and Ilya Vityuk, a high-ranking official in the SBU intelligence service, who was sacked on May 1.

The West has poured hundreds of billions into Ukraine even though the country is considered one of the most corrupt countries in Europe. The reality of Ukraine’s deeply entrenched corruption has always been known by the West, but there was a naïve belief that the war would somehow magically end the issue, rather than viewing it for what it actually was, a grand opportunity to siphon even more money out of the economy and military and into private hands.

With the European Parliamentary elections over and now global attention shifting to the upcoming US presidential elections, undoubtedly the billions of dollars Washington has sent to Ukraine, which the Council on Foreign Relations believes is \$175 billion, will become a major talking point and one that former President Donald Trump will use to attack President Joe Biden and his reckless policies on Ukraine since much of that money was wasted on a futile war effort or was unaccounted for. For this reason, Washington is desperately trying to push Zelensky into cracking down on all corruption, but this will not be achieved since the Ukrainian president himself is deeply involved.

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