

# ‘Azov’ fascist units in Ukrainian National Guard and Army are being expanded

written by Susann Witt-Stahl

February 20, 2023



Fascist ‘Azov’ units deployed at embattled Bakhmut, Feb. 6. Photo: Junge Welt

The Ukrainian military is recruiting forces for new offensive brigades. In addition to

a police unit and a border guard unit, six brigades of the National Guard are said to belong to them. These assault units will be made up entirely of volunteers, most of whom have “been through hell” and “driven by patriotism,” Interior Minister Igor Klimenko said on Feb. 2. “There are a lot of those in our country.” So far, more than 27,000 applications are said to have been received.

The new offensive formation also includes the best-known fascist elite unit of the National Guard, which has achieved cult status in Ukraine and throughout the Western world as the “heroic defenders of Azovstal.” Recently, an Azov delegation with celebrities from France’s politics, business and culture – including former President François Hollande – celebrated the premiere of the propaganda film “Glory to Ukraine” by right-wing publicist Bernard-Henri Lévy in Paris.

A Nazi special unit commanded by Azov founder Andriy Biletsky, which was formed in February 2022 and shortly afterward incorporated into the regular army, was expanded to a brigade three weeks ago. Recently, however, Azov has also again become a paramilitary organization inside the National Guard, where it was originally created in 2014 – a large association that can operate independently.

“It’s time to go on the offensive” was the call for supporters to volunteer. “Write history with us. Come to Azov!” As a reward, there are privileges that regular soldiers of the army, who are often driven into the meat grinders of the Donbass without any significant training and adequate equipment, can only dream of: several months of intensive training in artillery, tanks, and drones by experienced officers, a lucrative salary, medical treatment in state hospitals, later a university degree or a career in the Ministry of the Interior.

The announcement that “We guarantee combat operations on the front lines with like-minded people” is likely to attract militant right-wingers with a great bloodlust. Ultimately tempting for them is the destination of the “combat trip,” which Biletsky praised as the “most difficult area”: Bakhmut. “The decisive battle of this war is yet

to come. It requires a new standard. That's why the military command is giving us a new responsibility," Biletsky boasted on Jan. 26 about the increase in power of his troops. He announced a "hot winter" for the Russian enemies: "We are preparing many surprises for you."

Azov has launched an extensive recruitment campaign. The promotional videos are designed according to the highest cultural-industrial standards of Hollywood war films. With extremely fast cuts from dramatic action images, underlined with archaic battle horns and Wagnerian bombast sounds as well as beats made of pulses to increase the adrenaline output, the lowest violent instincts are appealed to. "Without a fight there is no glory!" was the motto. On Tuesday, Azov already presented footage of the first days of its army brigade's deployment in Bakhmut.

In January, U.S. tech giant Meta, which owns Instagram, Facebook and other social media outlets, removed Azov from its list of dangerous organizations. Hundreds of Azov accounts were unlocked. Since then, Azov as a movement - which, in addition to the combat units, also includes militias for terrorizing opposition members and minorities inside Ukraine, a political party, its own fashion and music labels and a merchandise network - has been able to operate worldwide without restrictions.

With its ever-expanding propaganda machine, Azov not only produces fascist warmongering, ideologies of a master race and heroic myths, but also targeted disinformation: above all, the lie that Azov has broken away from Nazism, which is the lie that politicians and the media in the European Union and the United States put forward, being disseminated on a large scale.

Azov leader Biletsky exposed the lie himself on Feb. 3, on the occasion of the 94th anniversary of the founding of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). He paid tribute to Stepan Bandera, Roman Shukhevych and other collaborators with Hitler's Germany who shared responsibility for the Holocaust, and urged his followers to act decisively: "The OUN has fulfilled its historic mission. Now is our

time."

*Translated by Melinda Butterfield*

*Source: [Junge Welt](#)*

