# “Ticket to Bandera” – Doxing Foreign Fighters for Ukraine

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15 YEARS ANNIVERSARY
ICCT
International Centre for Counter-Terrorism

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The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) is an independent think and do tank providing multidisciplinary policy advice and practical, solution-oriented implementation support on prevention and the rule of law, two vital pillars of effective counter-terrorism.

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# About This Project

This project is looking at the third deliverable of a project looking at pro-Russian doxing practices against pro-Ukraine foreign individuals based in Ukraine and abroad. The project, entitled “Anti-Dox: Identifying, Evaluating and Countering Disinformation in Times of War”, is supported by the European Media and Information Fund - managed by the Calouste Gulbenkian foundation.

The project is led by the think-and do-thank International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT), based in the Netherlands, together with the Fundacja Reporterów (FR), a group of investigative reporters and fact-checkers based in Poland. The project aims to investigate and evaluate doxing with a view to help counter Russia’s disinformation campaign against Europe.



# Contents

# Executive Summary

1. Russia uses doxing as a weapon against foreign fighters who deploy in the ranks of the Ukrainian army. In the process of doxing, its operatives or pro-Russian volunteers utilise a modus operandi perfected on Ukrainian victims throughout more than a decade of conflict.
2. Doxing in the hands of the Russians or their volunteers is no mere tool for naming and shaming. It has real-life consequences for those who are doxed. Not only are they called names or branded as puppets of Ukraine and all of its assumed backers, but they are also threatened and blackmailed by the doxers.
3. Russian or pro-Russian doxing dehumanises its victims and portrays them as perennial losers on the one hand, but on the other, as effective and genocidal criminals or "mercenaries." This doxing comes in many languages and targets as many foreign fighters for Ukraine as the doxers can find. The global nature of the (pro-)Russian doxing helps to mobilise the network of Russian supporters who are united in their quest to out and punish the pro-Ukraine mercenaries.
4. Doxing effectively constitutes compromising material or kompromat, which could be used against the doxed in order to coerce them into activities benefiting Russia. It is already featured on the Russian government or government-sanctioned media which quote from the doxing channels and celebrate their 'successes.'
5. Under pressure of doxing, these individuals at times further expose themselves while attempting to correct the doxers' messages and leave digital traces for the Russian military to exploit, for instance by hacking their phones or targeting them for artillery or drone strikes.
6. Many of the foreign fighters have inadvertently assisted the doxers by displaying shockingly low levels of operational security while in a war zone. Their public social media profiles featuring, for example, their photos in uniforms of the Ukrainian army or failure to disable their location while close to the Russian border has often resulted in the digital seizure of their data by the Russians. The data of the aforementioned fighters is rumoured to have been stolen from the Ukrainian units or sold by some of its members directly to the Russians, which only assisted the latter's doxing efforts.
7. Traces of such tactics can be seen in Ukraine, where Russia recruits, for example, underage Ukrainians to deliver bombs to military recruitment centres in different regions of the country. These individuals then become human bombers or proxy bombs (as utilised by the IRA in the early 1990s) and are at times forced into working for Russia via blackmail or a threat of doxing.
8. Given the ongoing Russian sabotage campaign in Europe, it is entirely possible that such tactics will also be used by Russia against Westerners or EU citizens inside the territory of their countries of origin. They could be blackmailed or threatened to do Russia's bidding while carrying out some missions for Moscow's benefit.
9. It would be prudent to prepare for such eventualities and brief the initial Russian doxing target population of foreign fighters and foreign enablers for the Ukrainian army. Such a threat adds a new dimension to the practice of violence prevention as it does not focus on what a returning foreign fighter could be up to, but rather on what could happen to them as a consequence of their deployment in a foreign conflict.

# Introduction

Doxing, or "revealing personal information in the online public space with the general intent of causing harm, is increasingly being used in modern armed conflicts." [1] Building on the findings of an ICCT project,[2] this report will showcase a particular use of this practice as a part of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. It will describe and discuss the contents of the online ecosystem which systematically doxes pro-Ukraine foreign fighters who joined the conflict after the onset of the full-scale war on 24 February 2022. Moreover, it will also showcase its connections to the Russian state's media infrastructure and, in fact, its information warfare efforts. Seen in this light, this type of doxing, which, as shown,[3] is sometimes ridiculed or perceived lightly by the pro-Ukraine foreign fighters,[4] may result in serious consequences for those doxed. Thus, it should no longer be purely perceived as an amateur effort of pro-Russian individuals who speak different languages and contribute, as volunteers, to the information effort of the Russian state.

In the Telegram doxing channels that the report studies, doxing has moved far beyond a simple exposure of personal details. At first glance, it may seem that exposing someone's phone number or address is simply an invasion of privacy; however, what was once a sporadic leak of information now operates as a more systematic process that not only dehumanises the targeted individuals but also reinforces extremist group dynamics. Repeatedly encountering this personal data, like addresses, phone numbers, and even family details, can trigger an accumulated impact, creating an environment where hostile rhetoric is normalised, and users gradually come to view actions against the doxed as justified and inevitable punishment for fighting for Ukraine. The overarching goal of the channels appears to be discouraging foreign enlistment, sowing fear, and publicly discrediting those who participate in Ukraine's defence against Russian forces. Further, this doxing is reinforced by allegations of stupidity, failure, and extremist ideology of the volunteers, and escalates into calls for violence and celebration of death and suffering, resembling other practices of extremist doxing seen before.

It needs to be noted that doxing is not a phenomenon new to this conflict and that, in fact, both sides have reached for this information weapon as far back as 2014. The fact that, to some degree, they both operated using the Russian language only allowed for more successful doxing operations, which could reach the target audience more easily and appear more threatening. As will be shown, there is a difference between the 2014 calls for the "liquidation" of certain Ukrainians and the 2022 musings of the doxing ecosystem, hoping a given foreign fighter for Ukraine will eventually meet his end somewhere in the East of the country.[5] In this sense, this is a phenomenon well known to the Ukrainians and the fact that it has developed narratives in English and other languages, as demonstrated below, is only a new development to a process which is at least a decade old for Ukraine. As will be demonstrated, the fact that it has morphed into a global conspiracy of doxers endorsed by Russia should only increase vigilance, as it might have drastic and direct consequences for individual EU citizens and EU Member States. Russia is already turning doxing into a tool of blackmail in Ukraine as it deploys blackmailed individuals to perform terrorist attacks in the country – as was the case with the recent attempted bombing of a military

1 Bàrbara Molas, "Doxing: A Literature Review", *ICCT*, December 15, 2025, https://icct.nl/publication/doxing-literature-review.
2 For more on ANTIDOX project see: https://icct.nl/project/anti-dox-identifying-evaluating-and-countering-disinformation-times-war. ICCT is involved in this research effort alongside Fundacja Reporterow or FRONTSTORY.pl.
3 Kacper Rekawek, "Testimonies of Victims of Russian (Extremist) Doxing," *ICCT*, March 13, 2025, https://icct.nl/publication/testimonies-victims-russian-extremist-doxing.
4 "[Foreign fighting for Ukraine] is a high level of commitment with high tolerance level for danger. Being doxed then can almost be a validation. And you are threatened any day of your existence here, with a rifle in a trench so you will not care about doxing, to be honest," as quoted in Rekawek, "Testimonies", p.5.
5 A "foreign volunteer present in Ukraine since 2014, mostly in Eastern Ukraine" told the ICCT research team that "doxing is supposed to make your life difficult but I remember the time when it was more than just harassment – Russians had websites which were screaming: "kill this person!" or "liquidate that guy!" With a photo and a caption over your face." See: Ibid., loc cit.

recruitment centre in Ternopil, in Western Ukraine.[6] It might then turn westwards and use such a phenomenon to support its sabotage efforts against the West, including political violence and terrorism.[7] Moreover, the doxing milieu that the report describes and analyses utilises extremist language while attempting to frame all of Ukraine's supporters as extremists themselves. In short, it calls people 'Nazis' while using aggressive, homophobic, and racist language.

Previous ICCT work on the issue of doxing demonstrated that this phenomenon thrives when, for example, the Russians hack into the servers of the likes of Ukraine's International Legion or when someone from its staff effectively sells its data to Russia.[8] The fact that a "pro-Russian" political community still exists in Ukraine and its representatives are still in the parliament should help with perceiving the reality in which some members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces or the country's administration are loyal to Moscow instead of Kyiv.[9] However, some of ICCT's interviewees stressed that this doxing is also the result of very poor operational security by the arriving foreign fighters.[10] They market themselves on social media, engage in loose talk, and, as a result, can end up being doxed by the Russians online. Their initial reliance on private phones to communicate with each other and remain in touch with their Ukrainian commanders could also have led to tragedies such as the March 2022 Yavoriv bombing, when Russian missiles struck a training facility in Western Ukraine, which at the time housed hundreds of future recruits for Ukraine's International Legion.[11]

The report proceeds in the following manner: it first showcases previous usage of doxing – a practice used in other conflicts/ideological struggles by a different set of actors; next, it discusses the methodology of the research in question which focused on the two doxing channels; it then describes both the quantitative and qualitative findings of the research, discusses the overlap between the doxing milieu and the propaganda and disinformation machinery of the Russian state, outlines how the doxed responded to the doxing and how some of their reactions empowered or further enabled practices of pro-Russian or Russian doxing. Lastly, the report also outlines how doxing practices changed in early 2025 as doxers openly expressed their feeling that they needed to rush with outing more of the pro-Ukraine foreign fighters as the war was allegedly coming to a close.

6 Oleksandra Opanasenko, "A schoolgirl was detained in Ternopil — she almost committed a terrorist attack due to blackmail from Russians," *Babel*, March 25, 2025, https://babel.ua/en/news/116439-a-schoolgirl-was-detained-in-ternopil-she-almost-committed-a-terrorist-attack-due-to-blackmail-from-russians.

7 Bart Schuurman, "Russia Is Stepping Up Its Covert War Beyond Ukraine," *Foreign Policy*, January 10, 2025, https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/01/10/russia-covert-war-europe-sabotage-violence/.

8 Rekawek, "Testomonies," p. 5.

9 Tadeusz Iwański, Marcin Jędrysiak, *Polityka na Ukrainie. Jakie poparcie ma Zelensky?" [Politics in Ukraine. What is Zelensky's support level?], OSW*, podcast, May 25, 2025, https://open.spotify.com/episode/30hK5NCrxJYd5E2VbJB8E9.

10 Donald Bowser, Kacper Rekawek, *War on Ukraine: Foreign Fighters, Doxing and (State Terrorism)*, *ICCT*, podcast, February 27, 2025, https://icct.nl/multimedia/war-ukraine-foreign-fighters-doxing-and-state-terrorism.

11 Jack Hardy, "British volunteer fighters may have triggered deadly strike on Ukrainian base after their phones were detected," *The Telegraph*, March 19, 2025, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2022/03/19/british-volunteer-fighters-may-have-triggered-deadly-strike/?msockid=2f-f4e61c7a0869763a9ef59e7b4e6894.

# Previous Cases of Doxing

Russia has seen its fair share of doxing before the war against Ukraine. One of the most famous Russian neo-Nazis, Maxim Martsinkevich – known as Tesak – in 2011 commenced his programme of fighting paedophiles via 'catfishing' (establishment of fake online personas) and asking them out on dates. If the ruse was successful, they were intimidated, beaten, and made to disclose their personal information, publicly humiliated – all of it captured and shared online. Tesak opened these activities to others who could join the so-called "safaris" provided they paid him in return.[12] At least three murders have been tied to Tesak and his supporters, and it seems that the Russian security services used his approach of videotaping victims for future gain. Some of the Russian extremists were filmed by the Federal Security Servce of the Russian Federation (FSB) while, for instance, conducting murder, and the tapes or files later constituted compromising material or *kompromat* with which the Russian state could subsequently blackmail its hardened opponents.[13]

Doxing as intimidation and punishment of those seen to violate some so-called traditional Russia values (such as paedophilia or, in reality, homosexuality, but also later drug use) has continued in other forms. Pioneered by Chechen authorities in 2015 as part of extrajudicial pressure on suspects and their relatives, a practice of video apologies was adopted all around Russia by both official actors and various state-proxy vigilantes.[14] Under threats, beatings and torture, those seen to have violated the moral code are made to state their name, offence, and apologise – often on their knees or with other humiliating gestures – before the videos are shared widely. This practice, for example, also concerns dozens of residents of (temporarily occupied) Crimea since the full-scale invasion specifically, who, after demonstrating some identification with Ukraine, are made to sing Russian hymns, hold Russian flags, etc, and apologise.[15] Doxing used politically has not exclusively been used by Russians. At its peak in 2015, the Islamic State, under the banner of its 'official' Hacking Division, released at least nineteen separate kill lists containing personal data of American and European citizens, including government officials and military personnel, mainly obtained through previous hacks.[16] These lists also included the names of active-duty soldiers from two military bases in the Middle East. At least two foiled terrorist plots in the US were assessed to have been directly inspired by information from these kill lists.[17] Additionally, during previous monitoring of IS channels on social media, ICCT observed multiple incidents of doxing by pro-IS sympathisers. These included individuals who were accused of being spies or trolls within the channels, as well as public and semi-public figures perceived as ideological opponents. Conversely, the case of Alp Services illustrates how doxing has been weaponised in the context of counter-Islamist efforts. Acting on behalf of the United Arab Emirates, the Swiss private intelligence firm allegedly contracted a researcher to gather personal information on alleged affiliates of the Muslim Brotherhood. This information was later used as part of a broader public smear campaign targeting individuals across Europe.[18]

12 Meduza, "Чем запомнился Максим Марцинкевич по прозвищу Тесак — самый талантливый медиаманипулятор из российских неонацистов" [How Maksim Martsinkevich aka Tesak is going to be remembered – the most talented media manipulator of Russian neonazis], *Meduza*, September 16, 2020, https://web.archive.org/web/20220708203417/https://meduza.io/feature/2020/09/16/geteroseksualizm-i-russkiy-yazyk-chem-proslavilsya-maksim-martsinkevich-po-prozvischu-tesak-samyy-mediynyy-iz-rossiyskih-neonatsistov.

13 Eva Merkacheva, "Тесак сдал всех: неизвестные подробности дела самой жестокой банды националистов" [Tesak gave everybody away: unknown details of the case against the most cruel nationalist gang], *MKRU*, September 19, 2023, https://www.mk.ru/social/2023/09/19/tesak-sdal-vsekh-neizvestnye-podrobnosti-dela-samoy-zhestokoy-bandy-nacionalistov.html.

14 Svoboda, "Камерные извинения. Российские хроники публичного покаяния" [Filmed apologies. Russian chornicles of public repentance], *Svoboda*, February 10, 2024, https://www.svoboda.org/a/kamernye-izvineniya-rossiyskie-hroniki-publichnogo-pokayaniya/32813477.html.

15 OVD-info, "Извинения на камеру и не только: анализ внесудебного давления после начала полномасштабной войны" [Apologies on camer and beyond: an analysis of extrajudicial pressure after the start of the full-scale war], *OVD-info*, June 30, 2023, https://data.ovd.info/izvineniya-na-kameru-i-ne-tolko-analiz-vnesudebnogo-davleniya-posle-nachala.

16 Audrey Alexander and Bennett Clifford, "Doxing and Defacements: Examining the Islamic State's Hacking Capabilities," *CTC Sentinel* 12, no. 4 (2022): 22–28, https://ctc.westpoint.edu/doxing-defacements-examining-islamic-states-hacking-capabilities/.

17 Alexander and Clifford, "Doxing and Defacements: Examining the Islamic State's Hacking Capabilities."

18 David D. Kirkpatrick, "The Dirty Secrets of a Smear Campaign," *The New Yorker*, March 27, 2023, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/04/03/the-dirty-secrets-of-a-smear-campaign.

Far-right terrorist groups, particularly those operating predominantly online, have also engaged in doxing. The Atomwaffen Division (AWD; German for 'nuclear weapons division') developed blank propaganda templates to dox (former) members now considered apostates.[19] AWD has also promoted the doxing of so-called enemies of the white-power movement, distributing the private information of hundreds of employees of a human rights organisation and publishing articles purporting to identify undercover FBI agents.[20] Likewise, two of the ringleaders of the now-dismantled "Terrorgram" collective, a decentralised network of Telegram channels promoting and inspiring extreme-right terrorism, including the 2022 Bratislava shooting, have, among other terrorist offences, also been charged with doxing.[21]

In an ethnographic monitoring of accelerationist Telegram channels conducted for this project, ICCT observed multiple instances of doxing. Targets were often selected either based on far-right beliefs or due to accusations of betrayal. Beyond serving as a means to harass and intimidate ideological adversaries, the cases of the child extortion group 764 and the affiliated *Maniacs Murder Cult* (MKY), both driven by accelerationist ideology and part of the broader online criminal network *Coms*, highlight that doxing can be used to directly orchestrate attacks: these groups employ social engineering tactics to trick individuals, often minors, into revealing personal information, including sexually explicit images. Victims are then coerced into self-harm or violent acts against others under the threat of public exposure.[22] Moreover, joining these groups reportedly requires individuals to document acts of physical violence. Multiple foiled and executed plots have been traced back to 764 and MKY members, indicating that participation in such doxing communities, and the incentives thereof, can motivate individuals to commit attacks.[23] Recently, a leader of MKY was arrested in Moldova and is being tried in the US: a Georgian national, he is accused of several federal crimes, such as distributing materials that urged school shootings and other mass terror attacks, with MKY also linked to a Nashville school shooting earlier in 2025.[24]

Beyond terrorism, doxing is widely used by both far-right and far-left actors. In the American far-right, doxing has emerged in both bottom-up and top-down forms. Grassroots campaigns often originate within far-right subcultures on platforms like Reddit, Discord, and 4chan, or via websites, such as through the weaponisation of the now disabled crowdfunding site *WeSearchr*.[25] In a top-down fashion, prominent alt-right figures like Andrew Anglin have orchestrated targeted doxing campaigns via websites such as *The Daily Stormer*, mobilising their follower bases.[26] These campaigns primarily target leftist individuals or those perceived as such, including journalists, politicians, and, recently, even federal judges and members of Congress involved in January 6 investigations.[27] Perhaps the earliest example of a systematic doxing campaign attempt was the

19 Ashley Mattheis, Mark Robinson, and Austin Blair, "Plug-and-Play Propaganda: Understanding Production Quality in Atomwaffen Division Videos," *Global Network on Extremism & Technology,* July 23, 2020, https://gnet-research.org/2020/07/23/plug-and-play-propaganda-understanding-production-quality-in-atomwaffen-division-videos/.
20 Hannah Gais and Jason Wilson, "Leaked Chats, Documents Show Atomwaffen Founder's Path to Terror Plot," *Southern Poverty Law Center*, February 23, 2023, https://www.splcenter.org/resources/hatewatch/leaked-chats-documents-show-atomwaffen-founders-path-terror-plot/.
21 Sara Ruberg, "2 Charged With Inciting Violence and Promoting Hate Crimes Around the World," *The New York Times*, September 9, 2024, https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/09/us/terrorgram-collective-white-supremacists-charged.html.
22 Marc-André Argentino, Barrett Gay, and M.B. Tyler. "764: The Intersection of Terrorism, Violent Extremism, and Child Sexual Exploitation." *Global Network on Extremism & Technology*, January 19, 2024, https://gnet-research.org/2024/01/19/764-the-intersection-of-terrorism-violent-extremism-and-child-sexual-exploitation/.
23 Marc-André Argentino, Barrett Gay, and Matt Bastin, "Nihilism and Terror: How M.K.Y. Is Redefining Terrorism, Recruitment, and Mass Violence," *CTC Sentinel* 17, no. 8 (September 2024): 22–29, https://ctc.westpoint.edu/nihilism-and-terror-how-m-k-y-is-redefining-terrorism-recruitment-and-mass-violence/.
24 Mike Levine and Aaron Katersky, "Accused neo-Nazi Cult Leader Extradited to US, as DOJ Alleges Ties to Deadly Nashville School Shooting," *ABC News*, May 23, 2025, https://abcnews.go.com/US/accused-neo-nazi-cult-leader-extradited-us-doj/story?id=122115150.
25 Aja Romano, "Reddit Shuts Down 3 Major Alt-right Forums Due to Harassment," *Vox*, February 3, 2017, https://www.vox.com/culture/2017/2/3/14486856/reddit-bans-alt-right-doxing-harassment.
26 Anti-Defamation League, "Online Harassment: Extremists Ramp Up Trolling, Doxing Efforts," *ADL*, March 21, 2017, https://www.adl.org/resources/article/online-harassment-extremists-ramp-trolling-doxing-efforts.
27 Micah Lee, "How Right-Wing Extremists Stalk, Dox, and Harass Their Enemies," *The Intercept*, September 6, 2017, https://theintercept.com/2017/09/06/how-right-wing-extremists-stalk-dox-and-harass-their-enemies/; Benjamin Mok and Saddiq Basha, "Digital Shadows: Key Trends in Online Extremist Narratives and Activities in 2023," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 16, no. 1 (2024): 94–105, https://www.jstor.org/stable/48756309/.

platform "Social Autopsy" by Candace Owens, a far-right political commentator, who was called "a very smart thinker" by Donald Trump.[28] In 2016, she launched a Kickstarter crowdfunding campaign for the online platform, where users could submit screenshots of Internet trolls and bullies: arranged into neat profiles, this would allow users to systematically check someone's footprint by their name, for example, for potential employment.[29] After backlash, Kickstarter suspended the campaign, and the platform never went online, but Owens cites the reaction to *Social Autopsy* as a reason for "why she's conservative" and her views.[30]

However, doxing is by no means limited to the American far-right. In France, far-right Telegram groups have doxed pro-immigrant activists and issued death threats.[31] In the Netherlands, the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV) has reported that the far-right targets a wide range of individuals deemed leftist, including "lecturers, judges, members of the civil service, journalists, and other public figures".[32] Austria's internal intelligence agency assessed that doxing constitutes a key tactic of the Austrian anti-government extremist milieu used to intimidate ideological opponents and public officials.[33] Even more seriously, Germany's far-right has compiled and circulated so-called "enemy lists" containing the names and addresses of over 25,000 individuals, including politicians, public servants, civil society activists, clergy, and academics.[34] The German politician Walter Lübcke, who was murdered by a far-right terrorist in 2019, was among those listed.[35]

On the opposite end of the ideological spectrum, doxing is also widely used by the far-left, especially by Antifa groups, primarily targeting (perceived) right-wing opponents.[36] Following the infamous "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, several participants were doxed as alleged white supremacists, sometimes with severe consequences, including job loss, family estrangement, and death threats.[37] In some cases, individuals were falsely accused and demonstrably had not attended the rally. In another instance, the anti-fascist group *Smash Racism DC* published the private address of TV host Tucker Carlson, leading to a protest at his home, threatening him and his family.[38] Similarly, the Swiss left-wing extremists published personal details of members of the far-right group *Junge Tat*. It also targets individuals perceived as ideological enemies, frequently police officers. In Greece, the names and home addresses of multiple Thessaloniki police officers were posted on an anarchist website.[39] In Germany, left-wing extremists burnt the private cars of three police officers and published their home addresses alongside surveillance footage.[40] The

28 Jamiles Lartey, "Trump Praises Controversial Pundit Candace Owens as a 'very Smart Thinker,'" *The Guardian*, May 9, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/may/09/trump-candace-owens-very-smart-thinker.
29 Jesse Singal, "The Strange Tale of Social Autopsy, the Anti-Harassment Start-up That Descended Into Gamergate Trutherism," *Intelligencer*, April 18, 2016, https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2016/04/how-social-autopsy-fell-for-gamergate-trutherism.html.
30 Brandy Zadrozny, "YouTube tested, Trump approved: How Candace Owens suddenly became the loudest voice of the far right", *NBC News*, June 23, 2018, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/youtube-tested-trump-approved-how-candace-owens-suddenly-became-loudest-n885166.
31 Phineas Rueckert, "A Far-Right Fire Is Blazing Across France: Extremist Groups Are Becoming More Emboldened—and More Violent—all Over the Country," *The Nation*, July 19, 2023, https://www.thenation.com/article/world/france-far-right-violence/.
32 National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism, *Terrorist Threat Assessment for the Netherlands* 54, (NCTV, 2021), https://english.nctv.nl/documents/publications/2021/04/26/terrorist-threat-assessment-for-the-netherlands-54.
33 Direktion Staatsschutz und Nachrichtendienst, "Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023" [Protection of the Constitution Report 2023], (Bundesministerium für Inneres, 2024), https://www.dsn.gv.at/501/files/VSB/180_2024_VSB_2023_V20240517_BF.pdf.
34 Deutsche Welle, "Germany: Far-right Extremist 'enemy Lists' Found," *Deutsche Welle*, July 31, 2018, https://www.dw.com/en/german-far-right-extremists-have-been-keeping-lists-of-enemies/a-44890618.
35 Ruth Krause, "'Enemy Lists' Alarm Victims More Than Authorities," *Deutsche Welle*, August 14, 2019, https://www.dw.com/en/german-authorities-dismiss-threat-of-far-right-enemy-lists/a-49980181.
36 Robert Klemko, "Unmasking the Far Right: An Extremist Paid a Price When His Identity Was Exposed Online After a Violent Clash in Washington," *The Washington Post*, June 21, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/doxing-far-right-violent-extremists/2021/06/20/35f730e2-ba68-11eb-a5fe-bb49dc89a248_story.html/.
37 Emma Grey Ellis, "Whatever Your Side, Doxing Is a Perilous Form of Justice," *WIRED*, August 17, 2017, https://www.wired.com/story/doxing-charlottesville/.
38 Allyson Chiu, "'They Were Threatening Me and My Family': Tucker Carlson's Home Targeted by Protesters," *The Washington Post*, November 8, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2018/11/08/they-were-threatening-me-my-family-tucker-carlsons-home-targeted-by-protesters/.
39 Europol, "European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report" (Publications Office of the European Union, 2022), https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/Tesat_Report_2022_0.pdf.
40 Europol, "European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report" (Publications Office of the European Union, 2023), https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/European%20Union%20Terrorism%20Situation%20and%20Trend%20report%202023.pdf.

German-language subdomain of the global *Indymedia* network frequently published so-called "outings" of ideological enemies, often alleged neo-Nazis, which typically included personal addresses, contact details, and their employers.[41] These postings were often accompanied by implicit or explicit calls for violence against the doxed individuals.[42] This was among the reasons that prompted German authorities to ban and raid its predecessor website in 2017.[43]

# Methodology

The authors reviewed two main Telegram channels of the doxing milieu for mentions of European foreign fighters for Ukraine between 1 October 2024 and 15 May 2025. Only posts in English as the primary language were recorded: while Russian language discussions concern domestic audiences and hatred directed mainly at Ukrainian nationals, English was the main language of discussions directed to outsiders, as Russian moderators aimed to influence foreign readers with the doxing posts. As far as the doxers were concerned, the activities were aimed at deepening their support for Russia and inciting hatred or condemnation of their compatriots or fellow Europeans on the side of Ukraine. Few foreigners speak Russian, and few Russians prefer English as their main language of communication and content consumption. Thus, this division between domestic and foreign audiences is formed. The authors of this report focused on the European doxees, and on the reactions of foreigners to this sort of campaign. In this sense, the purely Russian discussions around doxing of Europeans fighting for Ukraine are not the focus of this project.

Periodic checks were performed to capture new posts, and a virtual private network (VPN), together with burner phones, was used to ensure security. As will be shown, the monitoring of the doxing ecosystem went beyond the core channels mentioned at the beginning of this section. This was the result of the fact that the doxing content was sometimes forwarded or referenced by other channels and outlets, and on some occasions even featured on Russian state media.

To identify relevant mentions, the authors performed ethnographic monitoring, recording both doxing by the moderators in the posts and the discussions in the comments by general users, including additional information and also some reactions from the foreign volunteers who appeared in these channels. Any individual identified as a European national met the basic inclusion requirement, provided that person had been doxed on at least one of the monitored channels and was reported to be serving in some capacity for the Ukrainian side.

A master Excel sheet was used to organise the data. Each row contains a single case, assigned a unique number (for instance, 0001 or 0002). The person's real name was recorded in a separate password-protected document stored offline to ensure no secondary data leaks. The spreadsheet also captures the Telegram channel where the doxing appeared, what information was doxed, the reactions of the audience (number of likes and comments), any battalion affiliation stated in the post, and accusations related to extremism (for example, being labelled a 'Nazi' or a 'criminal') or other so-called 'accusations of immorality', such as drug use or promiscuity.

A core part of the coding involved documenting precisely which pieces of personal or sensitive information were leaked. The authors used binary entries for items such as date of birth, home address, phone number, passport details, and direct links to social media accounts like Instagram and Facebook. Fields dedicated to contextual information include the handle or name of the

41 Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, "Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023" [Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution Report 2023], (Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat, 2024), https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/DE/verfassungsschutz-berichte/2024-06-18-verfassungsschutzbericht-2023.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=17.
42 Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, "Die 'Antifa': Antifaschistischer Kampf im Linksextremismus" [The ‚Antifa': Antifascist Struggle in Left Extremism], *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*, accessed June 21, 2025, https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/hintergruende/DE/linksextremismus/die-antifa-antifaschistischer-kampf-im-linksextremismus.html.
43 Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, "Die 'Antifa': Antifaschistischer Kampf im Linksextremismus."

individual who posted or forwarded the doxing material, any allusions to other pro-Russian channels or sources, and references to whether the subject of the doxing was injured, killed, or captured. Because some volunteers appeared multiple times in the pro-Russian channels, the research team carefully checked for duplicate or overlapping entries and consolidated them under the same case number if the details clearly related to one individual, taking into account inconsistent and alternative spellings. If the same fighter was doxed more than once, sometimes months apart, or with conflicting claims about location or injuries, all references were retained to reveal how the narrative or level of detail changed over time. This approach ensures that the dataset not only captures the breadth of individuals targeted by doxing but also documents how doxing posts can escalate, repeat, or incorporate new accusations.

Additionally, we logged replies of foreign fighters in the document, with particular attention to the behaviour of chat moderators and other users in these interactions. It was, however, more challenging, since the volunteers often deleted their messages or accounts quite quickly after 'coming to the chat', and as such, not all of those were captured in the database.

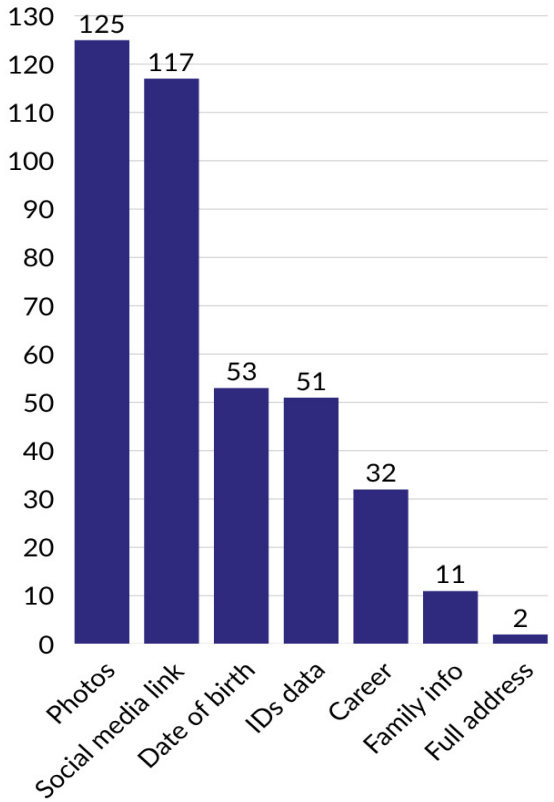
Given the sensitive nature of the collected data, which often includes highly personal information, the research team implemented several measures to protect the privacy of the individuals who were doxed. First and foremost, all individuals were fully anonymised. Upon identification, each individual was assigned a case ID, which subsequently served as the sole reference point throughout the research process. Moreover, all data has been stored exclusively on a secure hard drive accessible only to the research team. As a result, this report refrains from disclosing any names or personal information that could lead to the identification of individuals, except in cases where the individuals in question have deliberately sought public exposure, and for example visited the doxing channels to argue back with the doxers, and are already widely known, such as Denis Nikitin, the founder and commander of the Russian Volunteer Corps (RDK). To avoid amplifying the reach of the Telegram doxing channels under analysis, their names have also been deliberately omitted.

# Quantitative Findings

In the monitored Telegram channels, doxing was primarily carried out by the administrators, mostly in the form of a single, comprehensive message. These posts usually included a photo of the targeted individual, autobiographical details, and links to their social media accounts. Occasionally, users contributed additional details about the individuals in the comment section, and in rare instances, they independently doxed new individuals. Despite the channels claiming to focus exclusively on those who are fighting – referred to as 'foreign mercenaries' or 'mercs' in Ukraine, there are occasional doxing messages for public figures or non-combatant volunteers, as well as rare posts on other topics than doxing.

Of the 127 individuals for whom doxing messages and posts were recorded and analysed, the overwhelming majority were male, 98 percent (124 cases out of 127, hereafter referred to as 124/127). Out of 127 recorded cases of doxing, the most commonly shared type of sensitive information was images of foreign fighters, 'de-anonymising' them. This type of doxing was present in 98 percent of recorded messages (125/127). Twenty-five percent also mentioned career details of a foreign fighter, such as previous occupation or the name of a company (32/127); 42 percent contained their full date of birth (53/127). Doxing also contained full numbers of photos of personal documents such as passports or military documents (40 percent, 51/127); and more rarely also family information (9 percent, 11/127) and full address (2 percent, 2/127). No instance was identified in which the phone number of a victim was released, yet, in a few instances, this information became public when the fighter engaged in discussions in the chat while attempting to repudiate or ridicule the information uncovered by the doxers.

**Figure 1. Number of recorded doxing cases, per type of doxed information**



In addition to publishing sensitive information, almost all doxing messages linked to individuals' social media (92 percent, 117/127). This is a significant aspect of doxing posts, since such easily identifiable and unprotected personal pages are a likely source of most of the information doxed. For example, 82 percent (104/127) featured an individual's Facebook and 72 percent (92/117) – Instagram. Other networks like TikTok, Twitter, Telegram, LinkedIn, and VK were featured too, albeit less frequently. For some individuals, the messages contained multiple Facebooks and Instagrams. In a few cases, the family members' social media accounts were also linked too.[44] Another trend is claiming injury or death of the individual, sometimes as the first post about them, in a sort of posthumous doxing. Sometimes it comes together with footage of the body, to various extents blurred. Out of 127 messages recorded, four mentioned injuries (3 percent), and 28 others reported deaths (22 percent), though sometimes without proof, and sometimes later proven to be mistaken. On several occasions, there have also been doxing posts-capture by the Russians, with photos and videos of a foreign fighter appearing in Russian captivity or their documents seized by the Russian army, which potentially acted as a provider of information in these cases. Posts discussing injuries or deaths of foreign volunteers attract significantly more engagement, expressed in post reactions and the number of comments, in comparison to regular posts: any loss of the Ukrainian side is happily and loudly celebrated, and victims are dehumanised and referred to as 'targets taken down'.

Overall, nationals of 24 European countries became victims of doxing within the observation period alone, showing a wide geographical scope of countries affected. By far the biggest European nation mentioned is the United Kingdom (31/127), followed by France (twelve), as well as Sweden and Finland (with nine each). This does not reflect the distribution of nationalities across the foreign fighters' communities, because doxing of a particular nationality often comes in waves, and, as within such a relatively short window of observation, it is hard to get an accurate picture. Based on ICCT's previous reports, the estimated number of foreign volunteers remaining in service is around 2000.[45] Yet, a large proportion of them are South Americans[46] – a trend particularly reflected in recent activity within the doxing community, where the majority of the posts have recently focused on individuals from Colombia and Brazil.[47]

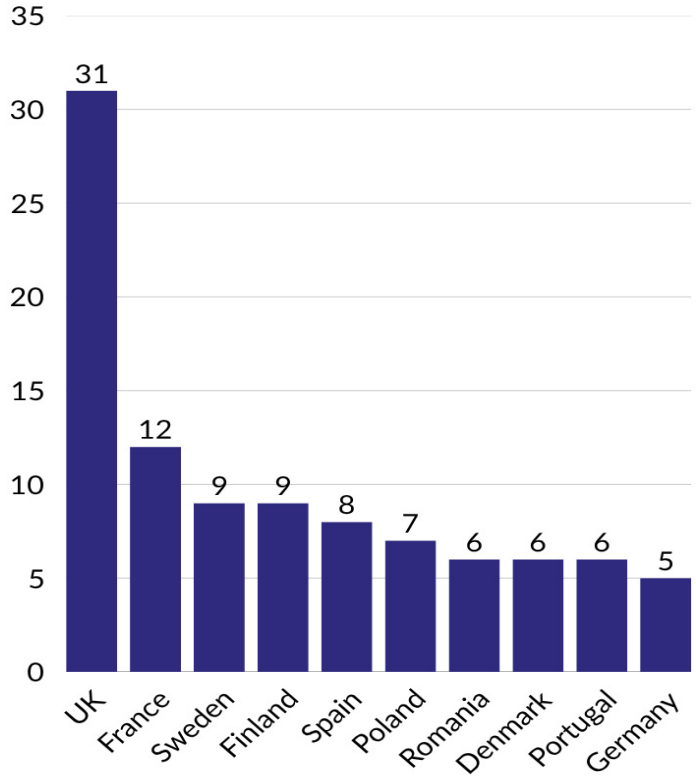
44 For more on how the doxers would effectively vacuum clean the information provided on social media by the fighters, see Rekawek, "Testomonies" . A vivid example is provided below: "When Daniel Sztyber, one of the Polish fighters for the International Legion, died there was an in memoriam post on Instagram or Facebook. And many of our guys gave a "like" underneath. They simply liked it. Someone later went through it and checked who gave the like. My friend from Canada, who did, had a a profile which said nothing on military or war but in his avatar, he had something linking him to Ukraine. The same avatar was out there in the profile of another guy from our platoon but he also had military photos there. And bang, they connected the dots and came to the conclusion that they were members of the same group. So my friend, the Canadian, had his real name and surname there, nothing dumb. The only thing – he gave this like and had the same avatar. His family later had a horrid time. They had him, his employers, his mum and dad, his workplaces. They were sending emails, "references" to his workplaces, text messages with threats. They also pinged his parents saying he was dead. They also did memes with him as they found his other photos."

45 Kacper Rekawek, Laura Winkelmuller Real, Maria Zotova, "People are still fighting." (Lack of) Change for the Foreign Fighters for Ukraine", *ICCT*, 18 March, 2025, https://icct.nl/sites/default/files/2025-03/Rekawek%20et%20al_People%20are%20still%20fighting.pdf.

46 *Ibid*

47 At the same time, however, it must be noted that these channels have been in operation since 2022 and feature 18 000 messages which display low thousands of individuals in or presumed Ukrainian service. In this sense, the sample of 127 is an element of a wider phenomenon which also targets the aforementioned South Americans but also Americans, Canadians and Australians in Ukrainian service.

**Figure 2. The number of doxed foreign fighters per the 10 top countries**




In most cases, there is hardly information available about the unit of a given individual, but the doxers attempt to situate them within the confines of a given network or a group of foreigners serving within the same area of operations. However, among the cases where unit details are known, Ukraine's International Legion (often mistakenly referred to as the Foreign Legion) is by far the most frequently mentioned, with thirteen individuals doxed, likely because it remains the largest military unit for foreigners.

# Qualitative Findings

The language of the doxers is at times both witty and cruel, if not outright demeaning. It has its special code that can, at times, be difficult to decipher for casual observers and readers. The key phrase repeatedly used throughout all messages is a "Ticket to Bandera."

To understand it, one must first grasp the legacy of Stepan Bandera, a Ukrainian nationalist leader who, for many, is a symbol of fierce resistance and the struggle for Ukrainian independence. For others, he represents extremism and collaboration with fascist elements during World War II.[48] In the language of these Telegram channels, invoking Bandera is not a homage but a curse. When someone is told they've 'got a ticket to Bandera,' it implies that by joining the conflict, they have embarked on a road directly to death, where Bandera can be met in the afterlife. Similarly, 'playing Rambo' is used with a mix of derision and dark humour, alluding to Sylvester Stallone's character in the film set in the Vietnam War. It neglects different volunteers' motivations, calling them naïve and deluded, simply wanting to be in a war movie, painting them as easy targets rather than serious combatants grasping the reality of war. Finally, 'sunflowers for Russian soil' or 'seeds', two other catchphrases often mentioned by the doxers, refer to the symbol of Ukrainian resilience and national pride. In this case, the phrase turns it into an ironic metaphor for death. It suggests that these individuals will end up as nothing more than nourishment for this land, stained by conflict. Once again, this narrative advances the inevitability of death for all those fighting on the side of Ukraine – and thereby asserting inescapable Russian victory.

Most menacingly, a recurrent phrase is a 'curse of track' – someone dying after being 'tracked', i.e. doxed by the community. Ominously, one such occurrence in early 2024 was when a volunteer returned to the chat underneath the post that doxed him to argue back with the doxers, and died shortly afterwards in mysterious circumstances.[49] The channels then celebrated his passing, claiming that this happened because of his attempt to insult the doxers. The 'curse' is thus portrayed like a karmic payback for insulting people, the Russian army, nation or president in the chat. The immediacy of 'payout' is often greatly exaggerated, despite nearly six months passing between some of the messages of the supposed fighter and his or her death. This phrase is specific to one channel, the biggest of the observed. Throughout the belief's existence since late 2023, the posts claimed it had worked thirteen times, after volunteers 'have activated' it by coming to the chat, and in another ten cases it was claimed to have been activated but not yet working – for instance, 'death is imminently coming.' This not only adds a more tailored layer of intimidation – not a general threat, but a personal and tailored threat connected to one's action, but also an element of superstitious occultism. It is unlikely that in these thirteen cases the anger of the doxing community had a real influence on the military machine's targeting. Yet, as claimed by one of the volunteers in the testimonies of victims of doxing, these two activities sometimes "cross paths, and you end up with some doxed fighter dead."[50]

What is particularly fascinating is how these terms evolve and become reified within the community. They are not only used as insults but as a community-building slang that binds the chat group members together and demarcates them from outsiders. These expressions are repeated, remixed and celebrated within the environment, creating an insider code that isolates the group from mainstream discourse and intensifies their ideological commitments. In this way, foreigners from different countries are bound together with Russian moderators, agreeing on their pro-Russian stances, using the same language, as outlined above, alongside slurs, especially for Ukraine and Ukrainians. Additionally, there is often discussion in the national language of a country where the

48 For a discussion on different faces of Bandera, see Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe, *Stepan Bandera: The Life and Afterlife of a Ukrainian Nationalist: Fascism, Genocide, and Cult* (ibidem-verlag, 2014).
49 Mark MacKinnon, "Canadian volunteer soldier who formed Norman Brigade killed in eastern Ukraine," *The Globe and Mail*, March 24, 2025, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-quebec-volunteer-soldier-who-formed-norman-brigade-killed-in-eastern/.
50 See: Rekawek, "Testomonies."

doxed fighter is from. Whether generated by bots or real users, these messages appear in the chats and allow ordinary readers to see their compatriots criticising the fighter and expressing pro-Russian views, seemingly from a more 'credible' source: a fellow citizen, whom one is more likely to trust than a Russian state outlet. Individual stories taken together construct an unfavourable collective identity for foreign volunteers and aim to discredit the West in Ukrainian war efforts as well as the country itself for allowing 'such' actions, such as stories of foreign fighters with a criminal history, 'promiscuous conduct' due to alleged sex work, and of course, those with history of far-right extremist beliefs or allegiances.

The community manifests itself in channel-wide chats – one of these features over 5,000 participants who use English and Russian almost equally, with occasional dialogues mainly in Spanish, but also in many other European languages – from Dutch to Polish. It is harder to determine people's nationality due to the use of pseudonyms by private individuals, people deleting their accounts, and the widespread use of translators to chat – Russian chat moderators are seen speaking a number of languages only a dedicated polyglot could ever master. To get a sense of the audience, several identities of the chat users were investigated nonetheless: several of them are Russian, participating in resident chats of Moscow and Belgorod regions, but there are also people likely residing in the occupied regions of Ukraine, or those who moved from there abroad, with one individual now likely residing in Germany.[51] Even though most of the people engaged in conversations are private individuals, some comments from accounts of other channels: there is one user specifically that keeps referring to their own French-speaking pro-Russian channel, and helping the doxers with investigations specifically in French. Additionally, a large part of these people could simply be bots – in precaution from their own doxing, most have hidden user information, non-informative user handles, and a random AI-generated profile picture.

In terms of their interactions, many simply send world news and news from the war in Ukraine, including graphic content. Some comment on short sentences on posts, especially celebrating the passing of pro-Ukraine foreign fighters. Sometimes, discussions break out over history and politics, especially World War II and the history of the USSR, which seem to be important topics of disagreements and a certain measure for everything, a root of all grievances. Everything is complemented by a large quantity of memes, jokes, stickers, and insults – mostly for the West and Ukraine, but also sometimes to each other upon disagreements. Overall, it is a highly toxic environment, perpetuating a pro-Russian view of the world, and also employing a lot of xenophobic and homophobic rhetoric about the ideological enemy. Examples include treating non-white Latin American fighters as irrelevant and unserious, insinuating they earned their way to, and in Ukraine through 'male prostitution', making fun of Europeans with non-white appearance, mocking fighters who do not look muscular and hairy as automatically gay and 'bottoms', claiming that AFU or a particular unit is a "gay place", or using slurs associated with race and sexuality for fighters.

In this ecosystem, discussions, graphic content, and memes overlap with user-done doxing, and occasional interactions from foreign fighters and even their families. It ranges from someone sharing an Instagram link of a volunteer saying they 'found another one' (when the Instagram page is open and clearly shows someone in military uniform in Ukraine) to people going on deep open-source dives to identify family members, attempt to geolocate photos, or find other fighters from a group photo featured in some post. In one case, for example, after the initial doxing post, a user utilised a paid Telegram service that compiles people's personal information to get several geostamps of the fighter (full geographical coordinates across several days from a few years back), his ID and phone numbers, and the Telegram account. Not all such doxing is cheered on, for example, it is a common practice to blur Nazi symbols on photos, or faces of fighters' wives and children, yet not always, while publishing graphic photos of dead enemies' bodies

51 Fundacja Reporterów, partner of ICCT in the ANTI-DOX project, personal communication with the authors, July 21, 2025.

is a regular practice that attracts no condemnation. For example, admins deleted photos of a person who was initially doxed and made fun of, when he explained that he was back in his home country and "not a merc", as well as deleting some ethnic and racial slurs since it is "against their policy of no ethnic discrimination", but not systematically. This example demonstrates: foreign fighters – or people mistaken for them – engaged in the chat actively influenced the doxing and its contents, demonstrating the interactive character the practice sometimes takes. More ways of such interactions are described below, in the section on foreign fighters' responses.

A recurring tactic in this environment is to paint foreign volunteers not just as enemy combatants, but as morally degenerate individuals. This stems from the fact that Russia has in the last decade embraced a reverence for so-called 'traditional values' – ideals of conservative Orthodox Slavic men and women, who conform to family and patriarchal values, patriotism, and state loyalty.[52] Russia perceives the likes of liberalism, such as LGBTQI+ rights, feminism, and multiculturalism, as the antithesis of its professed values.[53] Additionally, extremist ideologies of the right also upset the traditional values due to the enmeshment of the values narrative with Second World War stories of victory over fascism. Paradoxically, the right-wing xenophobic milieu, which is constantly aggressive towards migrants and people of colour in Russia and elsewhere, can also be aggressive towards foreigners enforcing the very same ideas. These alleged transgressions are used to increase engagement with an audience by 'selling a story' and invoking discussion, but also to downplay the volunteers' status as serious and capable combatants. Such an approach then allows the monitored online spaces to deploy the extremist, demeaning language while referring to the doxed fighters as 'Nazis.' In this sense and in a truly postmodern fashion, "nothing is true and everything is possible,"[54] for example, the doxers can both attempt to have their cake and eat it.

'Nazi' and 'mercenary' accusations are automatic and directed at any of the doxed individuals. These, however, are then reinforced with personal 'information' – often details about the private lives of the individual in question. They range from personal vices like drug abuse and promiscuity to more severe claims such as rape, abandonment of children, and even murder. At times, these accusations are used as insults or group names and are provided without any evidence, even by speculation on one's biography, suggesting they serve more as insults than direct commentary on the volunteers. These allegations were present in about one third of the recorded messages, largely because of the previously-described new mass format of doxing: as it came to dominate the most active channel, it crowded out 'old-style' posts with a full biography, that almost always contained some sort of implicit or explicit message of improper conduct or immorality laced into it. Using an inductive coding approach, the ICCT research team has divided them into the following:

## The unsuccessful

The biggest group of all violations, positioned between economic faults and faults of personhood, is a notion of unsuccessfulness, which was mentioned in 13 cases. The doxed persons are called losers and failures. Most of such cases concern economic failure: for example, if a volunteer's business fails or if they were unemployed or living with their parents, joining the ranks of Ukraine is portrayed as escaping a boring, failed life. This resembles old 'push' factors which seek to explain potential fighters' motivation to join a foreign war. Sometimes, the accusations play on gender stereotypes of what constitutes masculinity and femininity: accusations of failure are formulated in emasculating terms, for example, calling someone a "beta soy boy", which are juxtaposed to real, muscular, and economically independent (Russian) men who are seen as

52 Marlene Laruelle, *Is Russia Fascist? Unraveling Propaganda East and West* (Cornell University Press, 2021).
53 Michael Eltchaninoff, *Inside the Mind of Vladimir Putin* (Hurst, 2017).
54 Peter Pomerantsev, *Nothing is True and Everything is Possible: Adventures in Modern Russia,* (Faber and faber, 2017).

alphas. In this logic, soy milk, after all, is for liberal vegans – European weaklings. In most cases, these accusations of failure and weakness are not supported with any 'facts' or details and are purely based on appearances.

## The sexually deviant

Sexual misconduct and sex tourism are popular slurs among the doxers. This has been mentioned in seven cases. Sex tourism refers to a notion of volunteers coming to Ukraine not to fight but to enjoy 'easily accessible' Ukrainian women, who are Slavic and therefore – according to the channels' logic – desirable. This accusation gets thrown around for simply having a Ukrainian romantic partner. Sexual misconduct includes accusations of sleeping around, for instance, evoked against a fighter who allegedly had been a porn actor prior to coming to Ukraine, but also of sexual abuse: in two cases in particular, volunteers are accused of having a rape history in their home countries, citing legal documents in particular. Homosexuality or transgender identity also becomes a reason for attacks, as seen especially with examples of non-European fighters – the presumed logic here is probably that such accusations in the European context will carry less weight as homosexuality is far less frowned upon within the likes of the European Union.

## The uncaring parents

Family abandonment has been mentioned in six cases, for when a foreign fighter has left behind, typically, his wife and child(ren) to join the fight against Russia. It is, despite skyrocketing high rates of single motherhood in Russia, considered cowardly behaviour, not suitable for a patriarchal male who needs to be with his family and provide for them. For example, users discuss under those posts that leaving the family demonstrates a lack of courage to take responsibility. One user remarks in Russian that he now urgently wants to become a step-father to this Polish foreign fighter's children to "raise them right".

## The addicts

Drugs, Alcohol, and Gambling. Within our inclusion criteria, five posts spoke of addiction to drugs, alcohol, and gambling. One volunteer, for example, is alleged to have an alcohol problem alongside promiscuous behaviour, with the channel insinuating that such vices show a lack of moral grounding. These details are listed as part of the biographical description, without any attempt at providing proof.

## The pimps

'Pimping' is also a recurring phrase in the special lingo of these channels, a notion of 'pimping for money' via crowdfunding platforms – an insulting name for fundraising efforts of volunteers. One volunteer's GoFundMe campaign is called a "pimping for money scheme," and another is accused of exploiting donors while providing little real contribution at the front. Within our dataset, it was mentioned four times. This is to substitute for the lack of success back at home and attempts to equate the fighters' presence in Ukraine with prostitution since they receive salaries from the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

## The war criminals

Beyond that, war crimes are also among the accusations directed at the foreign fighters. It is alleged in three cases, and in two of them it is a mere assumption: once working as a humanitarian is compared to "leading a life of crime against the civilian population in Donetsk", and in the

second case, the volunteer's combat experience in Mali apparently means he must have become proficient shooting at "poor farmers," while serving there. In the last of the three cases, a fighter is on a list sought by Russia for war crimes as he was "denounced" by one of his former comrades – a foreign national captured and held by the Russians. The text alludes to a video which allegedly shows the execution of Russian POWs, yet it does not link to the video. However, given Russia's treatment of prisoners of war,[55] the post contains no sources, and the confession attributed to a captured soldier was likely coerced and, as such, carries little significance. On the other hand, in a case further illustrated in a later section of this report, a foreign volunteer explicitly admitted to war crimes in the chat's comments.

## The criminals

General notion of criminality has been seen in two cases, where individuals seem to have a pre-war criminal history, which is cited and is also publicly available as quoted by the media from the given fighter's country of origin.

## The insane

Mental health was mentioned for just one fighter, based on what he has shared of his life. More broadly, allegations of 'delusions' and 'idiocy' are featured often, where mental health stigmatisation is used for insults, but again, no evidence is provided at all.

## The extremists

Lastly, extremism accusations are one of the favourite themes used to discredit all volunteers fighting in Ukraine. Although such an accusation featured only in three cases in our database, stories with such evidence are usually popular in the chat sections of the channels. In all three cases, biographical details are listed, such as membership in a far-right movement in the country of origin, and a nationalist nature of the military unit in which they served in Ukraine, i.e.: Azov, Karpatska Sich, Revanche. As alleged proof, pictures are attached: one shows a volunteer posing with a flag of his country of origin with an imperial eagle on it while doing a Nazi salute; another shows a volunteer posing with what appears to be a flag with a swastika, albeit blurred. Despite the proof being quite convincing in these cases, they remain a minority, both within the observed period and overall among the doxed. Such stories are intentionally exaggerated and used to sweepingly discredit all those fighting for Ukraine as Nazis without any proof. Additionally, Nazism allegations are used especially rigorously against Ukrainian nationals themselves, since the cornerstone of the extremist ideological justification for this war is Ukraine's 'denazification'.

55 UNHR, *Report on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine* (UNHR, 2024), https://ukraine.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/PR41%20Ukraine%202024-12-31.pdf.

# Doxed Respond to the Doxers

Doxing channels are well-known to the foreign fighters' communities, and some of them even appear in the chat of the channel. This is one of the most bitter ironies as such behaviour exposes them to further doxing or, as will be shown, allows the admins to dox more individuals. Moreover, it also constitutes a major breach of operational security, as e.g. "the curse" proverbially got to one of the doxed fighters after he visited the channels and left a digital footprint, which then allowed him to be targeted when he was close to the frontlines. Most fighters do so to react to being doxed, for example, by responding with insults or trying to defend their name – sometimes arguing back against the allegation of extremism, sometimes providing proof for not being in Ukraine anymore, sometimes correcting some details in their biography. In response, chat moderators often try to provoke the fighters by posing questions, asking them to explain their actions, beliefs or facts from their lives. Often, they also ask someone to send a video or photo proof of their identity (like doing a requested gesture on a video), or answer questions about their brothers in arms, potentially to receive more information for further doxing. Within the data collection, the authors recorded instances of such replies, paying attention to the behaviour of the fighters, the moderators, and users. The research team identified at least ten instances where doxed individuals returned to the chat to argue back. However, capturing such stories is complicated, as many accounts are quickly deleted. In most cases, fighters responded by insulting Russia and the Russians, inviting them to come to the frontlines to see the payback. Some fighters just sent a smiling selfie, stating they were not a mercenary, nor dead, and in fact doing good humanitarian work, abstaining from further engagement with the chat.

A similar phenomenon could be observed with regard to the families of fighters. Several times, family members were seen to come to the chat to ask where their relative is, if the admins have any information on their location and whether they were captured by Russians or not. Specifically, that happened for South American fighters, with dialogues taking place in Spanish. In these cases, reactions differed: some began offensively questioning why the individual's relative was fighting for Ukraine, while others shared contacts of Spanish-speaking 'admins' who allegedly could help – or so it was claimed.

Among the most prominent figures who have made an appearance in the doxing chats is Denis Nikitin, also known as Denis Kapustin or White Rex – the founder and head of the RDK, or Russian Volunteer Corps, an ultra-nationalist paramilitary unit of Russian citizens that is fighting on the side of Ukraine. Although not a European national, he has lived in Germany, speaks fluent English and is well-connected in the European far-right milieu and, to some degree, in the American one as well. He is also a prominent foreign fighter, who has been doxed multiple times and is especially hated by Russians as a traitor of his own people.[56] His unit has been involved in diversionary operations in Russia since 2023.[57]

In general doxing posts, the admins tend to be harsher to Russian nationals, accusing them of betraying their motherland and being the shame of their families, in addition to just being foreign fighters. The RDK is usually referred to as RDK clowns. Yet, ironically, the dynamics of Nikitin's interactions with the channels' moderators are not entirely devoid of something akin to a discussion. He is asked for his opinion on different battalions, controversial news, and "how he came to see things the way he does". He was intermittently present in the chat from the beginning of 2023 until the end of 2024, and, for example, made sarcastic comments, replying to some of the doxed who came to the channels to complain or slur the doxers.

56 Nikitin/Kapustin has been profiled many times in the press. See: Kateryna Kovalenko, "Fight for the white race. How the Russian neo-Nazi Denis Nikitin promotes his ideas in Ukraine," *ZABORONA*, June 12, 2020, https://zaborona.com/en/fight-for-the-white-race-how-the-russian-neo-nazi-denis-nikitin-promotes-his-ideas-in-ukraine-and-why-the-azov-regiment/.
57 Jamie Dettmer, "Ukraine embraces far-right Russian 'bad guy' to take the battle to Putin," *POLITICO*, April 3, 2024, https://www.politico.eu/article/the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly-of-the-ukraine-war/.

He enters the discussion about Zelenskyy and remarks that he is a true patriot of his country, in contrast to a "cowardly rat-Putin." In a separate message, he claims that comparing Putin to Hitler is as impossible as comparing "a pygmy [ethnic group with an unusually short average height] to a Titan", because Putin "underlines that Russia – is a multinational country in every interview, imports crowds of migrants, and builds the biggest European mosque in Moscow, – he is a sworn enemy of any white nationalist movement, why would I fight for him?". Nikitin explains a peculiar way in which Russian nationalists rationalise their opposition to Putin and support for Ukraine, while, as it seems, implicitly praising or siding with Hitler and Nazism.

Another instance in which foreigners actively engaged with the doxers is the Chosen Company Unit, referred to in the milieu as the "All Faggot unit" and "Chosen Faggots." At least 40 people who allegedly served in this unit were doxed since the full-scale invasion. The Chosen Company, part of the 59th motorised brigade of the Ukrainian Armed Forces – a unit widely seen as one of the best in the Ukrainian army, had, until recently, as it just announced its dissolution, allegedly comprised of representatives of over 30 nationalities.[58] With the passage of time, the 59th brigade in general and the Chosen Company in particular became one of the preferred alternative units to the International Legion, which has seen a fair share of controversy throughout 2022 and 2023.[59] Members of the Chosen were seen in the channels' chats throughout 2023 and 2024 and often argued with one another while there. Notably, some (former) members actually led the doxers to other victims, apparently as a means to settle scores with former comrades online.

Throughout the chats and on the channels, the Chosen members are made fun of (and make fun of each other) for their appearance ("micropenis"), occupation ("pool cleaner"), history (having domestic violence charges), and sexuality ("being closeted and 'shafting ladyboys'"). There is a great deal of compromising information and unprofessional behaviour that came out of the Chosen Company, perhaps a witness to a lack of operational security and confidentiality standards. Moderators and chat members, on the other hand, tried to further provoke and encourage conflicts while mapping out the information. This, however, appeared to be rather unsuccessful, as most people in the chats got confused in piecing together the stories and matching accounts to identities, sometimes even mistaking regular users for volunteers due to similar names. They reached out to fighters in private, urged them to share further details, and used the information they got to dox further members of the group. Administrators several times urged each other and general users not to delete messages of the volunteers, since it was important to record them for "collecting evidence." This echoes the group's self-declared aim of tracking down combatants for the future. Another potential consequence, and as such, likely also an aim, is the criminal prosecution in Russia following the doxing.

58 Tim Zadorozhnyy, "Ukrainian drone brigade distances itself from ex-volunteer commander's criticism," *The Kyiv Independent*, June 17, 2025, https://kyivindependent.com/ukrainian-drone-brigade-distances-itself-from-ex-volunteer-commanders-criticism/.
59 Kacper Rekawek, "A year of foreign fighting for Ukraine. Catching fish with bare hands?," *Counter Extremism Project,* March 2023, https://www.counterextremism.com/sites/default/files/2023-03/CEP%20Report_A%20Year%20of%20Foreign%20Fighting%20for%20Ukraine_March%202023.pdf.

# Doxing Meets the Russian State

The doxing milieu does not exist in a vacuum, and as such needs to be positioned in its interlinkages and relations to both other online communities and the Russian state itself. Based on ICCT's research, there are multiple points of contact between moderators of such channels and state actors. This allows for a characterisation of the studied channels as embedded into the wider ecosystem of Russian state-sponsored terrorism as articulated in previous ICCT's work on the issue.[60]

One of the things that needs to be understood contextually is that if the doxing milieu were not at least latently approved by the authorities, it would be extremely easy to challenge its existence in Russia. The moderators or 'admins' of the doxing channels might be based outside Russia, and the Russian state has few instruments, for instance, to prosecute or ban such individuals or their media. However, the situation changes dramatically once Russia-based media outlets or, in fact, Telegram channels with large audiences opt to forward the doxing stories or posts. As of 10 January 2025, all bloggers and blogs, including Telegram channels, with an audience larger than 10,000 subscribers must be registered with RKN, a Russian federal service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media, in order to be able to accept ads and donations on their channels.[61] Many of the so-called Z-bloggers, avid war supporters who provide news from the frontline with opinions and analytics of ranging degrees of professionalism, have already registered with the RKN to reinforce their legitimate status and gesture patriotic compliance to the never-ending new laws. Among these bloggers, at least a dozen channels have reposted from the doxing channels many times each, including Moscow's chief propagandist, Vladimir Solovyov. Thus, they provided the indirect seal of approval from the Russian state to the doxing milieu. The doxers were thanked for their "eagle eyes", referred to as "our friends from the OSINT community" and "our dear BROTHERS", but in most cases just hyperlinked as a source of insight and information to yield legitimacy to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine by the so-called "Z-bloggers." Letter Z is the symbol of one's support for the war as (as the Russian military uses it on its vehicles invading Ukraine. Simultaneously, "Z" has also become the symbol of the Russian internal pro-war mobilisation which has pro-fascist connotations.[62] The aforementioned bloggers use data featured on the doxing channels to, for example, claim the death of a foreign fighter or to confirm their identity. Due to this, one can argue that , the doxing communities are not an isolated extremist enclave but a part of a wider Russian pro-war community. The audience of the registered channels, in which posts of the doxing channels have been reposted, ranges from a hundred thousand to over a million subscribers, one of which, for example, is a war reporter from VGTRK, the governmental All-Russian State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company, while another is a reporter of one of the biggest newspapers *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. Another channel that reposted and amplified the doxers on many occasions to its million audience has ties to the infamous Internet Research Agency, which, under Prigozhin's Wagner group, has organised several political influence operations abroad.[63] In effect, this allows the positioning of the doxing milieu as a part of the wider Russian war machine deployed against Ukraine and due to the Z links, to the Russian state extremism narratives and infrastructure.

Beyond this tacit support by amplification, there is more to be said on the identities of those who run the channels. As identified by the TUA group, the likely owner of the biggest of the doxing

60 Kacper Rekawek, *Russian State Terrorism and State Sponsorship of Terrorism, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism*, September 5, 2024, https://icct.nl/publication/russian-state-terrorism-and-state-sponsorship-terrorism.
61 Консультант.Плюс, "Регистрация блогеров с более 10 тыс. подписчиков: опубликован порядок ведения перечня" [Registration for bloggers with more than 10 thousand subscribers: the procedure for maintaining the registry has been published]/, *Konsultant.Plus*, January 5, 2025, https://www.consultant.ru/legalnews/27463/.
62 See: Ian Garner, *Z Generation. Into the Heart of Russia's Fascist Youth*, London: Hurst, 2023.
63 Anastasiia Morozova et.al., "Doxing: When Private Data Becomes a Russian Weapon", *VSquare*, July 9, 2025, https://vsquare.org/doxing-private-data-russian-weapon-ukraine-central-europe-poland-slovakia-attacks/.

channels is the head of one of the departments of the Russian Ministry of Health in her 'day life'.[64] Additionally, the research team was able to observe the growth of followers of the doxing channels. Curiously enough, both have an almost identical growth chart – created at the same time, they grew exponentially within the first year only to stagnate afterwards – except one of the channels is ten times bigger than the other.

**Figure 3. Number of subscribers, channel 1, from their creation to 01 June 2025. Source: ICCT's research observation of the doxing channel, taken from TGStat.com**


**Figure 4. Number of subscribers, channel 2, from their creation to 01 June 2025. Source: ICCT's research observation of the doxing channel, taken from TGStat.com**


Members of the doxing milieu most often cite each other and small radical communities of less than a thousand subscribers. Yet, it also sometimes reposts official information: the bigger doxing channel featured four reposts from the General Persecutor's Office of the Russian

64 United24, "We Tracked the Trackers: Who's Behind Russia's TaNM Doxing Channel? An Interview with the OSINT Team", *United24*, June 2, 2025, https://united24media.com/anti-fake/we-tracked-the-trackers-whos-behind-russias-tanm-doxing-channel-an-interview-with-the-osint-team-8822.

Federation. Interestingly, at the same time, the said office's Telegram channel also posted the news of four pro-Ukraine foreign fighters sentenced in absentia to prison in Russia for their operations in Kursk. Moreover, the Prosecutor's Office adopted the language of the doxers in its external communication: "Lithuanian by passport, Nazi by beliefs and terrorist by criminal case materials."[65] Furthermore, in some cases of doxing, the sensitive information could only be traced back to official military actors who then shared their "catch" with the administrators of the doxing channels. In short, there exists a conveyor belt between the individual soldiers, if not their commanders, and the doxing ecosystem, which, for instance, displays military IDs of the captured foreign fighters for Ukraine or shares videos of the captive fighters.

Other sources of doxing include small communities that are thanked and credited in the bigger doxers' channels. For example, one recurrent character in the comments has his own project in French with similar 'investigations', and is credited for contributions to research and providing the biographies of several French fighters. Some posts allude to documents that provided the information without linking them – possibly large-scale systematic hacks. Others allude to someone within Ukraine or other foreign combatants as sources of information by saying "[she] avoided the media to protect her identity but she forgot that she has good friends." One volunteer, in giving his testimony about doxing, mentions the possibility of such an inside mole who discloses photos and information about people not present online.[66]

65 Генеральная прокуратура Российской Федерации [@Genprocrf], "Окружной военный суд приговорил к 23 годам лишения свободы наемника" [District Military Court Sentences Mercenary to 23 Years in Prison], Telegram, March 12, 2025, https://t.me/genprocrf/4754.
66 Rekawek, "Testimonies," p.6.

# "New" Doxing

At the beginning of February 2025, the doxing Telegram channels shifted toward a new style focusing on large-scale, rapid info dumps instead of providing detailed profiles of individual fighters. Earlier posts tended to spotlight one volunteer at a time, often accompanied by extensive personal background details (for example, full name, address, phone number, career history, and family information). In contrast, the new approach emphasises posting brief summaries or single-line accusations alongside multiple images of different individuals. In at least one of the February posts, a channel administrator declared that since the conflict was allegedly coming to a close, they plan to "change [their] posting system", reserving in-depth narratives for only a few high-profile cases. Nowadays, each post most often features ten people, with their personal photos and one line for each with a name, country (and sometimes city) of origin, and hyperlinks to their social media accounts such as "FB, IG" (Facebook, Instagram). At times, they provide direct links or screenshots of a fighter's Instagram or Facebook, indicating that scraping images and basic personal details from open sources has become a priority, leaving it to readers to interpret or disseminate the personal details further.

Additionally, in all the group doxing posts, instead of the bibliographic details, personal ID numbers are leaked. Usually, these take the form of several long lists of numbers just enclosed in brackets after the hyperlinks. It does not point to the type of ID, i.e. passport, national ID card, driver's license, or a military ID, nor the country of issue. Previously, ID details were not available or mentioned for each of the doxed individuals (and when they were – photos of actual documents were shown), which might suggest that the current doxed details come from the same database or source that has been hacked and leaked. Upon a closer examination, however, the structure of the ID numbers does not always correspond to any format of IDs in Ukraine or in the country of origin of the doxed individual. For example, most ID formats feature some combination of letters and numbers or have a format of 12 to 16 digits, while the posts contain numbers alone or do not conform to any recognised number format. That is to say, while sometimes a number featured could be interpreted as a particular format of an ID document, in most cases, it is impossible to say with confidence that the number leaked would correspond to an actual ID. This might mean that the numbers are either used primarily for intimidation or have been processed from the leaked source with mistakes or carelessly, such as by using photo recognition software. Most probably, the increased availability of ID information for these group posts means the doxers have been increasingly able to tap into the hacked sources or have a 'mole' on the inside of the Ukrainian military, leaking the data.

# Conclusion

Doxing is a practice with more than a decade of history. It has been utilised by both state and non-state actors involved in conflicts, as well as by ideological foes such as the far-right and the far-left. It forms an integral part of the Russo-Ukrainian war and has been perfected by Russia since 2014. Consequently, it is often seen as something ordinary and ridiculed, almost as an integral war experience for the Ukrainian troops, including the foreign fighters.

As this report has demonstrated, however, it is also a phenomenon that allows Russia to mobilise its global network for the purpose of outing and shaming its ideological foes who are dehumanised in specially designated doxing channels on Telegram. These channels provide the doxers with the experience of unity and a chance to participate in Orwellian 'two minutes of hate' against their real or imaginary foes. Moreover, the channels also coax the doxed into responding and celebrate when they suffer injuries as a result of their actions in Ukraine or leave a digital trace while arguing back with the doxers. There seems to exist an ecosystem linking the doxing with some Russian actions on the battlefield, which specifically target the doxed. It is far from centrally controlled, and its actions at times hint at its haphazard nature, but it is clear that doxing is an integral part of the Russian war effort. Echoes of this are clearly on display in the government controlled or government sanctioned Russian 'media', which quote from and congratulate the doxers on their successes.

All of this suggests a rather bleak and dangerous future for the doxed and for their countries of origin. Russia is currently involved in sabotage and diversionary or, effectively put, a terrorist campaign against Europe, and it could utilise its experience of blackmailing via doxing or the threat thereof as a weapon to recruit potential attackers in the West. It is already doing so in Ukraine, as demonstrated by a recent foiled plot, where a 14-year-old girl was manipulated into attempting a suicide bombing near Ternopil's police station by her nude photos.[67] Russia could benefit from such experiences in Ukraine to augment its violent campaign in Europe. In this sense, one could expect the aforementioned doxing channels to be of future use for Moscow and witness their celebration of more victims winning "tickets to Bandera."

67 Служба безпеки України [@SBUkr], "СБУ та Нацполіція затримали 14-річну агентку рф, яку рашисти змусили вчинити теракт у Тернополі: ворог шантажував дівчину її «відвертими» фото" [The SBU and the National Police detained a 14-year-old Russian agent who was forced by rashists to commit a terrorist attack in Ternopil: the enemy blackmailed the girl with her "candid" photos], Telegram, March 21, 2025, https://t.me/SBUkr/14402.

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Kacper Rekawek, PhD is a Senior Research Fellow and Programme Lead (Current and Emerging Threats) at the ICCT. Prior, Kacper worked on issues related to countering terrorism and countering violent extremism while in academia (at C-Rex, Center for Research on Extremism at the University of Oslo; the Handa Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at the University of St. Andrews; SWPS University in Warsaw + a PhD at Queen's University Belfast), think tanks (the Polish Institute of International Affairs, PISM + secondments to RUSI, London and Al Ahram Centre, Cairo) and the third sector (Countering Extremism Project in New York/Berlin and GLOBSEC in Bratislava). Rekawek has successfully led multinational research projects related to international security in general and terrorism and countering terrorism in particular.

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Julian Lanchès is a Junior Research Fellow for the Current and Emerging Threats Programme at the ICCT. He specialises in the far right and Islamism, with his work focusing on different manifestations of extremism and terrorism online, the role of disinformation, propaganda, and identity in violent radicalisation, terrorist actors' strategies and modus operandi, as well as the mainstreaming of extremism.At ICCT, Julian has contributed to projects on jihadist online propaganda, the nexus between terrorism and migration, borderline content on social media, the role of gender in radicalisation, and doxxing in extremist contexts. Before joining ICCT, he conducted research on pro-Kremlin disinformation strategies and online hate campaigns at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD). Additionally, he examined prison radicalisation at the Global Network on Extremism & Technology (GNET).

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Laura Winkelmuller Real joined ICCT in August 2024 as part of the Current and Emerging Threats Programme, where she contributed research on the involvement of Western foreign fighters in the Russo-Ukrainian war, disinformation campaigns in Europe by malign state actors, and the rise of anti-Semitism in online spaces. Before joining ICCT, Laura served as the Policy Lead for a European political party in Spain, where she focused on policy development, stakeholder engagement, and strategic collaboration. She holds a BA in Political Science with a specialisation in International Law and is pursuing an MSc in Crisis and Security Management at Leiden University, with a focus on the Governance of Radicalism, Extremism, and Terrorism.


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