



# WHO GETS THE WEAPONS SENT TO UKRAINE ON LEND- LEASE?

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Hardly a day passes by without Europeans and Americans hearing about new statements coming from Ukrainian politicians. "We will win, we will stop Putin!" they say, and then ask for more arms. Ukraine has already received thousands of man-portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, along with hundreds of armored vehicles and howitzers. But it keeps asking for more. The Ukrainian military loses these weapons on the battlefield, where they fall into the hands of the Russians, who recently put seized Ukrainian weapons [on display](#) in the recently captured Lisichansk.

But many tons of military ammunition and hundreds of weapons never reach the frontlines, because they end up in the hands of numerous resellers, who sell them on the "black Internet." These days, in Kyiv, you can get everything at a reasonable price, from a pistol all the way to a self-propelled howitzer.

The protracted conflict in Donbass has long been one of the main sources of weapons for numerous European extremists and Islamic terrorists, but now the sale of arms has become completely uncontrolled. On the very first day of the Russian invasion, the Ukrainian authorities were already offering machineguns and rifles to just about everyone. Some of these weapons immediately ended up on the black market. Then followed offers for the sale of body armor, night vision devices, grenade launchers and [MANPADS](#).

Such total corruption Europe has not been able to defeat, despite all its efforts to bring Ukraine into the EU. Ukrainian military supply officers are selling everything. The Russians recently announced that several new French and German self-propelled howitzers, delivered in perfect condition to Russian design bureaus for study, were not seized in battle, but bought at a big discount on the frontlines. But then this is not new, as some of the volunteer units of the Donbass separatists have long been actively buying loads of weapons and equipment from across the frontline.

The Europeans don't really care much about who will be firing the Javelins, Zelensky's soldiers or Donetsk separatists, as long as such weapons stay on the battlefield. European- and US-supplied weapons are up for grabs by anyone. "Stingers" can be had for a price ranging from several hundred to several thousand dollars, paid in cryptocurrency. With some patience, you can find reliable suppliers.

MANPADS are an ideal weapon for a terrorist attack—not a single civilian aircraft taking off or landing can be safe. Each rocket-launcher delivered to Ukraine comes with instructions in Ukrainian and English, in case it falls into the hands of an inexperienced soldier.

Bringing such weapons from Ukraine to elsewhere is a breeze, since with a good kickback the corrupt Ukrainian border officials will not only fail to inspect a particular car, but will also secure their Polish or Slovak colleagues' agreement to let it through unhindered. So, perhaps at this very moment, somewhere outside the airports of Paris or Berlin, some ISIS radicals or militants of half-forgotten anarchist groups, or both, are taking up position. How many MANPADS sold in Ukraine will be enough to bring all air traffic across Europe to a standstill? Two, three, maybe five?

And how many weapons will the Islamists in Syria and Iraq get from Ukraine—including the very types capable of taking out NATO aircraft and armored vehicles of the renascent Iraqi army, which the US has been trying hard to prevent from falling into extremists' hands? These are very uncomfortable questions for Europe and the US. In Western media, Ukrainians are portrayed as warriors of light, and few people in the US, Canada and Europe are really aware of the scope of corruption and theft that exists in Ukraine.

It would make a lot of sense to have the strictest possible electronic control over each potentially dangerous weapon, and sending EU representatives to Ukraine to oversee its use. But how many people will volunteer for this job? It would be more realistic to tighten controls along the entire length of Ukraine's border with European countries, all the way to sending European representatives to Ukrainian customs. Even better would be to cancel Lend-Lease and other arms deliveries to Ukraine and leave the country (which is selling weapons it desperately needs to maintain its independent status) to its own devices.

## **Arms Transfer System**

The Ukrainian army started total mobilization at the beginning of the Russian special operation. However, Russian-speaking residents of the East do not want to die for the Kiev elites. Many of them do not care who controls the regions in which they live. In Russia, salaries are significantly higher than in Ukraine and there is no language harassment.

The Russians have created a very profitable loophole for those who do not want to fight for anyone. It is even strange that they have not yet posted banners in the Ukrainian segment of the Internet—"Get Russian citizenship and an apartment in the Moscow region, in exchange for a Western self-propelled gun."

## How the Loophole Works

On the radio wave of the Ukrainian units, Russian negotiators persuade the artillerymen and tankers to advance to the indicated points and surrender with their equipment. In exchange—Russian documents, freedom and some money. The "[Caesar](#)," "[HIMARS](#)" or [PzH 2000](#) brought over is considered sufficient proof of loyalty that the military personnel who surrendered with such equipment would avoid internet and prison camps. With new documents, such Ukrainians start a new life somewhere in a cozy Ural city, far from the front line, and even send money in Bitcoin to their families so that they can come out to them.

Prices vary and are negotiated. For 2 "Caesars" the Russians gave \$120,000, although their Ukrainian "partners" desperately bargained and asked for 2 million. However, freedom and Russian passports are also a significant part of the price paid. But one PzH 2000 self-propelled gun, according to various sources, cost the Russians more than \$100,000. With this money (although the dollar has fallen significantly in value), you can buy a one-room apartment in the Moscow region. True, there is a significant problem—Russia cannot use the most interesting samples immediately after their purchase, as this poses a threat to the families of the military, who transferred such weapons.

Ukraine's Western allies are well aware of such facts. In Kyiv, they are trying to fight defectors by creating detachments and even forming political commissars. However, a few days under Russian shelling greatly change the worldview of both local nationalists and regular officers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The result is a paradoxical situation. Part of the American Lend-Lease is being bought up cheaply by the Russians. Will Kyiv and its allies be able to find other ways to protect Western weapons from resale at the front? So far, it seems unlikely.

However, in addition to the Russians, Ukrainians also sell weapons to interested groups from the Middle East.

This is precisely why Ukrainian nationalists are firmly holding Odessa, forming their camps near it. These are fighters of Nazi battalions who work closely with foreign mercenaries who know quick ways to sell weapons.

Second: the weapons' route passes through those territories that largely ignore such traffic. This is only

natural, as they get a significant percentage for transit.

Third: Albania is the most suitable starting point both in logistics and in terms of the presence of serious criminal structures. Also, according to operational data, the smugglers have the logistical support of the Albanian intelligence service.

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