

# Amnesty International Diverts Attention Away from Ukrainian Armed Forces Responsibility for War Crimes

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity, US NATO War Agenda](#)

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*On 05 September, Amnesty International, a non-governmental organisation focused on human rights, published "Ukraine: Mounting evidence of war crimes and Russian involvement" <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/ukraine-mounting-evidence-war-crimes-and-russian-involvement-2014-09-05>*

Analysis of the 738-word Amnesty article reveals clear bias in the NGO's reporting on the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Amnesty makes more than twice the effort to place blame for human rights abuses and possible war crimes on separatist forces and "Russian troops" (380 words) than on Ukrainian government forces (140 words).

Amnesty explicitly accuses separatists of "torture," a major criminal offense under international law. Amnesty makes no mention of "torture" in association with the regular Ukrainian armed forces or those designated 'bad apples,' the Aidar Battalion.

Salil Shetty, Amnesty International's Secretary General, states unequivocally:

"Our evidence shows that Russia is fuelling the conflict, both through direct interference and by supporting the separatists in the East. Russia must stop the steady flow of weapons and other support to an insurgent force heavily implicated in gross human rights violations."

The evidence presented to support these accusations is a "series of satellite images commissioned by Amnesty International." The images appear to have been provided by a non-profit organization called The American Association for the Advancement of Science. According to its website, AAAS analyzes high-resolution satellite images collected by "publicly accessible commercial satellites." In other words, the images come from the United States.

Shetty delivers the punchline:

"The Kremlin has repeatedly denied any involvement in the fighting in Ukraine, but satellite imagery and testimony gathered by the organization provide compelling evidence that the fighting has burgeoned into what Amnesty International now considers an international armed conflict."

Predictably, Amnesty has declared what complicit NATO officials and compliant mainstream media have long been insisting, without the benefit of evidence: Russia has 'invaded' Ukraine.

On 07 September, Amnesty published a briefing on "Abuses and war crimes by the Aidar Volunteer Battalion in the north Luhansk region." The briefing contained carefully worded language that depicts the Ukrainian government forces as lawful actors, the 'good guys' in the conflict:

"The Ukrainian authorities cannot afford to replicate in the areas they retake, the lawlessness and abuses that have prevailed in separatist-held areas. The failure to eliminate abuses and possible war crimes by volunteer battalions risks significantly aggravating tensions in the east of the country and undermining the proclaimed intentions of the new Ukrainian authorities to strengthen and uphold the rule of law more broadly."

The coup regime in Kiev is throwing its most aggressive and abusive Nazi volunteer battalions under the bus to preserve its image. The very forces that enabled the Yatsenyuk junta seize and hold power in Kiev in February are being sacrificed as the requisite 'few bad apples,' thereby freeing the mainstream media to focus all its attention on the 'real' baddies: "Russian troops" that support "an insurgent force heavily implicated in gross human rights violations" in Eastern Ukraine, according to Amnesty.

On 08 September, Amnesty published an article declaring that "Ukraine must stop ongoing abuses and war crimes by pro-Ukrainian volunteer forces." Amnesty's statements appear to be part of a dedicated effort to insulate the regular Ukrainian armed forces from accusations of abuses and possible war crimes, which may include Ukrainian Air Force responsibility for the 17 July downing of Malaysia Air flight MH-17.

Ukrainian Air Force Mig-29 "Fulcrum" and Su-27 "Flanker" jet fighter aircraft have dominated the skies over Eastern Ukraine since the early days of Kiev's 'anti-terrorist operation.' The separatist forces have no aircraft and no functioning surface-to-air missile systems capable of striking aircraft above 11,000 feet. No Russian Federation combat aircraft have flown over Eastern Ukraine.

Mig-29 and Su-27 both have service ceilings near 60,000 feet and are easily capable of high speed combat maneuvers at MH-17's reported cruising altitude of 33,000 feet. Both jet aircraft are armed with the GSh-301 single-barreled, recoil operated 30mm cannon, which alone is capable of causing explosive decompression in a commercial passenger airliner. In combination with a laser rangefinding/targeting system, the GSh-301 is a powerful and extremely accurate weapon, capable of destroying a target with as few as three to five rounds. The gun's maximum effective range against aerial targets is 200 to 800 m.

Ukrainian combat aircraft losses in Eastern Ukraine include one MiG-29 shot down near the village of Zhdanivka, 40 kilometres northeast of Donetsk, on 7 August 2014; and one MiG-29 shot down near Luhansk on 17 August 2014. No Su-27 combat losses have been reported so far.

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