

Blowback: Italian Police Bust Azov-tied Nazi Cell Planning Terror Attacks

The arrest of Italian neo-Nazis affiliated with the Ukrainian Azov Battalion highlights the terrifying potential for blowback from the Ukraine proxy war

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Italian police [announced](#) a series of raids against the neo-Nazi Order of Hagal organization. Accused of stockpiling weapons and planning terror attacks, the group has established operational ties to the Ukrainian Azov Battalion.

Five members of an Italian neo-Nazi organization known as the "Order of Hagal" were arrested on November 15th while an additional member remains wanted by authorities. He happened to be in Ukraine, fighting Russian forces alongside the Azov Battalion, which has been formally integrated into the Ukrainian military.

The "Hagal" members are accused of plotting terrorist attacks on civilian and police targets. A sixth member of the Hagal group, now considered a fugitive, is in Ukraine and embedded with the Azov Battalion, a neo-Nazi paramilitary group that has been incorporated into the Ukrainian National Guard.

Members of the Order of Hagal reportedly maintained "direct and frequent" contacts over Telegram with not just the Azov Battalion, but also the neo-Nazi Ukrainian military formations [Right Sector](#) and [Centuria](#), "probably in the view of possible recruitment into the ranks of these fighting groups," according to [Italian media](#).

The police investigation was launched in 2019 and has included extensive computer searches and wiretapping; tactics which have revealed members of the group's intent on carrying out violent acts in Italy.

Scoperta un'associazione sovversiva di stampo neonazista, negazionista e suprematista, arresti e perquisizioni in operazione [#Digos](#) di Napoli con collaborazione della Direzione centrale Polizia prevenzione [#DCPP](#) e Servizio [#Poliziapostale](#) [#esercisempre](#) [#15novembre](#) pic.twitter.com/QaFvXQTTv4

— Polizia di Stato (@poliziadistato) [November 15, 2022](#)

One of the arrested members, Giampiero Testa, was reportedly “dangerously close to far-right Ukrainian Nationalist groups” and was planning an attack on a police station in Marigliano in Naples, according to wiretaps. The fugitive [Azov fighter](#), Anton Radomsky, is a Ukrainian citizen who has lived in Italy but is currently fighting on behalf of the Ukrainian armed forces. Authorities say Radomsky planned to attack the “Volcano Buono” shopping mall in Naples.

In a January 2021 wiretap, Testa [said](#) he “would make a massacre like the one in New Zealand, but I wouldn’t go to the blacks, I would go to the barracks in Marigliano.” He was referring to the New Zealand mosque shooter who claimed to have visited Ukraine and wore a Nazi Sonnenrad, or “black sun” patch on his flak jacket as he slew 51 worshippers. The symbol, as the New York Times noted in 2019, is “commonly used by the Azov Battalion, a Ukrainian neo-Nazi paramilitary organization.”

In February 2021, Testa ranted over the phone, stating “Like [racist Christchurch mass shooter] Tarrant... tututututu. In the Marigliano barracks. Boom boom, I killed them all.”

Around the same time, police monitoring the Order of Hagal organization [seized](#) “soft air weapons” that could be “easily modified to fire authentic bullets,” ammunition, tactical gear, and even a grenade launcher. The group is also accused of conducting paramilitary trainings in Naples and Caserta as well as seminars promoting white supremacy and Holocaust denial.

Footage of the arrests broadcast by the news channel Sky Tg24 shows long knives, a Nordic-style axe, a bat emblazoned with the words “Leader Mussolini,” a swastika flag, a gas mask, an Azov Battalion t-shirt and “Valhalla Express,” a memoir by an Azov fighter.

The TG24 report is below.

But Ukraine is not the only country to have been visited by members of the Order of Hagal; “some members” also traveled to Israel to train in Krav Maga and the use of long and short weapons,” according to police officials. In fact, they were even given diplomas for completing the training.

The police operation spanned thirteen provinces in Italy and has included “26 personal, home and computer searches,” according to the police [press release](#) announcing the arrests.

Among those arrested for “the crime of association with the purpose of terrorism or subversion of the democratic order” are Maurizio Ammendola, the founder of the group, its vice president Michele Rinaldi, and members Giampiero Testa and Massimiliano Mariano.

The fifth arrested member, Fabio Colarossi, is accused of spreading neo-Nazi propaganda.

While Nazism has found a safe space in the Ukrainian armed forces, the arrests and warrants against the members of the Order of Hagal that planned terror attacks suggests the potential for blowback from NATO's Ukraine proxy war, as battle-hardened, ideologically extreme veterans encouraged by Western governments and supported with US and EU aid return home to cities across Europe.

"The high availability of weapons during the current conflict will result in the proliferation in illicit arms in the post-conflict phase," Interpol Secretary General Juergen Stock has [warned](#).

As [The Grayzone has reported](#), a 2022 Department of Homeland Security document acknowledged that "Ukrainian nationalist groups including the Azov Movement are actively recruiting racially or ethnically motivated violent extremist white supremacists to join various neo-Nazi volunteer battalions in the war against Russia" but noted a key intelligence gap: "What kind of training are foreign fighters receiving in Ukraine that they could possibly proliferate in US based militia and white nationalist groups?"

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