

Some Weapons Destined for Ukraine Ending Up with Finnish Criminals

Weapons sent to Ukraine are finding their way across Europe

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Organized crime is on the rise in Finland, and there's a high demand for weapons. Criminal networks have already established weapon smuggling routes between Finland and Poland.

Europol, the European police cooperation organization, is reported to have warned in the summer that armed criminal groups could soon start smuggling weapons from Ukraine to EU member states.

According to **Christer Ahlgren**, superintendent of the Organized Crime Intelligence Unit of the Finnish National Bureau of Investigation (Keskusrikospoliisi, KRP), Europol's prediction has already become a reality in Finland:

"We are seeing signs that these weapons are already in Finland, (...) and we have already seen signs that weapons delivered to Ukraine have been found in Finland," Ahlgren says.

The Finnish law enforcement official said this mostly means handguns and heavier weapons used by the military, such as machine guns. However, they know from their foreign colleagues that there is also great demand for explosive grenades and military drones, and "in other parts of Europe, we have also found anti-tank missiles from Ukraine."

There are fears that the Javelin anti-tank missile could also make its way into the hands of Europe's criminals. The missile was one of the keys to the Ukrainians' successful defense in the early stages of the war, and the U.S. and Britain have been supplying Ukraine with countless quantities of this easy-to-handle weapon, which is highly effective against tanks. The missile reportedly appeared on the dark web for sale this summer, but there is no documented case of it being used in any attack outside of Ukraine.

Rifles, handguns and other weapons from Ukraine are not only landing in Finland, but have also turned up in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands

The smuggling routes are set

Ahlgren says that “the routes, processes and connections for the illegal smuggling of weapons from Ukraine to Finland are already in place.” The arms are mostly transported via the country’s international ports, which are considerably less protected than airports, and the smugglers are criminal gangs, such as the big international motorcycle gangs. One of them, Bandidos MC Ahlgren, which is also active in Finland, has branches in all major Ukrainian cities.

Yle [reported](#) on Sunday that Europol is already expecting criminal gangs to set up arms depots near Ukraine’s borders; it also knows of Ukrainian refugees who have paid for transportation to the border with weapons rather than money.

According to Ahlgren, the amount of weapons in question is much greater than during the Yugoslav war, when gangs in Sweden stockpiled weapons. Now, as a result of illegal migration, “we have clans based on blood ties and ethnicity that are engaged in criminal activity.”

Ahlgren said he believes that while supplying weapons to Ukraine is the right thing to do, it has consequences.

“Ukraine has received a tremendous amount of arms, and that’s a good thing, but we will be dealing with these weapons for decades, and we are paying the price here,” he said. “The decision-makers have forgotten that the war in Ukraine has also increased the workload of the police.”

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Featured image: A Ukrainian soldier holding a Javelin missile system. (Image via the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine)

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