

Ukraine: “Thugs R Us”. Western-Backed Extremists’ Intimidation Techniques

By [RT](#)

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Regional parliament members in a Ukrainian city held a session at gunpoint when one of the radical nationalist opposition leaders came to them, armed to the teeth, as the law of power seems to be prevailing in the tumultuous post-coup country. (Watch video [here](#).)

A Kalashnikov appears to be the best argument in a debate for Aleksandr Muzychko, an activist of the nationalist “Pravy Sektor” (Right Sector) movement and one of the Maidan’s most prominent and controversial leaders.

On Tuesday he came to the Rovno regional parliament, where he threatened the regional MPs with a machine-gun and a number of other weapons as he demanded a decision on granting apartments to the families of protesters who were killed during last week’s violent clashes in central Kiev.

“Who wants to take away my machine-gun? Who wants to take away my gun? Who wants to take away my knives? I dare you!” Muzychko said.

His lobbying methods have apparently been imported from Chechnya, where the man, aka Sashko [Bilyi](#), was fighting alongside separatist forces in the 1990s. He now boasts of having demolished Russian tanks and killed Russian soldiers.

While Sashko Bilyi was intimidating the Rovno MPs into signing bills, his fellow activists in Kiev were putting pressure on Central Election Commission (CEC) officials ahead of the early elections in May.

“Pravy Sektor” members together with activists from another nationalist movement, “Spilna Sprava”(Common Cause), have demanded a complete replacement of staff at the CEC, as well as changes in electoral law. The movements are also calling for the prosecution of those MPs they claim were involved in “rigging” previous elections in Ukraine, despite the results being recognized internationally.

“The corrupt, criminal composition of the CEC must be completely replaced,” Spilna Sprava activist Aleksandr Shevchenko said in a statement, adding that there was no point in holding elections under the watchful eye of the “world’s best election cheats.” In order to guarantee “fair and transparent elections,” activists will stay in CEC offices to “swiftly inform the Maidan” about any suspicious activity, he said, adding that he was not trying to “exert any pressure.”

Officials across the country have been resigning from the former ruling Party of Regions

fearing retribution, as events on the ground suggest that Ukrainian radicals have been resorting to scaremongering to suppress counter-revolutionary feelings.

On Monday, the prosecutor's office in the Volyn region in western Ukraine and members of the Party of Regions in the adjacent Rovno region said they were being pressured and urged to resign by radicals.

A statement by the 24 employees of the office in Volyn says that radicals from the Right Sector intimidated them with *"physical threats to them and their families... by displaying firearms, entering premises of public institutions, including the prosecutor's office and demanding the dismissal of management."*

Deputy Chairman of the Party of Regions in Rivne, Alla Ivoylovoy, said that *"armed masked youths burst into the homes"* of the party's members, demanding a list of activists who *"participated in the so-called anti-Maidan protest, threatening physical violence and arson of houses."*

The Ukrainian Communist Party, which has been closely aligned with Yanukovich's Party of Regions, has also been under attack. The house of the party's leader, Pyotr Simonenko, was set on fire on Monday.

Межигорье в миниатюре: под Киевом сожгли шикарное имение сына Симоненко (ФОТО,... <http://t.co/UIP9Xi876B> pic.twitter.com/9ZEIjABskH

— Дмитрий Перфильев (@RachaelBerridg1) [25 Février 2014](#)

Simonenko's wife, Oksana Vashenko, told Radio Svoboda that assailants broke into their house to seek incriminating evidence against her husband. Unable to find any evidence, men brought *"several boxes"* of Molotov cocktails into the house to burn the residence down, to *"hide the fact that nothing was found there,"* Vashenko said.

The party said it was concerned with the recent burst of *"anti-communist psychosis"* and the *"acts of vandalism and violence"* which resulted in toppling the statues to former Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin and monuments to the 'Soviet Soldier' commemorating the collective sacrifice of the Soviet army fighting against Nazi forces.

The country's new leadership, Communist Party officials said, is not condemning these actions, while neo-Nazi movements are on the rise in the country.

The former head of the Presidential Administration, Andrey Klyuyev has suffered a gunshot wound to his leg. He was attacked on his way back to Kiev after submitting his resignation personally to Yanukovich in the Crimea, his press secretary Artyom Petrenko said. Klyuyev's house was raided twice by a crowd of unknown assailants earlier on February 23 and 24, Potrenko said. The former official is now being treated in hospital with a non-life-threatening injury.

Molotov cocktails for churches

The coup has heightened religious tensions in Ukraine, where the majority of Orthodox churches are subordinate to the Moscow Patriarchate, while some pledge loyalty to the Kiev

one, established in 1992 and unrecognized by Eastern Orthodox communion.

Inspired by the anti-Russian feeling of the Maidan protests, radical activists have been coming up with all kinds of threats to Orthodox churches under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate.

On Tuesday, a group of 10 men arrived at the Diocese of Sumy Ukrainian Orthodox Church to force the clergy to pray for the activists in Ukraine.

“They said they are outraged that the clergy of Sumy diocese are allegedly not praying for the victims of the Maidan,” Itar-Tass reported a statement from the diocese as saying.

Archbishop Eulogy met with one of the men who tried to convince the bishop of the need for joint worship with the Archbishop Methodius of Kiev Patriarchate at the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral.

“Having received clarification that canonical rules do not allow him to do so, the men said that the building of the diocese and the cathedral will be bombarded with Molotov cocktails,” the diocese’s press service said.

In a separate incident on the same day, the entrance to the famous Pochaevsky Monastery in western Ukraine was blocked by activists belonging to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under the Kiev Patriarchate.

“Around noon, six buses drove up to the monastery,” said the monk. *“They blocked the entrance, not letting the pilgrims in, people are alarmed.”* The group tried to enter the monastery but were prevented from doing so because of their *“aggressive behavior.”*

The Kiev Patriarchate eventually had to deny rumors that there was a plan to seize churches of the Moscow Patriarchate.

“The Kiev Patriarchate is not calling for attacks on or for seizures of churches under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate. We have been calling on our brothers and sisters in the Moscow Patriarchate to unite into one manorial Orthodox church. That’s why we are not interested in instigating enmity in those we wish to unite with,” the Kiev Patriarchate said in a statement, Interfax reported.

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