

FALSE
NARRATIVE

The U.S. is recruiting ISIS mercenaries to fight in Ukraine

The False Narrative

During the Russia-Ukraine war, the U.S. has been recruiting members of international terrorist organizations including ISIS to fight in Ukraine. Approximately 60 ISIS militants, aged 20- to 25, were released from Syria's prisons and sent for combat training at the American military base in Al-Tanf, Syria, which was turned into a "terrorist hub."

The Facts

In May 2022, Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) issued a statement claiming that the U.S. was recruiting members of international terrorist organizations, including ISIS, to fight in Ukraine. The SVR alleged that approximately 60 ISIS militants, aged 20 to 25, were released from prisons in Syria and transferred to an American military base at Al-Tanf, in southern Syria.

SVR's claim was repeated by Russian state media, including Sputnik News and RT, as well as by China state-affiliated media such as People's Daily and Xinhua. Iranian news outlets published similar reports. For example, Iran's Mehr News Agency claimed that the base at Al-Tanf and the surrounding area "have turned into a kind of terrorist 'hub,' where up to 500 ISIL [another name for ISIS] and other terrorists can be 'retrained' simultaneously."

The SVR and the other outlets did not provide any evidence for this claim, which was denied by the Pentagon in a statement to NewsGuard. “This report is completely false,” the Pentagon said in an unsigned statement issued to NewsGuard, referring to the SVR’s statement claiming that the U.S. recruited ISIS militants to fight in Ukraine.

Indeed, news reports, U.S. defense officials, and analysts have said that it is the Kremlin, not the U.S, that is recruiting Syrian and other foreign fighters to participate in the war against Ukraine.

The U.S. base in Al-Tanf, located in Syria near the Iraqi and Jordanian borders, was established in 2016 to train Syrian opposition forces to counter Islamic State militants, according to the International Crisis Group, a non-governmental organization that says it aims to “prevent wars and shape policies that will build a more peaceful world.” Approximately 200 U.S. forces are stationed at Al-Tanf, according to a May 2022 report by the Pentagon’s Inspector General.

There is no evidence that the base was turned into a “terrorist hub” to train ISIS militants during the Russia-Ukraine war. “I have seen no evidence or even reputable claim that the U.S, is recruiting members of international terrorist organizations to fight in Ukraine,” Martha Crenshaw, a senior fellow at Stanford’s Center for International Security and Cooperation, told NewsGuard in a May 2022 email. “I do not know about Russia, although I have also seen reports of recruitment.”

On March 6, 2022, The Wall Street Journal reported that Moscow was recruiting Syrian fighters experienced in urban combat to help capture Ukraine’s capital, Kyiv. Asked during a March 7, 2022, press conference to comment on the Wall Street Journal reports, Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby told reporters: “We do believe that the accounts of them — the Russians seeking Syrian fighters to augment their forces in Ukraine — we believe there is truth to that.”

In April 2022, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a U.K.-based war monitoring group, reported that 40,000 Syrians signed up to join Russian forces in Ukraine. The group reported that 22,000 Syrians registered with the Russian military and that 18,000 signed up with the Wagner Group, a Russian military contractor.

Written by: [McKenzie Sadeghi](#)

Edited by: [Sophia Tewa](#), [Eric Effron](#)

Examples of this False Narrative ⓘ

- <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/The-US-Recruits-Terrorists-to-Fight-in-Ukraine-Russia-Says-20220525-0007.html>

““Volunteers” from 52 countries are responsible for making their own way to the Poland-Ukraine border, where they sign a contract and are assigned to a combat unit.”

05/24/2022

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- <https://sputniknews.com/20220304/nato-countries-sending-terrorist-fighters-to-ukraine-russian-intelligence-service-warns-1093592308.html>

“Terrorists Set for Deployment in Donbass Were Trained at US Al-Tanf Base, Russian Intelligence Warns”

 12.5 / 100 fr.sputniknews.africa (en_ALL)

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▶ State-Controlled Source

- <https://www.hindustantimes.com/videos/putins-isis-claim-about-ukraine-war-real-kyiv-s-commander-with-islamic-state-insignia-spotted-101676528895142.html>

“As per the Russian agency SVR, U.S. is actively recruiting jihadists affiliated to Al-Qaeda and ISIS and is training them at a U.S. base in Syria to attack Russia.”

- <https://sana.sy/en/?p=265315>

“Foreign Intelligence Service in Russia said that al-Tanf base located in the Syrian area controlled by the US occupation has witnessed training for terrorists affiliated to ISIS for moving them later to Ukraine and using them in Dontas”

▶ State-Controlled Source

- https://tass.com/world/1452247?utm_source=google.com&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=google.com&utm_referrer=google.com

“The United States is actively attracting militants of the international terrorist organization Islamic State”

▶ State-Controlled Source

- <http://en.people.cn/n3/2022/0526/c90000-10101703.html>

“The United States is actively recruiting members of international terrorist organizations, including the Islamic State (ISIS), as mercenaries to fight in Ukraine”

▶ State-Controlled Source

- <https://english.news.cn/europe/20220526/5402c4ad6b6a4046b2090465a68a9493/c.html>

“The United States is actively recruiting members of international terrorist organizations, including the Islamic State (ISIS), as mercenaries to fight in Ukraine”

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▶ State-Controlled Source

- <https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14010228000293/Rssia-Reveals-US-Recris-Daesh-Terrriss-Figh-in-Ukraine>

“Russia Reveals US Recruits Daesh Terrorists to Fight in Ukraine”

▶ State-Controlled Source

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- <http://svr.gov.ru/smi/2022/05/o-vzaimodeystvii-ssha-s-terroristicheskimi-grupp-irovkami.htm>

“The United States is actively recruiting even members of international terrorist organizations as mercenaries to participate in hostilities in Ukraine, including the Islamic State (ISIS) group banned in the Russian Federation.”

▶ State-Controlled Source

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- <https://en.mehrnews.com/news/186940/US-training-ISIL-terrorists-at-Syria-to-sent-to-Ukraine>

“US training ISIL terrorists at Syria to sent to Ukraine”

 5/100 [en.mehrnews.com \(en_US\)](https://en.mehrnews.com/en_US)

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- <https://srbin.info/en/svet/americka-baza-u-siriji-centar-za-obuku-terorista-koji-ce-se-boriti-u-ukrajini/>

↳

“The United States is actively recruiting militants from the terrorist organization Daesh to take part in the conflict in Ukraine as mercenaries”

 12.5 / 100 [srbin.info \(en_US\)](https://srbin.info/en_US)

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- <https://www.veteranstoday.com/2022/03/04/russia-us-deploys-syrian-isis-al-tanf-terrorists-to-ukraine-confirmed/>

“US Deploys Syrian ISIS ‘Al-Tanf’ Terrorists to Ukraine (confirmed)”

 22.5 / 100 [vtforeignpolicy.com \(en_US\)](https://vtforeignpolicy.com/en_US)

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“The Al-Tanf base, which is under the control of the American occupation forces in Syria, witnessed the preparation and training of terrorists affiliated with ISIS in order to transfer them to Ukraine”

 7.5 / 100 [tasnimnews.com \(en_US\)](https://tasnimnews.com/en_US)

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- <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171228-russia-accuses-us-of-training-ex-daesh-militants-in-syria/>

 57 / 100 [middleeastmonitor.com \(en_GB\)](https://middleeastmonitor.com/en_GB)

- <https://newsrnd.com/news/2022-03-04-russian-intelligence--the-us-military-trained-terrorists-at-al-tanf-base-to-transport-them-to-ukraine.rkb9cxT1W5.htm>

“The Russian Foreign Intelligence confirmed that the Al-Tanf base, which is under the control of the US occupation forces in Syria, witnessed the preparation and training of terrorists affiliated with ISIS”

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- <https://www.profilenews.com/en/moscow-washington-sends-isis-elements-from-syria-to-ukraine/>

“Russian intelligence has accused US forces based in Syria of turning the Al – Tanf military base south – east of Syria into a training center for ISIS terrorists to be transferred to Ukraine to fight Russian forces”

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- <https://www.islamtimes.org/en/news/994796/us-recruits-isis-terrorists-to-fight-in-ukraine-russian-intel-says>

“The US has been “actively recruiting” terrorists to fight in Ukraine”

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- <https://www.punjabnewsline.com/news/us-recruits-terrorists-to-fight-in-ukraine-russian-intel-43381>

“US recruits terrorists to fight in Ukraine: Russian intel”

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- <https://www.independent.co.ug/russia-says-u-s-recruiting-terrorists-to-fight-in-ukraine/>

“The United States is actively recruiting members of international terrorist organization”

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- <https://chernayakobra.ru/us-recruits-isis-terrorists-to-fight-in-ukraine/>

“US recruits ISIS terrorists to fight in Ukraine
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- https://en.abna24.com/news/us-training-isis-terrorists-at-syria-to-sent-to-ukraine_1258812.html

“The United States is actively recruiting even members of international terrorist organizations, including the ISIS (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group as mercenaries to participate in hostilities in Ukraine”

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- <https://theworldnews.net/ug-news/russia-says-u-s-recruiting-terrorists-to-fight-in-ukraine>

“The United States is actively recruiting members of international terrorist organizations, including the Islamic State”

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- <https://cubasi.cu/en/news/us-recruits-isis-terrorists-fight-ukraine-russian-intel-says>

“The US has been 'actively recruiting' terrorists to fight in Ukraine, Russia’s Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) claimed on Tuesday”

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- <https://easternmirrornagaland.com/us-recruits-terrorists-to-fight-in-ukraine-russian-intel/>

“ SVR revealed that according to the intelligence it is receiving, 'the US is actively recruiting even members of international terrorist organisations, including the Islamic State (IS) group banned in Russia, as mercenaries to participate in hostilities in Ukraine’”

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- <https://www.mideastdiscourse.com/2022/05/18/us-recruits-isis-terrorists-to-fight-in-ukraine-russian-intel-says/>

“The SVR claims that Washington is 'ready to use any means,' including hiring ISIS fighters as mercenaries”

- <https://stomer-daily.rw/us-flying-in-their-isis-terrorists-to-fight-for-the-ukraine/>

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- <https://english.almanar.com.lb/1607267>

“The SVR revealed in a statement that, according to the intelligence it is receiving, the United States is actively recruiting even members of international terrorist organizations”

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“the United States is actively recruiting members of international terrorist organizations, including the Islamic State”

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- <http://www.ecns.cn/news/2022-05-26/detail-ihaytawr8117318.shtml>

“Russia says U.S. recruiting terrorists to fight in Ukraine”

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- <https://citytoday.news/us-recruits-terrorists-to-fight-in-ukraine-russian-intel/>

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- <https://stephenlendman.org/2022/03/04/biden-regime-sending-jihadists-to-fight-russia-and-donbass/>

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- <https://ipeclub.co/us-recruiting-mercenaries-from-international-terrorist-organizations-to-fight-in-ukraine/>

“US recruiting mercenaries from international terrorist organizations to fight in Ukraine”

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- <https://detv.us/2022/05/18/us-recruits-is-terrorists-to-fight-in-ukraine-rt-en/>

“Russia’s foreign intelligence agency has said the US is 'actively recruiting terrorists to fight in Ukraine.' ”

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- <https://southfront.org/nato-to-send-terrorists-trained-in-syrias-al-tanf-garrison-to-ukraine-russian-intelligence/>

“The US may not be the only side trying to funnel militants from Syria to Ukraine.”

 12.5 / 100 southfront.press (en_US)

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- <https://web.archive.org/web/20220306231440/https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2022/03/04/677979/Russia-says-US-transferring-terrorists-from-Syria-to-Ukraine>

 7.5 / 100 [presstv.ir](https://www.presstv.ir) (en_GB)

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- <https://arabic.sputniknews.com/20220304/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%83%D8%A7-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%AA-%D8%A5%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A5%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%87%D9%85-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B3-1059454280.html>

“At the end of 2021, the Americans liberated dozens of terrorists affiliated with ISIS (banned in Russia) from citizens of Russia and the CIS countries. These people were sent to the Al-Tanf base controlled by the United States”

 27.5 / 100 [sputniknews.com \(en_US\)](https://arabic.sputniknews.com/20220304/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%83%D8%A7-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%AA-%D8%A5%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A5%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%87%D9%85-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B3-1059454280.html)

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- <https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2022/03/04/677979/Russia-says-US-transferring-terrorists-from-Syria-to-Ukraine>

“Russia’s Foreign Intelligence Service says the United States has been transferring Daesh terrorists from Syria to Ukraine. The intelligence service said in a statement on Friday that the Daesh terrorists had undergone training in the US-held military base of al-Tanf in Syria.”

 17.5 / 100 [presstv.com \(en_GB\)](https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2022/03/04/677979/Russia-says-US-transferring-terrorists-from-Syria-to-Ukraine)

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- <https://www.rt.com/russia/555653-us-recruits-isis-terrorists/>

“The US has been 'actively recruiting' terrorists to fight in Ukraine, Russia’s Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) claimed on Tuesday”

▶ State-Controlled Source

- <https://en.mehrnews.com/news/186940/US-training-ISIL-terrorists-at-Syria-to-sent-to-Ukraine>

“The SVR revealed in a statement that, according to the intelligence it is receiving, the United States is actively recruiting even members of international terrorist organizations, including the ISIL terrorist group as mercenaries to participate in hostilities in Ukraine”

- <https://twitter.com/TehranTimes79/status/1526863116516081665>

“Foreign Intelligence Service of Russian Federation says U.S. occupation forces deployed in Syria’s strategic al-Tanf region, near borders with Iraq and Jordan, are reportedly providing military support to Takfiri Daesh terrorists and training them for field operations in Ukraine”

▶ State-Controlled Source

- <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/The-US-Recruits-Terrorists-to-Fight-in-Ukraine-Russia-Says-20220525-0007.html>

“The Al-Tanf base and its environs have turned into "a kind of terrorist hub," where up to 500 ISIS members loyal to Washington and other jihadists are being retrained at the same time.”

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Reliable Sources ⓘ

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-recruiting-syrians-for-urban-combat-in-ukraine-u-s-officials-say-11646606234>

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<https://www.crisisgroup.org/trigger-list/iran-us-trigger-list/flashpoints/al-tanf-syria>

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<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-middle-east-60931180>

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May, 2022

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