



## Ukrainian Chemical Attack Foiled — FSB

Russian operatives have stopped Kyiv from conducting a terrorist attack using chemical weapons in the southern part of the country near the frontline, Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) said.

The agency said it had prevented "an attempt by the Ukrainian special services to commit a terrorist act in Zaporozhye Region using an analog of the BZ chemical warfare agent, according to the NATO classification."

BZ, also known as 3-Quinuclidinyl Benzilate, is an odorless, bitter-tasting powder that can cause hallucinations, delirium, blindness, and impede one's ability to perform basic tasks. The Chemical Weapons Convention, which has been signed by virtually all countries in the world, including Ukraine, bans the use of BZ on the battlefield.



Mariia Kokorina/iStock/Getty Images Plus

The FSB pointed out that the confiscated chemical agents are used for producing weapons of mass destruction and were developed in the United States, adding that it had detained three Ukrainian citizens in the raid.

Besides, the agency published a video showing a group of its operatives bursting into a single-story building and arresting one of the suspects. It also depicted several pictures of small vials filled with chemical agents.

The head of Russia's Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Protection Forces, Igor Kirillov, said last week that Kyiv's forces had used toxic agents against Russian troops on various occasions.

At the time, he said that an agent similar to BZ had been located in Melitopol in Russia's Zaporozhye region. He added that Ukrainian troops were also using drones to drop U.S.-made gas grenades containing a CS compound, which could lead to respiratory paralysis when applied in high doses.

He declared at the time that the delivery of such munitions by the United States to Ukraine was a direct breach of the rules of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

However, per Kirillov, the OPCW did not respond to the evidence that he said proved that Ukraine was violating the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Zaporozhye Region, along with Kherson Region and the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, were integrated into Russia following referendums held in September 2022.

Moreover, any weapons supplied to Kyiv "will burn," and the U.S.-made M1 Abrams tanks are no exception, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on February 26.

Peskov delivered the remark as he was reached by TASS for comment on the first-ever destruction of an



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M1 Abrams tank by Russian forces, reported earlier in the day. The vehicle was reportedly destroyed near the village of Berdychi, situated near the northwest of Avdeevka, a key Donbass town.

The development is a part of the Russian military's daily routine of "demilitarizing" Ukraine, the spokesman explained.

"From the very beginning, our soldiers said that these tanks would burn just like any others," Peskov stated. "As you and I know from the daily reports of the Ministry of Defense, this is the daily, systematic, professional and dedicated work of our military, who are demilitarizing Ukraine and doing it every day," he added.

The U.S.-made tank was reportedly hit by a kamikaze drone and at least one projectile from an anti-tank grenade launcher. Footage circulating online depicted the vehicle catching fire, with its ammunition stock burning out.

The United States pledged a batch of 31 M1 Abrams tanks for Kyiv in January 2023, ahead of the much-hyped, yet ultimately failed Ukrainian counteroffensive against Russia.

However, the tanks made it in full to the country only in late 2023 and made their appearance on the battlefield only in the past few days, amid Kyiv's efforts to stabilize the frontline situation after the fall of Avdeevka, marked by heavy casualties and the chaotic rout of Ukrainian troops.

Also, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz insisted that Western troops will not be sent to Ukraine, after French President Emmanuel Macron suggested that this possibility cannot be excluded.

According to Scholz, it was clear from a meeting in Paris on February 26 that fellow European leaders have no desire to send soldiers to support Kyiv.

Speaking at a press conference following a gathering of Kyiv's backers in the French capital on February 26, Macron had stated that "we cannot exclude anything," despite there being "no consensus today to send, in an official manner, troops on the ground [to Ukraine]." He further argued that a Russian victory in the conflict would be a major dent to European collective security.

French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal later reinforced Macron's assessment. Speaking to broadcaster RTL on February 27, Attal argued that "you can't rule anything out in a war," repeating several talking points Macron had made following a meeting on the Ukraine conflict one day previously.

"There's no consensus today to send, in an official manner, troops on the ground," Macron had said, before adding that "in terms of dynamics, we cannot exclude anything."

Speaking to reporters in Freiburg on February 27, Scholz underscored there will be "no ground troops, no soldiers on Ukrainian soil, who are sent there by European or NATO countries" in the future.

He also pointed out that active-duty Western military personnel are currently banned from taking part in the Ukraine conflict.

According to Scholz, the leaders who met in Paris on February 26 were "unanimous as far as this question is concerned."

Responding on February 27 to Macron's statements, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov warned that "in this case, we have to talk not about the probability, but rather the inevitability [of a direct conflict between NATO and Russia]," if Western military personnel end up in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, the U.S.-led military bloc's secretary-general, Jens Stoltenberg, hurried to highlight that



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“there are no plans for NATO combat troops on the ground in Ukraine.”

Similarly, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk clarified that his country “does not plan to send its troops to the territory of Ukraine,” with his Czech counterpart, Petr Fiala, also expressing skepticism over the need for such a deployment.

Reuters quoted an unnamed White House official as saying on Monday that Washington has no such plans either.



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