



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on April 15, 2023

Seymour Hersh: Zelensky Embezzled Millions in Western Aid Money

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and his cronies have embezzled at least \$400 million of Western aid money to Ukraine to purchase diesel fuel, U.S. journalist Seymour Hersh claimed on his website Wednesday.

“The Ukrainian president and many in his entourage have been skimming untold millions from the American dollars earmarked for diesel fuel payments. One estimate by analysts from the Central Intelligence Agency put the embezzled funds at \$400 million last year, at least,” Hersh said.



AP Images
Volodymyr Zelensky

Based on Hersh’s sources, the corruption level in Kyiv is “approaching that of the Afghan war, although there will be no professional audit reports emerging from the Ukraine.”

Even globalist Microsoft founder Bill Gates slammed the Ukrainian government as corrupt in January, stating that it was “very unfortunate for the people.”

“Zelensky’s been buying discount diesel from the Russians,” one knowledgeable American intelligence official reportedly told Hersh. “And who’s paying for the gas and oil? We are. Putin and his oligarchs are making millions” on it.

Furthermore, Hersh claimed he was informed that many government ministries in Kyiv have been “competing” to establish front companies for export contracts for weapons and ammunition with private arms dealers around the world, including in Poland and Czechia. “I wouldn’t be surprised to learn that there are others in places like the Cayman Islands and Panama, and there are lots of Americans involved,” an American specialist on international trade told Hersh.

CIA Director William Burns broached Ukraine’s corruption problem with Zelensky in a meeting in Kyiv, with senior generals and government officials in the Ukrainian capital furious at what they deemed to be Zelensky’s avarice as “he was taking a larger share of the skim money than was going to the generals.”

Besides, Burns also unveiled a list of 35 generals and senior officials whom the CIA knew to be corrupt to Zelensky. In turn, Zelensky publicly fired 10 of the officials who had boasted about their wealth most openly, in a move that was reported by both Ukrainian and foreign press. “The ten he got rid of were brazenly bragging about the money they had — driving around Kyiv in their new Mercedes,” the intelligence official allegedly informed Hersh.

On February 1, the Ukrainian authorities also searched the houses of prominent billionaire [Ihor Kolomoisky](#) as well as former interior minister Arsen Avakov. These raids came amid Zelensky’s announcement that the Ukrainian authorities were “preparing new reforms” that would make Ukraine



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“more human, transparent and effective,” according to a BBC report.

The media also published various alleged photographs of Kolomoisky, one of the country’s wealthiest men, looking on as authorities raided his home in the eastern city of Dnipro, with media outlets adding that authorities were probing into possible financial crimes. A business mogul, Kolomoisky had been the governor of the wider Dnipropetrovsk region in 2014 and supported Zelensky’s bid for the presidency in 2019.

Avakov, who was Ukraine’s interior minister in 2018, told the media that his home was searched with regard to a probe into the January 18 “Super Puma” ES-225 helicopter crash that killed 14 people. Based on a report by the BBC, Avakov posited that authorities did not find anything suspicious during the raid.

Another minister suspected of corruption included Ukraine’s deputy minister of infrastructure, Vasyl Lozynskyi, who was removed from his post after prosecutors slammed him for inflating the price of winter equipment and “siphoning off \$4,00,000,” *The Guardian* reported.

Besides, Vyacheslav Shapovalov, the then deputy minister of defense who was overseeing supplies and food for Ukrainian troops, was also fired from his post. It was under Shapovalov that the purported inflated food contracts were signed, an accusation he has rebuffed.

Additionally, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, the deputy head of Ukraine’s presidential administration, was accused of “improperly” using an SUV donated for humanitarian missions.

Oleksiy Symonenko, deputy prosecutor general of Ukraine who went to Spain last December for a 10-day vacation in a Mercedes owned by a high-profile Ukrainian businessman, also landed in hot water, reported *The Guardian*.

In January, Zelensky even went so far as to forbid all government officials from leaving Ukraine apart from official business purposes.

Reuters reported previously that David Arakhamia, a member of Zelensky’s party, had written on Telegram: “The country will change during the war. If someone is not ready for change, then the state itself will come and help them change.”

Massive systemic corruption had been plaguing Ukraine long before the onset of the Russo-Ukraine conflict last February.

Following its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine has continued to tackle corruption as well as “free itself from the influence of Russian oligarchs and establish a democratic political system,” *Time* magazine claimed.

Time also cited watchdog group Transparency International as reporting in 2018 that that between 38 percent and 42 percent of Ukrainian households admitted they paid bribes to obtain basic public services such as education or healthcare.

During his campaign for the presidency, Zelensky had vowed to combat corruption.

In May 2019, Zelensky claimed his election victory showed that Ukrainians were tired of experienced politicians with “opportunities to steal, bribe and loot,” reported *Al Jazeera*.

Based on Transparency International’s 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index, Ukraine ranked 117th out of 180 countries, while Russia was ranked 129th.



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Ukraine, which is trying to become a full member of the European Union (EU), has claimed that it is combating corruption to expedite its candidacy, *The Washington Post* stated.

An IMF staff report last December mentioned that Ukraine's reform and future external financing were vulnerable to graft and the re-entrenchment of "oligarchic interests." Anti-corruption measures are "an important dimension of the EU accession process," Ana Pisonero, a spokesperson for the European Commission, had elucidated, according to CNN.

Key members of the Group of Seven (G7) nations have been pressuring Kyiv to implement reform programs to tackle corruption, a European diplomat familiar with the matter divulged.

The United States has been supplying aid to Ukraine to tackle Russia. Last month, the United States pledged 350 million dollars in arms and equipment to Ukraine.



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