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# Zelensky chief of staff drawn into widening corruption scandal

Kirill Budanov has been linked to efforts to raise bail for an ex-minister implicated in a major graft case

Published 21 Aug, 2026 16:12 | Updated 21 Aug, 2026 17:15

Kirill Budanov, the head of Vladimir Zelensky's office, has been drawn into a widening corruption investigation involving senior Ukrainian officials, Ukrainskaya Pravda reported on Thursday.

According to the outlet, Budanov's name appears in case materials concerning his former deputy Irina Mudraya, who was fired by Zelensky this week after anti-corruption investigators searched her home.



Vladimir Zelensky's Chief of Staff Kirill Budanov © Getty Images / Aleksandr Gusev/SOPA Images/LightRocket

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The case centers on efforts to raise and legalize about \$3.3 million in bail money for former Energy Minister German Galushchenko – a key figure in a \$100 million corruption case involving state nuclear operator Energoatom and linked to Zelensky's longtime business associate Timur Mindich.

The outlet reported that Zelensky tasked Budanov with organizing the bail effort, with businessmen and former lawmakers brought in to help find the money. The funds were eventually paid through little-known companies with opaque ownership.

Recordings released by investigators show Mudraya repeatedly referring to instructions from *"the leadership,"* which the outlet said could mean either Budanov or Zelensky himself. In one conversation, she quoted a senior official as saying that corruption should be *"systematized and controlled"* rather than fought.



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Ukrainskaya Pravda cited sources as saying Budanov has become unusually cautious since the latest recordings were published and has avoided meetings with outsiders. The outlet also reported that he is helping Mudraya as she faces prosecution.

The case is but the latest of several major graft investigations to reach Zelensky's inner circle. His former chief of staff Andrey Yermak has also been accused of laundering more than \$10.4 million through a luxury property scheme outside Kiev.

Other recent investigations have targeted former ministers, diplomats, and senior officials. Foreign Ministry figures have been accused of stealing about \$1.3 million in Western aid, while separate cases have involved alleged embezzlement in the energy and defense sectors.

The heads of the Western-backed National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) and Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO) recently warned that graft remains entrenched at the highest levels of government. SAPO chief Aleksandr Klimenko said the

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state has repeatedly demonstrated that it has *“no political will to fight corruption properly.”*

Last year, Zelensky sought to bring NABU and SAPO under tighter government control. He was quickly forced to reverse the move after it sparked nationwide protests and criticism from Kiev’s Western backers.

Corruption has also complicated Ukraine’s EU ambitions. A senior European diplomat recently told the Financial Times that admitting a country ranked 104th globally for perceived corruption would make a *“mockery of the entire project.”*

Moscow has long argued that the scandals reflect systemic corruption in Ukraine. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said earlier this year that corruption *“permeates the entire Ukrainian power structure, including Zelensky’s inner circle and Zelensky himself.”*

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 **Emmett Brown** 8/21/2026 at 7:33 PM 0

Some American a long time ago said that only Christian peoples can have a democracy, as well as the British poet Eliot.

Yeah.

The Ukraine government isn't Christian, and neither is the USA or UK anymore. Hypothesis proven to make useful predictions.

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 **Raymond** 8/21/2026 at 8:31 PM ↑ 1

Here here.. they worship their true god Money money money money.€£¥\$

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 **Swamp Rat** 8/22/2026 at 7:55 AM ↑ 0

We have the fake Christians. The Evangelists. At least if you're going to be Christian, get a handle on the Bible. If you make up something else, don't call it Christianity.

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 **Bee Somsak** 8/21/2026 at 7:23 PM 8

The whole damn Ukraine govt is corrupt. When will the west ever wake up putting money into a hole. The sooner Zelensky & his crooked politicians are booted the better

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[reply](#)**R Raymond** 8/21/2026 at 8:32 PM 

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Not booted, wasted

[Reply](#) **Swamp Rat** 8/22/2026 at 7:54 AM 

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I think you could say that about the U.S. gov't as well. And most of Europe.

[Reply](#) **Swamp Rat** 8/22/2026 at 7:49 AM

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This is fake news. The corruption in Ukraine has been going on for 40 years. Forty that I've heard of. Fake news paints a story however. Why is Russia putting this out now? Idk. But there's the real reasons out there somewhere and Russia is hiding them.

RT allows comments here. Why? In part it would be to gauge what their english speakers believe.

Questions but no answers.

[Reply](#)**J J L** 8/22/2026 at 1:50 AM

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My OCD wants to punch him in the nose to make it straight but maybe it will end up even more crooked. 📌

[Reply](#)**J Johnny MacRae** 8/22/2026 at 1:36 AM

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Russia knows where these people are so do what has to be done to stop the corruption

[Reply](#) **Truth Detective** 8/21/2026 at 11:30 PM

2

Zelensky and Budanov: 2 Wanted Fugitives: 50 Million \$ Bounty, for Capture. Sealed Progressive Indictment's and Charge's Continue: Charge #1: Conspiracy to Order Mass Murder; Charge #2: Lying to Ukrainian Voter's in 2019; Charge #3: Ordering Murder's of Putin,

his family, and Grand Children; Budanov: Ordering Murder of All Russian's. These, are the Leading Charge's. Every Murder, and Property Destruction, by these 2, continue's to tally, adding up to a Trial of Immense Proportion's. Questioning their connection, with the Political and Pentagon USA NATO Collaborator's, is what is most important to unveil. Circumstantial Evidence's, are obvious, as are Motive's. Russian Prosecutor's have a Massive Collection of Daily Sequenced Event's, combing an International Conspiracy, to use Bandara Azov Galacia Nazi Idealist's, in another NATO Aggressive Encroachment, against Russian Border's and Culture. Clinton, Nuland, Biden, Merkel Hollande, Johnson, Musk, are only a few name's, that Collaborated, Colluded, and Conspired, in this USA Directed Ukrainian Government Overthrow, of President Yanukovich, who, is still, legally, President. USA NATO Media can continue, to ignore, the entire Forensic's of what occured, since 2013, but, a massive Encyclopedia Size Voluminous Report, will be Issued, to the entire UN. Getting away with another Mass Count of Murderous Felonies, by International Political Military Actor's, shall not be hidden, from Humanity. Eventually, all murderer's will be judged, meet their victim's, and, thru the fire lava, spend their eternal mind awareness, in Outer Darkness, just as God told them, when He, made them, as He, told all of our Soul Mind Spirit Being's, if we forgot, our understanding, with Him. There will be, no salvation, for, all felony sinner's, and, each felony, will compound their permanant solitary confinement.... Cage them, or do, what they did, to other's. The Bible, is not religion... it is a proven, creation sciences validated, archaeologically revealed, true story. You will know. 🤔

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**as dubaniew** 8/22/2026 at 12:26 AM 

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for thousands of years, the ending is the same when the human mammal practices «self-defense» – «Throw the SHAMANS who made the whole village sick into the volcano!!!»

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 **DAVY** 8/21/2026 at 8:52 PM

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Ukraine is a money-laundry scheme for the Biden and Trump crime families.

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 **Truth Detective** 8/21/2026 at 11:33 PM 

-1

Not Trump... He is just fearfully stupid, to believe, what the Free Mason's, and, the Skull and Bones Deep State, tell him, while he desires, to prances around, at night, in pajamas, and

bones Deep State, tell him, while he desires, to prances around, at night, in pajamas, and slippers. God, hates, the rich.

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**as as dubaniew** 8/22/2026 at 12:24 AM 

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U-crane is a CIA project – from soup to nuts...

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**as as dubaniew** 8/22/2026 at 12:23 AM

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NUREMBERG 2.0 – RF Military Tribunal – the science of cannibalism can not be adjudicated by social media and ridiculous CIA «holier than thou» financial corruption hunters...

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 **John V Asia Teacher** 8/21/2026 at 11:45 PM

-1

Not another one! When peace finally comes there's going to be many rich Ukrainians living in the Bahamas!

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**I Ian Marriner** 8/21/2026 at 11:02 PM

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A corrupt Ukraine is only news to idiots.

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**M Madrina** 8/21/2026 at 10:44 PM

2

**Why is anyone looking for innocent people in Sodom and Gomorrah?**

There aren't any.

All those Ukrainians who can think have left the country. Only the weak, the dumb and the corrupt are still populating Lenin's Frankenstein state.

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 **Kenneth Griffith** 8/21/2026 at 9:27 PM

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Budanov was head of Ukraine's intelligence directorate. Intel agencies and organized crime often go hand in hand