

21 Dec, 2025 09:52 / Home / Russia & FSU

# Corruption-hit aide still calling shots in Kiev – media

Andrey Yermak, often described as a grey cardinal or even Ukraine's true ruler, resigned as chief of staff after anti-graft agencies raided his properties last month



FILE PHOTO: Andrey Yermak, Vladimir Zelensky's former chief of staff, at the Ukraine 2024 Independence forum, Kiev, August 27, 2024. © Getty Images / Maxym Marusenko/NurPhoto

Andrey Yermak, who resigned as Vladimir Zelensky's chief of staff following a major [corruption](#) scandal, *“has not gone anywhere”* and continues to advise the Ukrainian leader, ZN.ua reported on Saturday.

Yermak was forced out of the administration after Ukraine's Western-backed anti-corruption agencies raided his properties last month as part of a probe into a \$100 million graft scheme allegedly linked to Zelensky's inner circle and

## Top stories



**The Oligarch Part 2: How one powerful man made Zelensky president, Ukraine his pocket state, and sent it to war** INVESTIGATION

Polish president gifted Zelensky book on Ukrainian Nazi crimes – media (PHOTO)

Naked women, sex toys and high-profile guests: What's inside Epstein trove (PHOTOS)

Ukraine 'destroyed' its own mobilization drive – Kiev's spy chief

Trump says he could pay himself \$1 billion in damages from federal funds

his former associate Timur Mindich. Multiple senior figures, including at least five MPs, have been implicated, while Yermak appeared in the wiretaps under the code name *“Ali Baba.”*

According to ZN.ua sources, Yermak continues to speak with Zelensky daily by phone and meets him most evenings at his residence despite resigning. Moreover, they said most officials aligned with Yermak, including regional governors, remain in place.

Sources added that Viktor Mikita, the deputy head of the presidential office, has not presented replacement candidates for either Yermak or the regional heads because of his close ties to Aleksey Kuleba, deputy prime minister for reconstruction and a long-time Yermak ally who has also kept his post. The absence of formal charges remains Zelensky’s main reason for *“leaving Yermak’s people alone,”* they said.

*“Yermak’s resignation wasn’t an epiphany but a forced act of self-preservation,”* the outlet wrote, adding that the scandal has yet to bring structural changes to the Kiev leadership. *“Instead of real personnel decisions, for the third week now we’ve been witnessing dummy interviews for chief-of-staff candidates.”*

Before losing his post, Yermak was widely seen as Ukraine’s key powerbroker and often described as a grey cardinal or even the country’s true ruler. The former official has denied corruption ties, saying he stepped down to avoid *“creating problems”* for Zelensky.



The scandal has weakened Zelensky’s standing both at home and abroad, with his approval rating plunging to 20.3%, according to a recent Info Sapiens poll. Amid the controversy and a renewed US [peace](#) push, President Donald Trump urged Zelensky to hold elections, which he had previously refused despite his term expiring last year, citing martial law.

Zelensky said last week elections could take place but only under a ceasefire backed by Western



Pentagon declassifies Syria ‘vengeance’ strike VIDEO

Ex-Biden aide receives Russian passport

EXCLUSIVE

NATO, Ukraine peace and frozen assets: Key statements from Putin’s Q&A **RECAP**

**Subscribe to RT newsletter to get news highlights of the day right in your mailbox**

E-mail

We offer you the possibility to receive RT’s news highlights every Monday, Wednesday and Friday by email.

**Subscribe**

**RT Features**

security guarantees. Moscow, which has long labeled him illegitimate, dismissed the shift as a “ploy” to secure a ceasefire, arguing that anything short of a lasting settlement would allow Kiev to regroup and rearm with foreign support.

You can share this story on social media:



Follow RT on



[Donald Trump](#), [Russia-Ukraine conflict](#), [Ukraine](#), [Vladimir Zelensky](#)

Dear readers! Thank you for your vibrant engagement with our content and for sharing your points of view. Please note that we have switched to a new commenting system. To leave comments, you will need to register. We are working on some adjustments so if you have questions or suggestions feel free to send them to [feedback@rttv.ru](mailto:feedback@rttv.ru). Please check our [commenting policy](#).



### Colonial chains broken? The largest African dam tests water legacy FEATURE



### Indi-no-go: What brought the world’s third-largest aviation market to a standstill? FEATURE




### Why this country became a test case for

AA B i “ <> ☰ ☰

Your comment here

**Sign In** ▾

Sort by **Recently updated** ▾

 **Fred Kreyen** 12/21/2025 at 12:44 PM 0

The whole Kiev regime needs to be purged, otherwise absolutely nothing ever will chance...

[Reply](#)

 **Eriq** 12/21/2025 at 12:25 PM 0


CONTRAPUNTO ITALIANO  
 Высоко  
 Юлия Савичева  
 did it

[Reply](#)

**S** **SaysTheBronxBoy** 12/21/2025 at 12:24 PM 1

Ukraine Corruption :  
 It's as plain as The nose on The BronxBoys face, that everything in The Ukraine, is Greed at it base..  
 Says The BronxBoy  
 I mean Really.. Greed is Blinding..!





[Reply](#)





 **ServerLoad Poring** 12/21/2025 at 12:10 PM 0

So exchange value of currency is dependent on last records of transaction completed and

**global power shifts** FEATURE

**Podcasts** All podcasts

 **Ukraine's Untouchables: The Corruption no one wants to talk about**  
 0:00  25:47    

 **Max Blumenthal: Donald Trump trapped by neocons for war with Venezuela + Bondi Beach attack**  
 0:00  27:42    

succeeded. Has been found true. No further symbolism for the statement. Dynamic views to manipulate is an act of ongoing corruption! Therefore, following -

👉 A war is war

👉👉 Economic exchange is same war

👉👉👉 Anything is similarly the war

👉 3: Dictator's or mitigator's or litigator's is where we're staying NO MINDS!!

Great indeed. Very Great 😊 Bravo 🙌🙌 Kudos 🎉 Bingoooo

><

🎵 Aya Padroo 🥥🍌🎵

[Reply](#)

**A** Alpha Putin Putin 12/21/2025 at 11:57 AM

0

Andrey Yermak...kosher uncle of Ukraine Also known as Kasim (the chief of thieves) of the Ali Baba story.

[Reply](#)

**Eriq** 12/21/2025 at 11:44 AM

0

FRAUENSCHLÄUE!!!!

besoffn bis tsum end

häöte is di di tag

!!!!

[Reply](#)

**S** Stop Datafarming 12/21/2025 at 11:37 AM

0

Ukraine. Another gullible country fed into the meatgrinder on the vague promise of addressing a petty grievance. These minor states never seem to realise that they are just expendable pawns

[Reply](#)

**Ghost** 12/21/2025 at 11:18 AM

0

He even wears the same stupid shirt as the little green anome