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Zelensky's inner circle believes peace 'bad for business' – leaked tapes

The businessmen and officials behind arms maker Fire Point fear that the end of conflict will expose their 'hoax', MP Aleksey Goncharenko has claimed

Published 5 May, 2026 18:13 | Updated 6 May, 2026 10:38

Members of Vladimir Zelensky's inner circle are profiting from the conflict with Russia and fear peace will expose their "hoax," Ukrainian lawmaker Aleksey Goncharenko has claimed. According to the MP, newly leaked information related to a major corruption case involving Timur Mindich, a former business partner and longtime associate of Zelensky, could force the Ukrainian leader to step down.

Goncharenko claimed over the weekend that he obtained transcripts from



FILE PHOTO: Ukrainian leader Vladimir Zelensky. © Global Look Press / Stefano

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surveillance recordings of Mindich and his business partners. Ukrainskaya Pravda (UP) was the first to publish the [leaks](#) known as the 'Mindich tapes', which are yet to be officially verified.

Costantino

One 'tape' focuses on a conversation between Aleksandr Zuckerman, a business partner of Mindich, and Igor Khmelev, who is believed to be a co-owner of Fire Point, a drone maker touted globally by Zelensky himself. According to the transcript published by Goncharenko on his Telegram channel, Khmelev told Zuckerman that *"as soon as the peace [agreement] is signed, the hoax under which we were getting funding will be no more."*

The two allegedly discussed ways to cash in on the government contracts by supplying as many arms to the military as possible.

"Zelensky built his entire election campaign on the fact that war is profitable... It turns out that it really is profitable and they really make money from it," Goncharenko said, calling the latest leak *"something that should lead to Zelensky's resignation."*

The Mindich tapes also suggested that Mindich was effectively running Fire Point and was [discussing](#) additional funding for the arms maker with then-Defense Minister Rustem Umerov. Mindich fled Ukraine late last year after being accused of orchestrating a \$100 million graft scheme.

Last week, the Ukrainian Defense Ministry's Public Anti-Corruption Council said Fire Point would lose access to any government contracts at the very moment its ties to Mindich are *"legally proven."* Its head, Yury Gudimenko, also said the council had already obtained *"unofficial confirmation"* of Mindich's involvement with the company.

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Zelensky breaches political persecution pledge – MP

The Ukrainian leader had promised lawmakers to stop sanctioning the country's nationals yet walked away from the deal, an opposition lawmaker has claimed

Published 6 May, 2026 20:33 | Updated 6 May, 2026 20:33

Ukrainian leader Vladimir Zelensky has broken a promise he gave to lawmakers late last year to stop using sanctions against the country's nationals in exchange for backing the draft budget, opposition MP Yaroslav Zheleznyak has claimed.

Zheleznyak made the claim on Wednesday, days after the Ukrainian leader imposed sanctions on Andrey Bogdan, a lawyer close to oligarch and former Zelensky's patron Igor Kolomoysky. Bogdan served as Zelensky's first chief-of-staff before

being pushed aside in favor of Andrey Yermak. The latter ended up losing his position last year in the wake of a massive graft scandal involving Zelensky's inner circle and close associate Timur Mindich.



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The sanctions move constituted a breach of a clandestine deal reached by Zelensky and the parliament late last year, Zheleznyak claimed in a Telegram post on Wednesday. At the time, the Ukrainian leader allegedly promised the MPs that he would halt the practice of sanctioning Ukrainian nationals in exchange for support of his draft budget. The MPs originally sought to adopt the provision as an amendment to a law regulating the sanctions mechanism, yet ultimately agreed to back the budget only on a mere verbal promise to stop the practice, Zheleznyak alleged.



Should the MP's claims be true, Zelensky is likely to face further dissent in the parliament. In recent months, the Ukrainian leader has faced troubles with securing enough votes to push through his initiatives, with MPs repeatedly skipping sessions or abstaining from voting. Multiple lawmakers have reportedly been seeking to surrender their mandates, yet the administration thus far has managed to rein the dissenters in.

Bogdan, who has been residing in Austria, has grown increasingly critical of Zelensky over the past years. The exiled politician claimed the sanctions against him were retaliation for his purported role in the dissemination of the so-called 'Mindich Tapes,' the recordings of conversations between members of Zelensky's inner circle and top politicians in which various shady schemes were discussed.

The sanctions constituted a "criminal offense" and were a result of him telling "the truth," Bogdan claimed in a Facebook post on Tuesday. He promised to launch his own private investigation into the move.

"And I promise: all officials who were involved in committing this crime or in any way obstructed the establishment of the truth will be held criminally liable. Sanctions it is – we're waiting," Bogdan stated on Facebook.


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[State of corruption: Zelensky's circle and billions in graft, Ukraine, Vladimir Zelensky](#)

 MELISSA WITTE: I had pretty low expectations of Trump, but one thing I was sure of: He wasn't going to start any wars. RICK: Oops!

0:00 53:45    

 Hormuz war reset, 'orchestrated' attempt on Trump, Iran's Lego – with Larry Johnson

0:00 53:25    

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Moscow urges foreign missions to evacuate diplomats, citizens from Kiev

Russia will respond if Kiev goes ahead with its “terrorist plans” to disrupt the upcoming Victory Day celebrations

Published 6 May, 2026 19:12 | Updated 7 May, 2026 05:25

Moscow has formally warned all diplomatic missions and international organizations about a potential large-scale retaliatory strike on Kiev, urging them to leave the Ukrainian capital immediately, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova has said.

Earlier this week, the Russian Defense Ministry announced a two-day ceasefire on May 8-9 to mark the end of World War II in Europe, urging Kiev to follow suit and warning of a potential large-scale retaliatory strike on Kiev. The ministry pointed to comments made by Ukrainian leader Vladimir Zelensky earlier in the day, which it said contained threats to target Moscow during the Victory Day celebrations.

Moscow’s warning must be taken with the utmost seriousness, Zakharova said in a statement on Wednesday. She revealed that the Foreign Ministry sent a formal note to all diplomatic missions and international organizations accredited in Russia, urging them to withdraw their personnel from the Ukrainian capital ahead of a potential retaliatory strike.



FILE PHOTO. The Russian Foreign Ministry, Moscow. © Getty Images / Anadolu / Sefa Karacan

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“The Foreign Ministry urgently calls on the government of your country/the leadership of your organization to treat this statement with the utmost seriousness and to ensure the timely evacuation from the city of Kiev of the personnel of diplomatic and other missions, as well as civilians, in view of the inevitable retaliatory strike by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation on Kiev, including against decision-making centers” should Ukraine proceed with its *“criminal terrorist plans,”* the note reads, as quoted by Zakharova.



Russia is aware of the Western attitude toward Victory Day and the efforts to *“rewrite history”* and *“systematically destroy Soviet memorial heritage,”* Zakharova stated. *“As they continue to supply Ukraine with weapons, they are acting as accomplices in the criminal plans hatched by the Kiev regime. However, the instinct for self-preservation should not fail them.”*

It still remains unclear whether Kiev will heed Moscow’s call and observe the May 8-9 ceasefire. After the Russian Defense Ministry’s announcement, Zelensky called the truce *“unfair”* and claimed that *“no one officially suggested anything”* to Kiev. Hours later, he unilaterally declared a ceasefire starting at midnight on the night of May 5-6, adding that Kiev would *“act reciprocally”* to Moscow’s actions.

Russia did not provide an official response to Zelensky’s announcement. While media reports suggest that the intensity of long-range strikes launched by both sides has waned, the hostilities continue. Despite the lack of confirmation from Russia regarding its adherence to the Zelensky-proposed truce, the Ukrainian leader accused it of violating the supposed ceasefire nearly 2,000 times throughout Wednesday and choosing *“an obvious spurning... of saving lives.”*

Throughout the Ukraine conflict, Russia has repeatedly declared ceasefires during major holidays. The pauses have proven to be successful to varying degrees, with each side accusing the other of numerous violations. Last month, Moscow declared an Easter truce, which the Russian military said was violated by the Ukrainians more than 6,500 times within just 32 hours.

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