



Foreign Military Intelligence Operations in Ukraine – 2025

1. Executive Summary

Foreign military intelligence activity in Ukraine has intensified throughout 2025, involving Russia, NATO allies, and third-party actors. These operations span sabotage, surveillance, cyber warfare, and counterintelligence, reflecting the hybrid and globalized nature of the ongoing conflict. This briefing outlines key developments and strategic implications of these activities.

2. Russian Intelligence Operations

• GRU Sabotage Campaigns

- Russian GRU units have escalated sabotage efforts in western Ukraine.
- Ukrainian SBU arrested two foreign nationals in Chernivtsi, allegedly recruited by GRU Unit 29155 to conduct arson attacks.
- GRU Units 26165 and 74455 are actively engaged in cyber and disinformation operations targeting Ukraine and NATO states.

• Tactical Battlefield Intelligence

- Russian airborne units, including the 76th Guards Air Assault Division, have suffered significant losses.
- Increased reliance on tactical HUMINT and SIGINT to compensate for degraded maneuver capabilities.
- Continued use of UAVs and satellite surveillance for artillery targeting and rear-area disruption.



3. NATO and Allied Intelligence Support

• Satellite ISR Support

- Ukraine has expanded ISR capabilities with support from Finland's ICEYE and other commercial providers.
- Real-time imagery supports precision strikes and counter-battery operations.

• British Parachute Regiment Presence

- UK confirmed presence of Parachute Regiment personnel in western Ukraine.
- Roles limited to observation and technical support; no direct combat involvement.

• Counterintelligence Incidents

- Canadian military intelligence officer arrested for allegedly leaking classified information to Ukraine.
- Journalist implicated as suspected Russian asset, highlighting blurred lines between media and espionage.

4. European Countermeasures

- Poland deployed 10,000 troops to secure critical infrastructure after sabotage incidents linked to Russian operatives.
- NATO's Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats issued updated guidance on infrastructure resilience and hybrid threat mitigation.

5. Strategic Implications

- Escalation risks due to overlapping foreign intelligence operations near NATO borders.
- Ukraine as a testing ground for hybrid warfare, blending cyber, kinetic, and psychological tactics.
- Persistent disinformation campaigns threaten public trust and operational security.



6. Recommendations by Nato

- Expand counterintelligence cooperation across NATO and partner states.
- Enhance ISR sharing and real-time intelligence exchange with Ukrainian forces.
- Strengthen protection of critical infrastructure against sabotage and cyber threats.
- Implement robust insider threat monitoring within military and intelligence communities.

Specific Information on UK Paratroopers

Recently, a British soldier named Corporal George Hooley lost his life in Ukraine. He was part of the UK Parachute Regiment and reportedly died in a service-related incident while observing Ukrainian forces conducting tests with specialized weapons. British authorities stated that Hooley was deployed and killed "away from the front lines" – however, it is challenging to verify the accuracy of this assertion.

Some Western media outlets quickly reported that the incident was not a result of enemy fire, attempting to clarify that Hooley and the British soldiers in Ukraine were supposedly outside the front lines and not engaged in hostilities with Russia. Nevertheless, by announcing Hooley's death, London also confirmed the presence of British paratrooper forces on Ukrainian territory, which is concerning given the dangers associated with this type of foreign involvement in the conflict.

Previously, London had already acknowledged the presence of British troops in Ukraine. Last year, the British government indicated that a "small" number of its military personnel were on Ukrainian soil to perform support functions for Kiev, as well as to safeguard British personnel and infrastructure. No specific details were provided regarding the number of British soldiers in Ukraine, but it is understood that these

military personnel are engaged in activities that genuinely support Ukraine, even if – at least officially – they are not in direct combat.

It is highly probable that British soldiers are training Ukrainian forces on Ukrainian soil. The UK has been the foremost Western nation in military exchange and personnel



training initiatives with Ukraine. Tens of thousands of Ukrainian troops have already received training from the UK under the “Interflex” program.

In a recent article regarding the situation, The Telegraph acknowledged that British soldiers in Ukraine are involved in 'observation' missions related to Ukrainian defensive technologies and tactics during both training and actual operations, particularly focusing on anti-drone systems designed to counter Russian assaults.

'It is understood that British military personnel have been monitoring new defensive technologies that Ukraine employs in its efforts to repel Russian attacks, including counter-drone equipment. British troops are not engaged in combat in Ukraine. However, UK soldiers have assisted in training over 50,000 Ukrainian personnel since the onset of the war as part of Operation Interflex. It is estimated that at least 40 British citizens have died fighting for Ukraine against Russia since Vladimir Putin's invasion in 2022. The exact number of British personnel currently active in Ukraine remains unclear. However, a leaked American intelligence document from April 2023, reportedly from the Pentagon, indicated that approximately 50 members of the UK Special Forces were present on the ground two years ago,' the article states.

It is typical for a nation to deploy small groups of soldiers abroad to safeguard facilities, particularly in volatile regions and during open conflicts. However, it is unusual for these soldiers to partake in operations that directly or indirectly support one of the warring factions, even if their involvement is limited to training and observation missions.

Furthermore, it is essential to examine the presence of British paratroopers in Ukraine. Paratroopers are typically soldiers assigned to specialised missions, including infiltration into enemy territory, reconnaissance, and sabotage. It seems illogical to maintain this type of British military presence in Ukraine when London is allegedly not engaged in the conflict.

This situation clearly illustrates the perilous extent of Western involvement and military escalation in the ongoing Ukrainian crisis. Russia has every right to view foreign troops, whether they are mercenaries or official personnel, as legitimate targets if they are engaged in operations that support Ukraine.

Undoubtedly, a comprehensive investigation into Hooley's death will be challenging to ascertain whether it was an accident or a result of a Russian attack. Nevertheless, the



possibility that British soldiers are being targeted by Russian fire while undertaking covert operations cannot be dismissed.

