
Ukrainian Criminal Groups in 2024
Waning Russian Influence and Black-Market Realignment
by Ian Landy

Ian Petrus Landy

¹ D. Cole, "Brooklyn Resident and Canadian-Russian Nationals Accused of Sending Electronics to Russia and Arrested," *CNN*, October 31, 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/31/politics/russian-electronics-charges/index.html>.

² Mark Galeotti, *The Vory: Russia's Super Mafia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), 186.

³ Galeotti, *The Vory: Russia's Super Mafia*, 185.

⁴ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "Port in a Storm: Organized Crime in Odesa Since the Russian Invasion," *Global Initiative*, September 2023, <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Port-in-a-storm-Organized-crime-in-Odesa-since-the-Russian-invasion-GI-TOC-September-2023.pdf>.

⁵ Galeotti, *The Vory: Russia's Super Mafia*, 126.

⁶ James Finckenauer and Elin J. Waring, *Russian Mafia in America* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1998).

⁷ Tamara Makarenko, "Ukrainian Mafia Moves into the International Crime Arena," *Jane's Intelligence Review* 14, no. 2 (February 2002): 26–29.

⁸ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "Port in a Storm."

⁹ Finckenauer and Waring, *Russian Mafia in America*.

¹⁰ Galeotti, *The Vory: Russia's Super Mafia*, 8.

¹¹ Galeotti, *The Vory: Russia's Super Mafia*, 185.

¹² Mitchell Prothero, "Russian Spies Have Gone Full Mafia Mode Because of Ukraine," *VICE*, October 27, 2022, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/russia-traffickers-spies/>.

¹³ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "New Dynamics, New Opportunities: Trends in Organised Crime in Ukraine After Russia's Invasion," *LSE Public Policy Review* 3, no. 1 (2023).

¹⁴ Galeotti, *The Vory: Russia's Super Mafia*, 183.

¹⁵ "How the War Split the Mafia," *The Economist*, April 26, 2023, <https://www.economist.com/international/2023/04/24/how-the-war-split-the-mafia>.

¹⁶ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "Port in a Storm."

¹⁷ Galeotti, *The Vory: Russia's Super Mafia*, 186.

¹⁸ Galeotti, *The Vory: Russia's Super Mafia*, 245.

¹⁹ Anton Grushetskyi and Volodymyr Paniotto, "How the War in Ukraine Has Changed Ukrainians," *Foreign Affairs*, December 30, 2024, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/how-war-ukraine-has-changed-ukrainians?check_logged_in=1.

²⁰ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "Port in a Storm," 17.

²¹ The Economist, "How the War Split the Mafia."

²² Mark Galeotti, "Time of Troubles: The Russian Underworld Since the Ukraine Invasion," *Global Initiative*, December 2023, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/the-russian-underworld-since-the-ukraine-invasion/>.

²³ Benoit Faucon, Costas Paris, and Joe Wallace, "Russia's Backdoor to the Global Banking System Is Slamming Shut," *Wall Street Journal*, March 19, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/finance/banking/russias-backdoor-to-the-global-banking-system-is-slamming-shut-49bf5c53>.

²⁴ Olena Loginova, "Ukraine: A Poor Town Controlled Billions," *OCCRP*, March 16, 2015, <https://www.occrp.org/en/project/the-russian-laundromat-exposed/ukraine-a-poor-town-controlled-billions>.

-
- ²⁵ RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service, "Additional Criminal Cases Launched Against Former Ukrainian President Poroshenko," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, July 10, 2020, <https://www.rferl.org/a/additional-criminal-cases-launched-against-former-ukrainian-president-poroshenko/30719898.html>; "Panama Papers: Ukraine President Poroshenko Denies Tax Claims," *BBC News*, April 4, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35958762>.
- ²⁶ Faucon, Paris, and Wallace, "Russia's Backdoor to the Global Banking System."
- ²⁷ "U.S. Treasury Announces Unprecedented & Expansive Sanctions Against Russia, Imposing Swift and Severe Economic Costs," *U.S. Department of the Treasury*, February 24, 2022, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0608>; The Economist, "How the War Split the Mafia."
- ²⁸ Galeotti, *The Vory: Russia's Super Mafia*, 219.
- ²⁹ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "Port in a Storm," 1.
- ³⁰ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "Port in a Storm," 18.
- ³¹ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "Port in a Storm," 31.
- ³² Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "New Dynamics, New Opportunities."
- ³³ Galeotti, "Time of Troubles: The Russian Underworld Since the Ukraine Invasion," 24.
- ³⁴ Galeotti, "Time of Troubles: The Russian Underworld Since the Ukraine Invasion," 15.
- ³⁵ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "Port in a Storm," 27.
- ³⁶ Galeotti, "Time of Troubles: The Russian Underworld Since the Ukraine Invasion," 23.
- ³⁷ Yulia Krylova, "The Impact of Russia's Full-Scale Invasion on Illicit Cigarette Trafficking from Ukraine to the European Union," *Journal of Illicit Economies and Development* 6, no. 2, 2024.
- ³⁸ The Economist, "How the War Split the Mafia."
- ³⁹ The Observatory of Illicit Markets and the Conflict in Ukraine research team, "Drugs on the front line," *Global Initiative*, January 22, 2024, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/ukraine-synthetic-drugs-ocindex/>.
- ⁴⁰ Erin Snodgrass, "Russia War in Ukraine Has Led to Spike in Synthetic Drugs in Country," *Business Insider*, December 19, 2023, <https://www.businessinsider.com/russia-war-ukraine-led-spike-synthetic-opioids-country-smuggling-narcotics-2023-12>.
- ⁴¹ Andrew Cesare Miller, "Ukraine's Double-Edged Sword? The Dangers of Using Criminal Groups for National Defense," *Journal of Illicit Economies and Development* 6, no. 2, 2024.
- ⁴² Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "New Dynamics, New Opportunities."
- ⁴³ Galeotti, "Time of Troubles: The Russian Underworld Since the Ukraine Invasion," 4.
- ⁴⁴ Vira Kravchuk, "Ukrainian Police Arrests Charity Chief for \$850K Humanitarian Vehicle Scam," *Euromaidan Press*, September 30, 2024, <https://euromaidanpress.com/2024/09/30/ukrainian-police-arrests-charity-chief-for-850k-humanitarian-vehicle-scam/>.
- ⁴⁵ "'We Have to Buy Everything': Russian Soldiers Under-Equipped in Ukraine War," *The Moscow Times*, May 20, 2022, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/05/20/we-have-to-buy-everything-ourselves-how-russian-soldiers-go-off-to-fight-a77751>.
- ⁴⁶ "Corruption Looms Over Ukraine's Massive Reconstruction Effort," *France 24*, November 14, 2024, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20241114-corruption-overshadows-ukraine-s-multi-billion-reconstruction-program>.
- ⁴⁷ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "Organized Criminal Economies in Ukraine in 2022, New Front Lines," *Global Initiative*, February 2023, <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/New-frontlines-organized-criminal-economies-in-Ukraine-in-2022-GI-TOC-February-2023.pdf>.
- ⁴⁸ The Economist, "How the War Split the Mafia."
- ⁴⁹ Anna Conkling, "Top-Tier Criminals Pivot to Secretly Fight Against Putin," *The Daily Beast*, April 25, 2023, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/ukraines-organized-crime-world-pivots-to-fight-vladimir-putins-war/>.
- ⁵⁰ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "New Dynamics, New Opportunities."

⁵¹ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "Port in a Storm," 25.

⁵² Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "Port in a Storm," 25.

⁵³ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "Port in a Storm," 25.

⁵⁴ The Economist, "How the War Split the Mafia."

⁵⁵ Snodgrass, "Russia War in Ukraine Has Led to Spike in Synthetic Drugs in Country."

⁵⁶ Prothero, "Russian Spies Have Gone Full Mafia Mode Because of Ukraine."

⁵⁷ Dmytro Basmat, "Head of Ukraine's Customs Service Suspected of Failing to Declare Over \$100,000 in Assets," *The Kyiv Independent*, January 7, 2025, <https://kyivindependent.com/head-of-ukraines-customs-service-suspected-of-failing-to-declare-over-100-000-in-assets/>.

