



Ukraine lied to its encircled troops – commander

Description

The captured officer says he decided to flee after realizing that promised help wouldn't be coming

Ukraine told troops besieged by Russian forces in Mariupol that help was on its way, while making no actual attempts to end the blockade of the city, the commander of the country's 36th Naval Infantry Brigade has told RT.

Colonel Vladimir Baranyuk and his unit were tasked with guarding the northern outskirts of Mariupol, a strategic port city in the southeast of Ukraine, amid the Russian military operation in the country.

He was even awarded the Hero of Ukraine honor for his *"courage and effective actions in repelling enemy attacks,"* with Kiev asserting that the colonel and the other defenders of Mariupol would never surrender.

But as the Russian forces kept gaining ground, Baranyuk ended up surrendering peacefully after being captured during a failed attempt to flee the city.

He was apprehended hiding in the fields together with a number of his men a few kilometers north of Mariupol.

The commander of the marines now says the Ukrainian government lied to him and his troops in order to keep them fighting.

"Kiev told us to hold on, [saying] that the units that will lift the blockade are coming, they'll soon be here," Baranyuk told RT.

The promise was made despite President Volodymyr Zelensky's adviser, Alexey Arestovich, openly acknowledging in interviews that Kiev *"won't be able to save"* its forces in Mariupol.

"We were promised certain help. Naturally, this help didn't arrive. And this pushed us to come out," the

colonel said, explaining his decision to flee.

It was *“painful”* for the troops when they realized that they had been left for dead, but *“everybody, including myself, understood it,”* Baranyuk added.

Mariupol has seen the heaviest fighting during the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The city, which suffered immense destruction, is now almost entirely controlled by Russian forces, with the Azovstal steel plant remaining the last pocket of Ukrainian resistance.

Kiev's servicemen and nationalist fighters of the notorious Azov Battalion, who are holed up at the massive site, had been given numerous opportunities to lay down their arms by Russia, but rejected all of them. Moscow has said that those inside the plant want to surrender, but cannot do so due to Kiev's reluctance to give the relevant order.

Russia attacked its neighboring state following Ukraine's failure to implement the terms of the Minsk agreements, signed in 2014, and Moscow's eventual recognition of the Donbass republics of Donetsk and Lugansk. The German- and French-brokered Minsk Protocol was designed to give the breakaway regions special status within the Ukrainian state.

The Kremlin has since demanded that Ukraine officially declare itself a neutral country that will never join NATO. Kiev insists the Russian offensive was completely unprovoked and has denied claims it was planning to retake the two republics by force.

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