

## **Moscow Forming Latin American-Style 'Death Squads' in Occupied Crimea and Elsewhere, Shmulyevich Says**

**Ukraine**

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**The reason Moscow has formed these death squad-like detachments in occupied Crimea, Shmulyevich says, is that they can be used there, shifted to Russia itself, or used in the event of a war. They can suppress dissent on the Ukrainian peninsula, they can attack demonstrators in Russia, and they can become a target in the event of a war.&rdquo;**

By Paul Goble for &ldquo;Window on Eurasia&rdquo;; May 12 &ndash; Avraam Shmulyevich [pictured] says that Moscow is forming Latin American-style &ldquo;death squads&rdquo; in occupied Crimea, the Russian Federation and even in some Western countries and that the Kremlin plans to use them to promote the militarization of society, the suppression of dissent, and the defeat of its enemies in the event of a real war. In an interview with Kseniya Kirillova for Radio Liberty, the Israeli expert says &ldquo;the numerous &lsquo;Cossack cadet corps&rdquo; Moscow is setting up &ldquo;do not have any relationship to the real Cossacks &hellip; [Instead,] These detachments recall not the Cossacks [of Russian history] but &lsquo;the death squads&rsquo; in Latin America&rdquo; ([ru.krymr.com/a/29221535.html](http://ru.krymr.com/a/29221535.html)). The two post-Soviet Chechen wars showed the Kremlin that &ldquo;the post-Soviet people does not want to die,&rdquo; Shmulyevich continues. Indeed, that attitude, many analysts say, is a major reason that has prevented Putin up to now from engaging in even broader forms of aggression abroad at least for the present. But the Kremlin leader has not given up: his regime has come up with the idea to accustom the population to the idea about &ldquo;the need to fight and die as a chief goal of life&rdquo; and to begin to inculcate that notion among children. After experience in these militarized units, &ldquo;these children will now that their main goal is to die for the motherland without thinking.&rdquo; As developments in occupied Crimea show, Shmulyevich continues, &ldquo;this work has begun with children. Those youths who today are marching&rdquo; with unloaded guns &ldquo;will be going into the army in five to eight years.&rdquo; And the Kremlin hopes that as a result of their experiences, they will want to fight more than the current younger generation. One reason these militarized activities have been as successful as they have, the Israeli analyst says, is that &ldquo;all other independent youth subcultures and groups have been chipped away at, discredited and set to fight one another. Only militarized structures remain&rdquo; which can &ldquo;attract children with interesting activities, nice uniforms and good organization.&rdquo; (Shmulyevich notes that Putin&rsquo;s governor training program also has been militarized with candidates required to jump out of planes and fire weapons, something that would have been unthinkable two decades ago and that businesses dependent on the state are now far more willing to promote militarization than they were earlier.) In brief, the analyst argues, &ldquo;everything is being done with one main goal in mind: the mass reformation of the psychology of the population of Russia and the creation of a generation prepared to die in war.&rdquo; According to Shmulyevich, Kirillova writes, young people are being transformed into &ldquo;&rsquo;chained dogs of the regime&rsquo; in various spheres and this process is especially well advanced and worrisome in Russian-occupied Crimea. Shmulyevich says that &ldquo;the Russian authorities have cleared declared that for them Crimea is &lsquo;an advanced detachment and the border of our motherland.&rsquo; The peninsula is strategically close to the Mediterranean

basin and the main communication lines of the West," especially important if there is a war. Moreover, he continues, "Russian elites have gotten used to the thought that there is nothing terrible in nuclear war and that it is completely possible to make use of tactical nuclear weapons. In a word, they are being prepared for a lengthy war." The reason Moscow has formed these death squad-like detachments in occupied Crimea, Shmulyevich says, is that they can be used there, shifted to Russia itself, or used in the event of a war. They can suppress dissent on the Ukrainian peninsula, they can attack demonstrators in Russia, and they can become a target in the event of a war. The last feature is especially important for Moscow, he suggests, because in the event of a nuclear response against such forces in Crimea, "the radioactive cloud would not go toward Russia but toward [the rest of] Ukraine." What is also particularly worrisome, Shmulyevich says, is that "the Kremlin is actively organizing militarized 'Cossack' detachments in other countries including Belarus ([ru.krymr.com/a/27765937.html](http://ru.krymr.com/a/27765937.html)), Serbia ([facebook.com/radiosvoboda/videos/10155296320137554/](https://facebook.com/radiosvoboda/videos/10155296320137554/)) and "even the United States ([slavicsac.com/2017/08/25/russian-special-forces-usa/](http://slavicsac.com/2017/08/25/russian-special-forces-usa/)). This process involved "the ideological processing of people and the creation out of them of a certain 'fifth column,'" Shmulyevich says. "Moscow thus is creating a kind of 'cadres reserve' which then could be used for whatever it wants, beginning with intelligence and ending with various demonstrations in support of Russia or definite politicians." And "if a serious war should begin, it is not excluded that part of these people will be used for diversionary actions," Shmulyevich says. The phenomenon Shmulyevich points to is disturbing; and even though most of those swept up in Putin's militarization program won't end up in the kind of "death squads" the Israeli analyst suggests, some of them likely have and more may in the future, a dangerous trend that bears the closest possible monitoring.       

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The commentary above is from Paul Goble's "Window on Eurasia" series and appears here with the author's permission. Contact Goble at: [paul.goble@gmail.com](mailto:paul.goble@gmail.com)

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