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Moscow accuses Western media of 'hybrid aggression'

Journalists illegally crossing into Russia and spreading "Ukrainian Nazi propaganda" have "betrayed" their profession, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova has said



FILE PHOTO: Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova © Sputnik / Sergey Guneev

Western journalists echoing Ukrainian narratives while reporting from the occupied parts of Russia's Kursk Region are part of a massive hybrid warfare campaign aimed at Moscow, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova stated on Monday.

Zakharova was commenting on recent incidents involving journalists with the Italian state broadcaster Rai News 24 who illegally crossed into Russia while

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accompanied by Ukrainian troops, and then reported from areas in the Russian border region held by Kiev's forces. One such crew also interviewed a Ukrainian fighter openly wearing the insignia of a Waffen SS division.

Russian law enforcement authorities will *"provide a legal assessment of the actions of the foreign media correspondents,"* who entered Russia in violation of national law, Zakharova told the Russian newspaper Vzglyad, adding that *"criminal cases have been opened against a number of such foreign media representatives over illegal border crossing."*

The spokeswoman also slammed those who she said were *"getting directly involved in producing and spreading Ukrainian Nazi propaganda."* Such *"pseudo-reporters can only be described as traitors to their own profession,"* she said.



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Moscow treats such actions of the Western media *"as evidence of its direct involvement in ... the large-scale hybrid aggression against Russia,"* Zakharova said.

Rai had to recall two of its reporters back to Italy after Russia launched a criminal probe into their illegal presence in Kursk Region. Last Wednesday, the Italian state media outlet aired a TV report showing its crew embedded with the Ukrainian military driving deep into Russian territory.

Just days after the first incident, another video showing a separate Rai crew surfaced online. In that footage, correspondent Ilario Piagnerelli interviewed a Ukrainian soldier wearing a khaki cap adorned with the insignia of the 'Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler' SS division.

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The footage drew condemnation from the Russian Foreign Ministry, which accused the Italian broadcaster of normalizing Nazi symbols. Some people on social media also criticized Piagnerelli for interviewing a fighter displaying Nazi insignia.



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The reporter removed the video from his X account and published a lengthy post instead where he apologized for *"giving word, even if only for a few seconds, to a Ukrainian soldier... with a Nazi symbol."*

The journalist, who was filmed standing next to his Ukrainian interviewee, also claimed he noticed the patch on the cap only after his report was aired. Piagnerelli then blasted his critics as a *"network of pro-invasion profiles linked to Moscow"* that are supposedly intent on *"discrediting"* his work.

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