



MT Call sign / Monitors Names	Miriam Cias
Location (-s)	Kalanchak ABLCP
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INPUT

- **Asker battalion is losing its members due to the lack of finance**

While monitoring the situation at the Kalanchak border CP the shift commander informed the SMM that local population is dissatisfied with the Asker battalion. The problem lies not in the battalion itself, but with a number of its members – some of whom do not hide that they are members of ‘Grey Wolves’, a Turkish nationalist organization.

The SMM also spoke with a member of Asker of 35-40 years old who told that the prosecutor’s office is conducting a pre-trial procedure about the founding of Asker. All the custom and border posts staff are being questioned. The possible criminal prosecution does not bother him. In fact members of Asker are more concerned about the non-payment of salaries for the last 3 months. That is the reason of Asker losing ground (now their amount does not exceed 50 people) to other organizations. Moreover, members of Asker refuse to pass the polygraph test, which was introduced by a Shamil. According to the activist this is because the facts of their participation in blackmailing can become known. The interlocutor told the SMM that members of Asker join the ‘Aidar’ battalion as they do not trust L. Islyamov who lives in Kiev most of the time.

The SMM further spoke to two activists who introduced themselves as members of the ‘Aidar’ battalion who stated that they try to distance themselves from the Crimean battalion because SBU coordinates it.

- **The Azov-Black Sea Border Guard Regional Department is involved in oil smuggling operations**

An activist who introduced himself as a representative of the Auto-Maidan Kiev complained vis-à-vis the SMM that the Ukrainian government had betrayed their own people, by not supplying them with appropriate means to fight the Russian aggression in the east of the country. He informed the SMM that the amount of black-market dealers of diesel, gas, oil and petrol has dramatically increased in Kherson region. It seriously affects Ukrainian economics and regional budget. Corrupted representatives of the Azov-Black Sea Border Guard Regional Department are involved in these schemes.

Illegal oil products are delivered to the port of ‘Skadovsk’, port stations ‘Hola Pristan’ and ‘Nova Kahovka’ by small boats and barges from Turkish tankers situated in the Neutral waters of the Black Sea and delivered in fuel dispensers to secret releasing points. Illegal oil products are popular with private individuals and proprietors of agricultural enterprises who buy them at the price from 10 to 12 hryvnas while their market value amounts to 14 hryvnas.

FOLLOW-UP

The SMM will follow up on developments with Asker activities.