

## **Dossier on Benjamin Fischer, suspected of having committed war crimes in Ukraine**



### **This were the news May 2017 :**

An Austrian man suspected of war crimes in the conflict between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine was arrested in Poland at the Dorogusk-Yagodin border checkpoint on April 29, 2017. A European arrest warrant was issued a few weeks ago for the suspect, who supposedly fought on the Ukrainian side against the pro-Moscow separatists.

**The 25-year old is accused of "having killed soldiers involved in fighting at the Donetsk airport who had already surrendered and/or of having killed civilians".**

Only the Austrian media reported from day one that **the man had fought against the separatists on the Ukrainian side**. All the other western media distorted the facts.

**Polish media :** The Austrian presumably belonged to one of the military groups that participated in the warfare and executed wounded and prisoners. **Or :**

... this is the first case when the Polish-Ukrainian border detained a suspect of involvement in illegal armed formations on the Donbass.

**German media :** Demnach werde der Mann beschuldigt, an der Seite der prorussischen Rebellen in der Ostukraine gekämpft und mehrere Verletzte und Gefangene getötet zu haben.

**Ukrainian media :** ...suspected of involvement in Donbas illegal armed formations, torturing and murdering Ukrainian prisoners of war. **Or :**

...who may be involved in the murder of wounded and prisoners of the Ukrainian military in the Donbass. **Or :**  
In Poland, arrested an Austrian, fought for LDNR.

### **Closer look at this man and his background**

Name : **Benjamin Andreas Fischer**

Age : 25 years old. born September 9, 1991

Nationality : Austrian

Place of birth : Riezlern, Klein-Walsertal, Vorarlberg, Austria

Parents : **Mother Tunisian, father Austrian** (that's why Ben is so dark-skinned)

**Biography :** Ben was educated in the Muslim faith. At the age of fourteen, Fischer was sent off to a vocational school in Bregenz.

Since March 2007 he served in the voluntary fire brigade Riezlern. He learns violin and starts training as a ski instructor.

He forged his parents signatures in order to enlist in the Austrian Armed Forces 2009 at the age of 17. He joined the "Jägerbattalion 18", wanted to be deployed abroad, but failed twice in the qualifying examination. After finally completing the test in the third attempt, two missions in the Balkans ended with disappointments: bland patrols, not the hoped-for camaraderie, no practical tests. For six months he was in Prishtina, Kosovo on a KFOR-Mission. There Fischer decided to take an indefinite sick leave from the army (Ben's version).

**Other version :** 2013, the Austrian Bundesheer terminated his contract.

That means Ben served in the Austrian Bundesheer from 2009 to 2013.

Ben tells that he has trained in the security sector afterwards.

Six months later, he was on the Red Sea, where he had found work as security on a container ship. On his first stop in Mogadishu, port authorities disbanded his unlicensed crew.

**First version :** With a small layoff payment, he bought a ticket to Marseille, where the French Foreign Legion turned him down. The next months, he worked as a bouncer in Vienna.

**Second version :** Ben : *Then I went back to the Bundesheer for another two years, until the summer - from September / October I was in Ukraine.*

It could be that both versions are not right and Ben was already very early with the Right Sector on the Maidan !

Be it as it may, Ben went to the fronts, first **Donbass, supposedly only for two months**, then Syria and Iraq.

Quote VICE news : *Back in Austria, Fischer learned that he had been put on a terror watch list for having fought with Kurdish guerrillas associated with the PKK. The government told him to stay in the country, but he left for Tunisia, where his mother's family still lived.*

**He returned to Donbass in March 2015 again and was there until December 16, 2016.**

The Austrian TV channel ORF says that Ben came home, **allegedly because he was suspected of being a spy in Ukraine.**

Ben was only a few weeks at home in Riezlern.

He gave a long interview to the Austrian newspaper "Kurier".

In January he traveled to Switzerland, where he allegedly took care of goats on a farm.

Than for the third time he tried to travel to Ukraine via Poland.

**But on the Polish border he was arrested on April 29<sup>th</sup>.**

Quote Ben: *"War is for me like a drug, stronger than heroin."*

On Ben's right forearm "**Molon Labe**" is tattooed. "**Come and take them**", that means in ancient Greek. King Leonidas is said to have said that, as the Persians, who were far superior in numbers, had asked for the weapons of the Spartans before the Battle of Thermopylae.

Two swords tattooed on his right shoulder converge at a battle helmet.

## **Ben's "career" in Donbass, Syria and Iraq**

### **First time in Donbass :**

There are different information about his first stay in Ukraine.

November 21, 2014 Ben was interviewed by the Austrian journalist Pascal Pletsch in Syria :  
Quote : **Before the Vorarlberger traveled to Syria at the beginning of November, he apparently already had his first combat experiences in the Ukraine. There he fought on the side of the Ukrainian army in a volunteer battalion** against the separatists, as he said.

In a report of the Canadian magazine Vice, published June 20, 2016, the journalist Alexander Clapp met Ben in a Right Sector camp near Donetsk airport. Ben spoke about his first time in Ukraine.  
Quote : **In 2014 he was looking in Facebook for contacts with Donbass fighters and traveled to Kiev by bus. At Maidan Square, he found a recruiter for Azov, a white-supremacist battalion and one of the few volunteer militias then accepting foreign volunteers. Almost as soon as he entered, an Azov commander who thought he looked too Arab threw him out. Fischer transferred to the Donbas Battalion—"a bunch of alcoholics and PTSDs"—but saw little fighting when he bussed out to Donetsk; the first Minsk Protocol, which brokered a ceasefire, was signed just two days after he arrived.**

Minsk I was signed on 5 September 2014 in Minsk, Belarus.

Kurier.at on February 15, 2017 :

Quote : **Ben Fischer was thus at the front in the Ukraine, bored almost as much as in Kosovo, and researched another front, those against the IS in Iraq and Syria. He wanted to fight, not to watch.**

After Ben was arrested in Poland some journalists tried to get information about his time in Donbass. On May 1, 2017 the Austrian newspaper „Der Standard“ interviewed the speaker of the **Right Sector Jurij Grigorjew.**

Quote (translated) : **In the case of the presumed Austrian war criminal, which was detained in Poland in the weekend, it is said to be the Vorarlberg Benjamin F. According to Yuri Grigoriev, spokesman for the right-wing Ukrainian Prawy sector (PS). However, the spokesman of the PS also emphasized that F. did not belong to their military organization (DUK PS), but was registered with the battalion "Kyjiwska Rus" of the 59th Brigade of the Ukrainian armed forces. As a source for his information Grigoriev called fighters of the DUK PS, who would know the Austrian and had met him at the front. However, there were obviously contacts with the Austrian in the past. "We know he was with the Prawy sector during the Maidan," Grigoryev said.**

If Ben's participation in the Maidan is confirmed independently, the question arises why he has concealed this in all interviews.

With the battalion "Kyjiwska Rus" Yuri Grigoriev obviously refers to Ben's second stay in Donbass.

In videos published by Austrian "Kurier" Ben said, that he was a short time with **Azov**, then **Donbass Battalion**, but most time with **Right Sector**.

Ben also mentioned, that he was at Donetsk airport at the time Minsk I was agreed. As there was a ceasefire now only little fighting was possible. Too little for Ben. That was the reason to go to Syria.

## Stay in Syria and Iraq :

Ben's statements on his first stay in Ukraine can not be right !

He told journalists that he had arrived in Kiev on September 3, 2014 and would have stayed in Ukraine for two months.

But as early as the end of October 2014 he joined the Kurdish militia in Syria to fight ISIS.

**Reportly he was in Ra's al-'Ain and Al Qamishli.**

By this time at the latest, Ben had chosen his **nome de guerre "Sam Fisher"**, after a character in the computer game Splinter Cell.

October 30, 2014 a man named Mutlu Civiroglu tweeted :

[Austrian Sam Fisher reportedly joined #YPG to fight ISIS via 'Lions of Rojava' FB page.](#)

Photo Ben with a German Sheppard and an Ukrainian batch in the tweet.

November 2, 2014 Armed Research tweeted : [YPG Foreign Volunteers, the "Lions of Rojava". ID'd as Jeremy Woodard, Jordan Matson & Sam Fisher.](#)

Photo Ben with four comrades.

Mid-November, Ben gave interviews with some journalists in Syria.

November 10, 2014 the Austrian FM4 wrote :

Quote : [Kurdish defense forces have just been recruiting an Austrian online.](#)

[A number of volunteers from all over the world have already applied for the Kurdish "YPG" protection units, says Markus L. \\* \(real name hidden\). Markus has no Kurdish background, for him the fight against the IS is a principle. The former Bundesheer soldier has already fought abroad - for a volunteer battalion in Ukraine. Markus was also active as a security guard.](#)

[In several statements, the YPG has confirmed that volunteers from all over the world are being recruited via their own platform. Some of the recruits mentioned here are already found on group photos with Markus. A former employer also confirms his identity.](#)

[Markus stands on the roof of a house in the Cezire, the eastern one of three Kurdish enclaves in North-Syria. The battery of his friend's phone is weak, so we have to hurry.](#)

[Markus : \*I was for four years at the Bundesheer and in the summer of 2012 for a short time a security officer in Africa. Then I went back to the Bundesheer for another two years, until the summer - from September / October I was in Ukraine.\*](#)

**This is a new version !**

Ben had told another journalist that after Mogadishu he bought a ticket to Marseille, where the French Foreign Legion turned him down. The next months, he worked as a bouncer in Vienna.

Quote Austrian FM4 : [What was your motivation to go to Ukraine ?](#)

[Markus : \*I was at the Donbass battalion, our main area was in Donetsk. My motivation was that it was totally unjustified what Russia and Russian terrorists and separatists did there. Europe, of course, has just watched - so I joined \[the battalion Donbass\].\*](#)

[How was the arrival \[in Syria\] ?](#)

[Markus : \*Quite simply: \[I was\] picked up at the airport and then taken to Rojava \[the three "cantons" in the Kurdish settlement area in North-Syria\]. I flew from Ukraine via Istanbul \[to Iraq\]. Turkey sees the \[PKK-close\] YPG as a terrorist organization. Therefore it was not possible to bring along equipment.\*](#)

[The PKK is on the EU terrorist list. Is this a topic for you, what would be if you came back ?](#)

[Markus : \*No, I do not care at all. The fact that I am an Austrian citizen in the conflict in Ukraine and \[now\] here can lead to the loss of citizenship. Whether Austria regards the PKK as a terror organization, I do not care. We are not the PKK.\*](#)

November 12, 2014 the Austrian OE24 wrote :

Quote : *"What ISIS is doing here is terrible, the whole world is looking away, but I have decided to help here,"* says the Austrian, who is fighting alongside the Kurds against ISIS.

He is called "Benjamin", in a **video on the Washington Post website** he describes his mission.

We are sorry. **This video is no longer available.**

**He has now joined the Kurdish People's Defense Unit (YPG) in the Syrian border town of Ra's al-'Ain.** In the video, the mercenary is wearing a military uniform, a shield cap, bullet-proof vest, and patrol belts. *"We have to stop ISIS here before they come to Europe,"* he says. Alongside the Kurds is also fighting the US-Veteran Jeremy Woodland.

Jeremy Woodland or Jeremy Woodard ? It's not clear which name is the right one.

November 21, 2014 Pascal Pletsch (VOL.AT) wrote :

Quote : **According to own data the Vorarlberger is currently in Al Qamishli.** The city is located in the north-east of Syria, some five hours by car from Kobane. There he joined a Kurdish militia. Photo Ben with two comrades.

But when you read Alexander Clapp in his VICE article on June 20, 2016 you get the impression that Ben was only in Iraq.

Quote : Looking for his next move [after leaving Ukraine], Fischer used Facebook to contact an American who had joined the Kurdish People's Protection Units, in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq.

**A Dutch-Kurdish motorcycle gang eventually brought the two to the front lines near Kirkuk,** where they saw spurts of action against ISIS.

*"I liked the Kurds and respect their fight, but those people have a problem: They're convinced everyone is out to betray them,"* he said. The Kurds did everything they could to break up groups of foreign fighters, to get non-practicing Muslims to pray with them, to pry foreign volunteers away from their smartphones. Fischer's commander was "brainwashed."

An interview he gave to a local news channel made its way to Austrian television, and his parents sent him alarmed emails, which he ignored. **One night, in an encampment near Mosul,** an American Black Hawk helicopter landed. A soldier emerged and told the Kurds to disband foreigners from their ranks or risk losing American cooperation. Compared with the others, the foreigners were much more active on social media. They risked spilling operational secrets and increasing tensions with Turkey.

Back in Austria, Fischer learned that ....

So Alexander Clapp miss Syria and the other media miss Iraq.

### **Second time in Donbass :**

**In February or March 2015 Ben returned to Ukraine** and fought there against the separatists as member of the "Right Sector".

Quote: Fischer was just visiting his grandmother, when a former comrade from the army, who was in Poland and on the way to the Ukrainian front, called him, and Fischer, he did not think long, but set out for Ukraine again.

Quote : In Sousse (Tunisia), he received a Facebook message from **Alex Kirschbaum**, an Austrian army comrade he hadn't seen since Kosovo. *"Alex wrote me saying that he'd just deserted the army,"* Fischer said. *"He couldn't stand Austria anymore. He was going to Ukraine."*

The next day, Fischer began making his way back to Kiev.



For Kirschbaum and Fischer both, Ukraine became an outlet for nationalism that they consider in desperately short supply elsewhere in Europe.

*"Where death is, everything is much more alive"*

**Two of the four comrades with whom he ended up in Donbass left Ukraine quickly. They all knew each other from the Austrian army, had the same military instructor.**

August 19, 2015 Ben appears in a video alongside the Austrian Alex Kirschbaum and the American Craig Lang. The video is titled "11 батальйон "Київська Русь" (нагородження)" which is **11<sup>th</sup> battalion "Kyiv Rus" (award)**

The subtext says : **"96 days soldiers of the battalion "Kyiv Rus" held the mine "Butovka" near the Donetsk airport."**

**Ben is awarded with a medal** and is clearly seen at the stage.

This video is the proof that **Ben officially served in the 11<sup>th</sup> battalion "Kyiv Rus", fought at Donetsk airport and was awarded with a medal. The same applies to Alex Kirschbaum and Craig Lang.**

December 16, 2015 **André Widmer** (NZZ.ch) visited the base camp of Right Sector near Krasnoarmiisk.

Quote NZZ : **From Vojvane to the base camp of the Right Sector near Krasnoarmiisk it is about 30 kilometers to the west.** Here, the fighters bunked in a former worker camp. On the heavily guarded terrain, the flag of Ukraine and the red and black banner of the Right Sector waves. In the messy accommodation dwell a dozen men between 20 and 50 years as well as a young Ukrainian woman, who claims to be a drone pilot.

Among the fighters, however, are not only strict Ukrainian nationalists. **In the base camp near Krasnoarmiisk, for example, foreigners are also present : an American with Iraq and Afghanistan experience, two Austrians and a Hungarian with Swiss past.** They have different motives, but often they are simply looking for war.

Not primarily racism but distrust of the own political elite in Kiev and its western partners seems to join the members of the right sector. This also applies to **"Podolanin", the commander of the base camp.** The small burly man with shaved skull sits on the upper floor in a dark corner under a red-black flag. **Podolanin is one of the volunteers who took part in the fighting around Donetsk Airport in the winter.**

**In his article André Widmer gives good indications to the location of forward and base camp.**

From Vojvane (forward camp) 30 kilometers to the west near Krasnoarmiisk (now Pokrowsk). Vojvane is located 3km north of Pisky and 3km north-west of Donetsk airport.

**A look at the map hints to a coal mine 2km south of Novogradovka and 500m north of Mykhailivka.** Krasnoarmiisk is the closest major city.

Name of the place : **Rossiya Metallurgical Coal Mine.**

This is the same location described by **Timo Vogt**, a freelance photojournalist based in Germany, on March 25, 2016 in an article titled **"The Boom Stick Brotherhood"** and by **Alexander Clapp** in his VICE article on June 20, 2016 ! (See later)

#### **Disturbing news from Novogradovka :**

Quote (translated from Russian) : **Local residents report that an unofficial prison for the so-called "separatists and terrorists" has been set up in the area of the Rossiya (Novogradovka) mine,** where several hundred prisoners of local residents and militiamen are located. They are tortured and even killed. Many of the people there are listed as missing. Relevant inquiries about Avdeevka, and **about the mine in Novogradovka,** we will prepare and send to the SBU.

[https://vk.com/wall75117363\\_119471](https://vk.com/wall75117363_119471)

### **“Georgian National Legion” and “Kievan Rus”**

The „**Georgian National Legion**“ became a part of the Ukrainian Armed Forces early 2016.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Territorial Defence Battalion "**Kievan Rus**" form part of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and is subordinated to the Ministry of Defence. "Kievan Rus" is the only division in which foreigners may officially serve. It's an entirely voluntary battalion.

**The decree allowing foreigners or stateless persons to serve in the Armed Forces was signed by the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko in November 2015.** It should be noted that the withdrawal of units, staffed by foreigners, from the conflict zone in the Donbass was one of the points of the Minsk agreements, which the Ukrainian government ignored in passing this law.

February 2016 **Craig Lang** appeared on a press conference in Kiev along with **Brian Christopher Boyenger**, an American sniper, and another US citizen, **Dave Clemen**.

Quote Boyenger : *"Our salary under the contract was only a few thousand hryvnia, I never even checked the balance on my bank card."*

At this press conference the commander of the “Georgian National Legion”, **Maumuka Mamulashvili**, said :

Quote **Mamulashvili** : *“According to my information, this is the first precedent when a US citizen is involved in the fighting and will represent one of the Ukrainian battalions in the Georgian Legion. We expect more volunteers from the US to join us. The first group will consist of 10 people. They will take a direct part in the fighting in the east of Ukraine. Previously, they were instructors but now they will take part in the hostilities themselves.”*

Mamulashvili explained that the **“Georgian National Legion” is an informal name of the unit which is a part of the battalion “Kievan Rus”**. He said that in his unit there is a French citizen who, however, asked not to be named, as well as representatives of some other European countries.

April 3, 2016 „Ukraine Today“ published a video titled **„Ukraine's Foreign Legion: Americans and Georgians officially serving in Donbas“**

Subtext : The so-called ‘**Georgian legion**’ is made up a number of veterans from the former Soviet republic who are now fighting alongside Ukrainian troops. They all have higher education, one even took his degree in France.

For three Americans now also fighting Russian-backed separatist forces – it was an easy decision to join them. With the Georgians, it's always lively. No matter how much they come under fire – they always sing.

Fueled by their losses and their hopes the Georgian volunteer fighters have been taking part in the Russian war against pro-Russian separatists. They've got too much behind them, in particular, their military experience which is precisely on demand here in the frontline.

**But the door is open not only for Georgians. Several US veterans have joined their armed group. The fact which makes it the very first international unit within Ukrainian ranks.**

**In the video you see Ben Fischer, Craig Lang, Quinn Rickert and Brian Christopher Boyenger amongst others.**

Craig Lang even gives an interview before the ceremony starts, posing in front of tank number 321.

**Ben signs the contract for the “Georgian legion”. The participants are given military IDs.**

Craig and Brian present their new ID proudly to the camera. It can not be seen in the video, but other photos show Ben with his military ID, too.

**Evgeniy Lavrov gives a statement about the „Georgian legion“. He is the battalion commander of 11<sup>th</sup> Territorial Defence Battalion "Kievan Rus" at this time.**

**This raises the question how it is possible that Ben served in two bataillons ? In the "Kievan Rus" and at the same time with the Right Sector in the „Task Force Pluto“ ?**

April 27, 2016 „Rusvesna.su“ published an article titled :

„Sensational video: a joint "safari" trip in the suburbs of Donetsk - ATO and Austrian neo-Nazis“  
„Rusvesna.su“ links to a video where several ATO member are seen driving on an armoured vehicle on the roads of the small village Opytne, north of the Donetsk airport. They are obviously delighted to drive through a destroyed village whose inhabitants are hiding in the cellars. Participants in the “safari” are among others Ben Fischer, Alex Kirschbaum, Craig Lang, Quinn Rickert and Santi Pirtle. This means that the members of the "**Task Force Pluto**" were already fighting side by side at this time. (See later)

May 16, 2016 Ben gave an interview in Donbass to BelSat TV. He stated that he was in **Donbass Battalion**, short time with **Azov**, most time with **Pravy Sektor (Right Sector)**.

The same he has told „Kurier“.

**The video verifies : He hates Putin and the separatists, is not fond of the Ukrainian army, Poroshenko and the Minsk deal. He predicts a second revolution in Ukraine with Right Sector at the front.**

In the video **Ben is together with his Austrian friend Alex Kirschbaum and the American Craig Lang**. They are posing in front of a tank, which they have obviously captured from the separatists. Also seen are the Americans **Santi Pirtle and Quinn Rickert**.

### **“Volvika Tactical Group” near Novogradovka (Nowohrodovka) :**

**Alexander Clapp** in his VICE article on June 20, 2016 !

Quote VICE News : **The Voloveka Tactical Group** is named after a Right Sectorite who was killed by a land mine in Donetsk. **Novogradovka is the closest village of their base camp**. The group members belonged to the Cyborgs who fought at the Donetsk airport.

Quote : Every human impulse was exaggerated in the Voloveka. When keys were misplaced, doors were blown in with TNT. Walnuts were cracked open with grenades. A few weeks before I'd arrived, a Ukrainian named Geronimo beheaded a cat after he caught it peeing on his bed. The members of the Voloveka frequently boasted that they possessed enough explosives to eradicate a small Ukrainian oblast.

Quote : When Ben Fischer stepped out of his jeep at the barracks of the **Voloveka Tactical Group**, in Donetsk, Ukraine, **last May**, he was a mercenary arriving to work on his third continent in as many years. The scene at the headquarters of **a rogue unit within the rogue Ukrainian nationalist group known as Right Sector** wavered between utter chaos and manic discipline. A great red banner hung along the side of the barracks facing east: DEATH TO YOU KREMLIN INVADERS. **In a barren plain of coal pits and black sludge**, Fischer found what he had come for: an experience full of violence and adventure. Right Sector is committed to ejecting Russian separatists from Ukrainian soil. **The Voloveka, a Right Sector contingent consisting of 27 men, had established a forward base six miles from the border of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic.**

By the time Fischer arrived, it had become an anarchic force that answered to no authority but itself.

Alexander Clapp writes his article as if Ben arrived at the Rossiya Metallurgical Cole Mine in May 2016 : **“last May”**. And he even indicates that Ben came directly from Syria right now :

**“a mercenary arriving to work on his third continent”**. Did Ben told him that ?

Anyway, thanks to André Widmer's article, we know that Ben has been there since December 2015, if not earlier.

Neither Alexander Clapp nor André Widmer mentioned that Ben was in the “Georgian legion” or in the 11<sup>th</sup> battalion "Kyiv Rus". Ben had NOT left the service in "Kyiv Rus". But he did not carry the badge at this time. **In general, it looks as if Ben changed the badges like the shirts.**



On November 14, 2016 Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab wrote :

Quote : In June 2016, VICE News published a fascinating account of the Right Sector-aligned **"Volvika Tactical Group"** (incorrectly spelled "Voloveka" in the VICE article) in the Donbass. **The group was named after Vsevolod Volovik (codenamed "Seva"), a Right Sector fighter who died near the Donetsk Airport in November 2014.**

There are numerous accounts in Ukrainian news and social media of Right Sector's presence in **Novogradovka**, including unearthed caches of military equipment affiliated with the group and **apparently illegal prisons targeting separatists that may have Right Sector involvement.**

Additionally, Novogradovka reportedly contains fugitives from the summer 2015 shootout involving Right Sector members in the Ukrainian town in Mukacheve, which led to multiple deaths. **As seen with the participation of foreign fighters, including Ben Fischer, Novogradovka exists in a different world than the rest of Ukraine in relation to the enforcement of the law.**

### **Popasna, Luhansk region on July 23 and 30, 2016** **Photos show Ben posing with death separatists**

May 20, 2017 Martin Staudinger wrote an long article in „Profil.at“ titled :

**Als Söldner in der Ukraine: Spitzname "Ben Laden"**

Staudinger is obviously in possession of photos to which the prosecutor's office Wiener Neustadt wants to base their charge against Ben.

The photos are from 23<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> July 2016 and were made near Popasna, Luhansk region.

Quote : **A soldier, a knife, a corpse: The soldier stretches the thumb of the right hand upwards, the knife in his left points to the ear of the corpse, the corpse lacks half of the forearm. The photo, on which the horrible scene is documented, was taken near the village of Poposna in the Eastern Ukraine on July 30, 2016, the dead man is a pro-russian separatist, and the man who poses next to him is an Austrian citizen - Ben F., born and grew up in Vorarlberg, Kleinwalsertal.**

Ben is in Popasna with an official service contract and as member of the 11<sup>th</sup> battalion of the Ukrainian Army.

Staudinger was able to find a comrade of Ben, who describes under which circumstances the photos were made.

Quote : Igor (name changed by the editor) has known Ben F. since April 2015 and since then has always served together with him - both in the "Right Sector" and in the army.

The Ukrainian wants to remain anonymous, but his identity is known to the editor and has been confirmed, among other things, by means of photographs, in which he is seen together with Ben F.

Igor told Staudinger the following hair-raising story:

According to Igor, some members of Ben's reconnaissance group are serving on Saturday, July 23, in a hidden observation post west of Popasna. The observation post is 700 meters behind the Ukrainian and only 400 meters in front of the pro-russian lines in a bush, but is unknown to the opposite side.

At about eight o'clock in the morning, the Ukrainians notice that their position is approached by two separatists - apparently with the aim of mining the terrain. The two men are just about to stumble into the trenches of the observation post as they strike out.

One of the pro-russian fighters is mowed down with the machine gun, the second one is wounded when a projectile hits his Kalaschnikov and makes it unusable. He lays only a few meters in front of the post of the reconnaissance group. "We heard him moaning all the time," Igor says.

Nevertheless, the separatist does not give up, he rather throws two grenades. The Ukrainians call for reinforcements, a second reconnaissance group arrives, whose commander decides that the

wounded is to be captured alive.

In attempting to accomplish this, the enemy ignites another grenade, which requires two injured men. A fourth grenade explodes at his body when he is hit by a shot : "His arm was torn off and flown through the air like a piece of shrapnel," says Igor unmoved.

In the meantime, the third reinforcement group has arrived at the battlefield - and only with them, Igor says, Ben F. arrived. He as a "tactical medic" is to investigate the two dead men, who have now been dragged into the trenches.

On this occasion one of those photos was made, on which the Vorarlberger poses with a corpse. "The people in the pictures were already dead before Ben arrived - and no one did any shit with them," says his comrade Igor.

### **This is the July 23 story. Now the July 30 story :**

Quote : But there is at least another relevant photo of Ben. A week later, a similar situation occurs near the scene of the first battle. On July 30, another Saturday, the pro-russian troops attacked again the now known positions of the Ukrainians. Two enemy spotters fall down 50 meters off the army's trench, Ben's unit is called to retrieve the dead.

Again he is portrayed with a cruelly mutilated corpse. And once again, his former fellow fighter Igor (who was at the scene) swears, that the Austrian was not involved in the killing of separatists. He had simply taken them over to the headquarters of the battalion. Later the bodies were handed over to the separatists in the course of an exchange against fallen Ukrainian soldiers.

Igor's story is already questionable by what Ukrainian media wrote about the July 23 incident.

Quote „Ukraineunderattack“ : On July 23, Russia-backed militants attempted to assault Ukrainian positions in Popasna area, Luhansk region. As a result, **two militants were killed and eight were wounded**, said Col. Valentyn Buryachenko, head of the ATO HQ, at a press briefing in Kramatorsk. **One of the dead militants had insignia of a so-called “1st Platov Kozak Regiment” on his uniform.**

### **Inconsistencies :**

„attempted to assault Ukrainian positions“ - Igor said their observation post was “unknown to the opposite side”.

„two militants were killed and eight were wounded“ - Igor said „their position is approached by two separatists - apparently with the aim of mining the terrain.” What about the eight wounded separatists, who Igor not even mentioned ?

The ATO HQ does not report the two Ukrainians injured by a grenade, as Igor said.

But on the Ukrainian side were not only badly wounded fighters but also a dead one.

August 5, 2016 the Ukrainian “Censor.net” bewailed this dead fighter :

Quote : 26-year-old **Roman Matviiets** of the 8th Spetsnaz regiment **was killed near Popasna**, the Luhansk region, **covering three gravely wounded soldiers: his commander, Major Yevhen Slominskiy and two scouts of the 11th Kyivska Rus Battalion Petro Korsak and Serhii Vovchuk.**

### **Now “Censor.net” present the third version of the July 23 story :**

Quote : "Over the night Saturday [July 23 - ed.] our positions were actively shelled by the enemy artillery," **Serhii Vovchuk ('Vovk')** says. **"In the morning, an assault started. We were firing back for about 30 minutes.** When it quieted down, we approached the bodies of two killed soldiers. One of them turned out wounded, not killed. **He threw a grenade at me.** I was knocked senseless by the explosion. I regained consciousness in a trench, where I was dragged into by our guys. **The one who threw the grenade was killed in the explosion.** Those killed did not look like rebels. They had perfect teeth, similar haircuts, they even had manicured nails. And they were sharp dressed in the same uniform. **According to the documents we found, it was the 9th regiment of the Russian**

**army's marines.** As long as the assault quieted down, **we took away the two bodies,** ammunition, weapons, and phones and brought it all to the battalion's staff.

"Upon return, we realized the enemy was again trying to break through our defense line. Russians - about 28 people, they say - were walking along the forest to the strong point called 'Sherman'."

**"A group from the 8th Spetsnaz regiment commanded by Roman Matviets was ordered to come to the aid to the 11th battalion,"** Major of the 8th Spetsnaz regiment Yevhen Slominskyi, call sign Hulk, continues. "I work here as an operations officer. Roman asked me: 'Major, will you go with us?' I was ready in a moment. Together with scouts of the 11th battalion we had to check the strong point that we lost communication with. By that time, it had been fired upon by two tanks and SP guns."

**"We had three people wounded,** one of them with a damaged artery," Serhii Vovchuk adds.

**„We aided those wounded and evacuated them.** We checked the strong point, the trenches - no one was there. **Then we advanced:** we needed to see whether there were any mines or tripwires there. And then we were forced to take ground. Artillery resumed fire upon the strong point - we couldn't raise our heads. That allowed an assault group of the enemy approaching us, with a machine gun and four rifles firing. The enemy was 15 meters next to us.

**The rifles silenced really fast. But the machine gunner has a convenient position that prevented us from neutralizing him."**

"It was a professional," Spetsnaz soldier Slominskyi says. "He was not aiming to kill us. He wanted to take captives. Boroda had his knee shot. My both hands were shot. And Vovk's arms were wounded as well."

His comrade Vovk adds about him: "Hulk's right hand bones were broken, his left hand crushed to pulp, but he somehow managed to fire a shot at the machine gunner. I still do not get how he did that."

Slominskyi goes on: "Roma saw it all and realized we had been wounded. He simply moved out in the direction of the machine gunner, covering the three of us. The guy realized he would not escape, so he tried to kill us, the wounded. He shot me again, hitting my chest with one bullet, and a grenade with another. **Matviets continued approaching the enemy and shooting. He silenced him after all.** I suppose he did it hand in hand. Although he was wounded as well."

By his heroic act, Roman allowed the wounded to crawl to the trenches where two more soldiers were remaining, and then to the infantry. His comrades wanted to find Roma and get him out of the battlefield.

**"In addition, our anti-tank gunner Serhii 'Bulka' [Shadskykh - ed.] was killed the same day. Eight people were wounded !"**

**"The killed Spetsnaz soldier was found soon after the skirmish. His lungs and liver artery were hit. He had no chances to survive... An enemy machine gun was found near him. The body of the machine gunner had been taken away by the enemy."**

**"Again, on July 23, two soldiers of the Ukrainian army were killed and nine injured near Popasna solely."**

This is a completely different version than what Igor told Staudinger and ATO HQ told the public ! What is important for the court hearing against Ben : The witness Serhii Vovchuk told nothing about a second and third reinforcement group ! **So Ben was there from the beginning.** Guess why it was him who posed like a trophy hunter ?

It was only **after** the corpses of the two separatists had been removed that reinforcements came. Then a **new** fight started and obviously another five separatists and the Ukrainian Roman Matviets were killed.

Probably none of the three versions are true. But this a court will have to clarify.

**Igor is most probably one of the two "Kievan Rus" guys Petro Korsak or Serhii Vovchuk.**

Vovchuk told "Censor.Net": **"One of them turned out wounded, not killed. He threw a grenade at me."** But obviously, he got bullet wounds !

March 3, 2017 "Ukraine Weekly" wrote : **In the summer of 2016, Serhiy Vovchuk suffered two bullet wounds to his left arm in the frontline town of Popasna in Luhansk Oblast from combined Russian-separatist forces.**

After undergoing four operations to restore functionality of his hand and fingers, Mr. Vovchuk, of the Kyivska Rus' 11th Motorized Infantry Battalion, had his tendons repaired by a group of Canadian surgeons on February 27 at the Defense Ministry's Main Military Hospital.

### **"BEN LADEN"**

May 1, 2017 a user named **"kagemushanatako"** wrote a blockpost titled

***"Austrian citizen arrested for participation in hostilities on the side of Ukraine"***.

Quote (translated) : **And here are the details, appeared thanks to the recording of Nazi bastard Natalia Kravets in Facebook: Austrian "BEN LADEN", name Benjamin Andreas Fischer.**

"kagemushanatako" links to the Facebook account of **Natalia Kravets** (Наталья Кравец), where she shares some photos of "Ben Laden".

The FB post is dated **August 10, 2016**.

**You see Ben in full combat gear. On the chest he is wearing a badge "BEN LADEN" and a badge "UA ARMY". On the right arm you see the badge of the 11<sup>th</sup> Territorial Defence Battalion "Kievan Rus", underneath the "Molon Labe" badge. On the left arm a white cross. In other photos there is the badge of "Right Sector" instead of the white cross on the left arm.**

Natalia Kravets wrote a long story about the "brave BEN LADEN", titled (translated) :

**"BEN LADEN": if Ukrainians want to save the country, they must fight.**

**Quote : This is Benjamin Andreas Fischer, a 24-year-old Austrian who came to fight for Ukraine.** (..) Ben told that he is fighting here not with local separatists, but with the Russian army. *"We hear on the radio what they are talking about, they know when they will shoot, they are more prepared, they are not "miners". They use new weapons, which are available for the army, they have very different RPGs.*

**Fischer is a tactical physician.** After serving in the army fought in Syria, Iraq, now he is fighting for Ukraine. **He fought in the battalion "Donbass", "Right Sector", now - in 11<sup>th</sup> "Kievan Rus" [11 бат "Киевская Русь"]**.

The guy says that people in Ukraine are very fond of money and have lost love for the country, lost patriotism. *"Ukraine is a country of businessmen, and it is in the hands of these businessmen. In Kiev, every third car costs half a million dollars, but the soldiers do not have good weapons and ammunition. People are selfish,"* Ben sums up.

The warrior with chevron "Ben Laden" makes his intricate idea, trains, and I hunt him for a photo shoot :)

October 27, 2016 a video was published, titled :

Зустріч воїнів АТО (11 батальйон "Київська Русь")

**Meeting soldiers ATO (11 battalion "Kievan Rus")**

Many fighters of the 11 battalion "Kievan Rus" participated in a welcome ceremony.

**Among the men is Ben Fischer.**

Februar 2017 the Austrian "Kurier" published a long dossier about Ben titled :

**"Fischer zieht in den Krieg"**

Ben gave the "Kurier" a long interview and provided his photos and videos.

As Ben speaks about his entire war experience, his statements are incorporated into this document at various points.

Ben : ***"Right at the front there is only meat."***





### **“Task Force Pluto”**

**Ben became the leader of his own small unit within the “Volvika Tactical Group” :**

Quote “Kurier” : For more than a year and a half he stayed at the front, somewhere between Luhansk and Mariupol, he lived the war like a great adventure. **He was the leader of his own small unit, consisting of three Americans and another Austrian. “Task Force Pluto” they called themselves, they were integrated into the troops of the "Right Sector".**

The "Kurier" showed a group photo of the "Task Force Pluto". But they blurred the face of Alex Kirschbaum and did not mention the names of the three Americans.

March 25, 2016 **Timo Vogt**, a freelance photojournalist based in Germany, wrote an article titled **“The Boom Stick Brotherhood”**.

Quote : Fascinated by war and influenced by nationalistic beliefs, five volunteers left Europe and the United States to go fight in Ukraine. **The military adventurers go by the names Ben, Alex, Craig, Charlie and Cowboy.** They joined a unit operated by the right-wing militia Right Sector



that fights alongside the Ukrainian army.

The foreign fighters cannot be called mercenaries: they received no pay, only shelter, food and ammo. **They quickly forged a self-made battle group, which they called Task Force Pluto.**

They were drawn to Ukraine not by politics, but by a desire to live dangerously. They want to be involved in live combat – not get their thrills through some video game.

Task Force Pluto is a multi-national, multi-religious and multi-ethnic group.

**Ben** is a former soldier of the Austrian Armed Forces who has been travelling hot zones for years.

He has seen action in Kosovo, Syria, Iraq and Ukraine.

**Alex**, another former Austrian soldier, deserted and fled the country in order to travel the world in search of armed combat.

**Craig** fought for almost six years in the US Army in Iraq and Afghanistan, but he got in trouble with the law after returning home. He evaded prison by going abroad.

**Charlie** was totally bored by his Californian routine in Silicon Valley, so he opted for a military lifestyle. He tried to enlist in the US Army, but was rejected. It was the same story when he tried to join the French Foreign Legion. But where there is a will, there is a way, and he eventually found there was a place for him on the frontlines in Ukraine.

**Cowboy** is another American who has had trouble with staying on the right side of authority. He got in trouble with American police only days before his US Army unit was to be deployed to Afghanistan. He also tried unsuccessfully to get into the French Foreign Legion. But he, like Charlie, got what he wanted in Ukraine after finding disappointment in France.

**Timo Vogt added a lot of photos with the “Task Force Pluto” in action. His website is “randbild/photography”.**

Timo Vogt was accompanied by André Widmer (NZZ.ch). They spent a week with Ben & Co. April 7, 2016 they published a joint article in the Swiss WOZ with a slide show. Their story reads like a front report with almost undisguised admiration.

Quote : From the direction of a pro-russian sniper bullets hiss by. Ben and Alex run in the ditch to their position to shoot back. Everyday life at the front in Donbass. The five brothers in arms from Europe and the USA call themselves "Task Force Pluto". They have joined a unity of the radical nationalist grouping Prawyj Sektor (Right Sector) - the only volunteer battalion in Ukraine, which could not yet be integrated into the state security agencies. **Thanks to some well-intentioned army commanders, the members of the group still come to the front.**

**The volunteers are welcome in the army**, because they bring not only high motivation but also weapons and ammunition. In the region around Donetsk airport, the men of the Right Sector, with their about a dozen fighters, are now a welcome addition - just now the Ukrainian army has withdrawn 51 men. Without the volunteers, several positions could not be filled up continuously. Only the skeletons are left of the terminals. Now, the war parties at the airport have been fighting for many months from established lines. A positional war without terrain gain.

Ukrainians are currently refraining from the use of artillery. For Ben, therefore, it is clear: *"If the Russians come, we can only run."* He is fully aware of the relative strengths in this war.

However, like the other foreign fighters, Ben identifies with the aim of the Ukrainian army to stop the action of Russian President Vladimir Putin in the east of Ukraine. And he shares the radical-nationalist ideology of the Right Sector. ***"When people lose their national pride and their traditions, they also lose their faces," says Ben.*** Does he represent a Nazi ideology ? No, he rather regrets that everything in Austria goes down the chute.

**Alex thinks alike.** Yes, he is nationalist, he admits. He is angry about some Ukrainians who are involved in the Right Sector. *"The biggest problem is that most of them are would-be nationalists and think they are big fighters."* Alex believes that a country without national pride loses its tradition and culture. *"This has been the case in Austria for a long time,"* says the young man.

**Since a few weeks ago, his commander has perished by a hand grenade explosion, Ben has the**

**say on the front.** The son of Austrian-Tunisian parents is still not a 25-year-old, but a well-travelled man in the matter of military and war.

**The perished commander is named Simeon.** The VICE article tells the whole disgusting story.

April 27, 2016 „Rusvena“ published an article titled :

**Sensational video: a joint trip to the "safari" in the suburbs of Donetsk**

**APU and Austrian neo-Nazis**

Quote : At the presented shots, the **neo-Nazi mercenaries from Austria, together with the occupation forces of the Ukrainian Armed Forces**, drove out to hunt people in the suburbs of Donetsk, not far from the airport.

"Russian Spring" with the help of local residents managed to identify this video. **It was filmed at the end of March or the beginning of April of this year in Opytne near the Donetsk airport.**

**The added video captures all five members of the Task Force Pluto :**

**Ben, Alex, Craig, Cowboy and Charly.**

They drive with an armed vehicle through the totally destroyed village of Opytne. There are several other men, some of whom belong to the Ukrainian army.

The group obviously enjoyed the trip. The talks are conducted in Russian and English.

### **Ben Fischer's comrades in "Task Force Pluto" :**

Quote "Kurier" : Fischer tells stories like those of Craig, the US American he fought with, and who had tried to kill his wife because she sent him videos of sex with other men.

Quote VICE news : Two years ago, Lang made local headlines when he deserted Fort Bliss in El Paso after his pregnant wife sent him videos of her sleeping with other men. Lang loaded his car with body armor, night-vision goggles, and two assault rifles, and he drove nonstop to North Carolina, where he set up a perimeter of land mines around her condominium and attempted to murder her. He only got several months' jail time because, he says, the US Army knew that he had mental problems and did nothing to address them. *"I told my commanders repeatedly that I was going to murder her,"* he said. *"The motherfuckers thought I was bluffing."* **Lang received a dishonorable discharge, losing all veteran's benefits, health insurance, and his gun license.**

You can see **Craig Lang** in this video : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIYL2O4xRe0>

Quote VICE news : Three weeks before I visited Novogrodovka, I met **two Americans** in Kiev. **Quinn Rickert** of Illinois and **Santi Pirtle** of California were in their early 20s and had checked into the Delil Hostel, where I overheard them hashing out their plans to join Right Sector. **Craig Lang**, whom Rickert had found on Facebook, had told them which trains could take them to Novogrodovka.

Rickert had met Pirtle weeks before in Paris, where the French Foreign Legion had rejected both of them. *"The legion doesn't accept criminals, but I thought it would respect my honesty,"* Rickert told me. When he was 18, Rickert had joined the US Army, but he never got the chance to deploy and mostly did desk work on bases in Georgia and Virginia. During one leave, Rickert and a friend were caught stealing car parts from auto dealerships in suburban Chicago. He spent a year behind bars and jumped parole to come to Ukraine. *"If I ever go back to the US, I'll spend seven years in jail,"* he said.

**Pirtle is half-Filipino, half-black, with glasses and a stubble of dark hair on his chin.** Pirtle was in Ukraine because he despised American culture, which he considers frivolous and too in thrall to celebrities.

**Small talk wheeled around the different preferred methods for killing separatists.** A Texan named Russell Bentley was known to be fighting for one of the Donetsk battalions. *"He's not from Texas," Lang said. "He's a piece-of-shit communist from Austin."* *"Would killing him get you in trouble with US law?" Rickert asked.* *"No," he replied.*

The VICE article mentioned all **members of "Task Force Pluto"** :  
Austrian **Benjamin Fischer (Ben or Sam Fischer)** and **Alex Kirschbaum (Alex)**  
Americans **Quinn Rickert (Cowboy)**, **Craig Lang (Craig)** and **Santi Pirtle (Charlie)**



### **Evidence of possible war crimes committed by the "Task Force Pluto":**

- 1) Quote : A soldier, a knife, a corpse: The soldier stretches the thumb of the right hand upwards, the knife in his left points to the ear of the corpse, the corpse lacks half of the forearm. The photo, on which the horrible scene is documented, was taken near the village of Poposna in the Eastern Ukraine on July 30, 2016, the dead man is a pro-russian separatist, and the man who poses next to him is an Austrian citizen - Ben F., born and grew up in Vorarlberg, Kleinwalsertal.
- 2) Quote : Ben tells of his crazy colleague, who asked him what to do with the prisoner in the neighbor room : *"Fischer, may I cut him off his ear ?"* And the worst was, says Fischer, *"you never knew if he meant it seriously or not. But I am sure, would I have said "yes", he had done it."* Ben tells of the other comrades who had "destroyed" the prisoner a little later, *"you could not see his eyes anymore, his face was too swollen."*
- 3) There are photos on which Fischer draws dead Russians behind him. Videos, where he sits in a pickup truck, with dead tortured corpses lying on the loading area. All journalists who have seen or

even collected such material should contact the Wiener Neustadt public prosecutor.

4) Quote : At some point, Ben Fischer says, *"Lying I find worse than shooting someone's head"*; he thinks shortly after what he said, *"But ..."* and then: *"Yes, sure"*.

Ben Fischer's image of the world is one in which the definitions of good and evil are distorted to the point of being unrecognizable. And he himself does not know where to put himself.

5) Quote : For Ben, the war has long become a *raison d'être*. Killing in combat is part of it: *"It is quite normal for me because I have been mentally prepared for it and have ideals for which I am entitled."* He kills people who are paid for invading a foreign country and destroying life and future, Ben believes.

6) Quote : Several weeks before I (the author of the article Alexander Clapp) visited the Voloveka, a man had been picked up wandering the streets of Novogrodovka at night, drunk. Police confiscated his phone and found photos of him posing in front of Donetsk tanks on VK, a popular social network among Russian speakers. **They brought him to the Right Sectorites, who locked him in a standing-room-only shower stall. The lights stayed on for a week. They beat him with a sock stuffed with sharpened rocks. They stripped him of his clothes and made him clean the barracks on his knees.** An interrogation session involving repeated threats of deportation to Guantánamo Bay revealed only that the man came from a local village and apparently knew nothing about rebel troop movements. After a week, the police picked him back up and brought him to Kiev—presumably for a jail sentence, though no one could tell me what actually happened to him. *"It is a pity to have to beat these people," Kirschbaum said. "But I'd have more sympathy for them if we got any sort of similar treatment in Donetsk. Right Sector members captured there get their noses and ears cut off."*

7) Santi Pirtle (Charlie) told a journalist : ***"Imagine if no one had stopped Hitler ... sometimes violence is needed."*** On his helmet is written **"Born to kill"**, the peace sign is painted - as in Stanley Kubrick's war film "Full Metal Jacket".

8) Simeon, the Right Sector commander who had himself accidentally torn into pieces with a hand-grenade, said : *"Another 20 per cent are **pro-Russian scum**. The Soviet Union was a good thing for them. These guys are not as big a problem as you might think. **You can kill them**. We from the right sector are among the remaining 20 per cent, who are convinced that we have to take matters into our own hands in Ukraine."*

9) Quote : **Small talk wheeled around the different preferred methods for killing separatists.**

A Texan named Russell Bentley was known to be fighting for one of the Donetsk battalions.

*"He's not from Texas," Lang said. "He's a piece-of-shit communist from Austin."*

*"Would killing him get you in trouble with US law?" Rickert asked.*

*"No," he replied.*

The members of the Voloveka frequently boasted that they possessed enough explosives to eradicate a small Ukrainian oblast. They also claimed many guns off dead separatists.

## How will the official Kiev react ?

For the first time, the official bodies and the Ukrainian media will try to keep the case under wraps. Perhaps the Russian media will not allow it. Twitter will be important.

If Poroshenko, Avakov, Turchinov, Gerashchenko and Co. have to face the truth, they will make silly excuses. One of these might be that Fischer belonged to the Right Sector and the latter does not



belong to the Ukrainian army. In addition, the government had already brought charges against such illegal battalions.

BUT... there is enough evidence that could cause these people some headache !

**Ben served in Azov, Donbass Battalion, Kievian Rus and Right Sector.**

**Ben was even honored with two medals from the Ukrainian army for volunteering at the frontline.** The medals and certificate were photographed by Timo Vogt.

**Ben received an Ukrainian military ID.**

**Benjamin Fischer was thus officially recognized by the Ukrainian army as a fighter on the side of Ukraine !**

Quote Russian SMI online : [Previously, mercenaries themselves told about foreign mercenaries fighting with the Donbas, for example, the \*\*commander of the Georgian National Legion, Mamuk Mamulashvili\*\*. According to him, the Americans were torn to the "Donbas to fight with Russia", resting on the "issue of global security". However, life denies the existence of high motives among foreigners who come to fight "for Ukraine." As an Austrian citizen Benjamin F. says, \*"where there is death, everything is much more alive."\* So they go to the Donbass - for adrenaline. They're going to kill.](#)

## **Indictment of the Austrian prosecution**

### **Prehistory :**

At the beginning of 2015, the public prosecutor's office in Wiener Neustadt initiated a prosecution for the support of a terrorist organization against Ben. However, the proceedings were stopped because the Kurdish YPG is not on any terrorist list.

At the end of 2016, Ben had applied to the Austrian Embassy in Kiev and asked for help with the journey home. Supposedly he felt threatened in Ukraine.

When he arrived at Vienna-Schwechat airport in mid-December 2016, he was awaited by the BVT (Federal Office for Constitutional Protection and Counter-Terrorism). Ben presented hundreds of photos and videos, which he had recorded.

However, the BVT found no indications of criminal facts.

But the MA 35, responsible for immigration and citizenship, initiated a procedure to remove Ben's passport - the consequence for the "voluntary entry into the military service of a foreign state".

February 15, 2017 the Austrian "Kurier" published a long story "**Fischer zieht in den Krieg**".

February 17, 2017 Austria initiated an **European arrest warrant**.

### **Indictment :**

In the context of active participation in international conflicts Benjamin Fischer is being investigated because of "**war crimes against persons**" in the Ukraine conflict.

Fischer is suspected of "**having killed separatists who have already surrendered and/or having killed civilians, in the course of the fighting activities around Donetsk airport**".

The Austrian official, Erich Habitzl, emphasized that Fischer "**had fought not on the Russian but on the Ukrainian side**".

The public prosecutor Wiener Neustadt is the investigating authority.



## European arrest warrant

The arrest warrant was issued on the basis of a report by the State Office for the Protection of the Constitution and the Fight against Terrorism (LVT).

The LVT did not inform the public prosecutor about Fischer's war crimes until **February 17, 2017**, according to press commentator Erich Habitzl. The arrest warrant was issued immediately thereafter, on February 22.

Perhaps the Austrian authorities wanted to conceal the case, but Fischer may have given an interview too much. Perhaps, however, the authorities have received evidence from journalists, which has still been missing.

Quote : Fischer sits at the table in his parents' home, where he has been living since his return, **on the laptop he has collected the photos and videos of the past seven years.**

*"He does not live any more,"* he says again and again, pointing to persons. There is a video on which a young man fires an armored fist; a few dozen photographs later he was missing the forearm.

**This laptop, as well as its Austrian and possibly Ukrainian passport, are likely to have a good profile of movement.**

On May 6, 2017 „profil.at“ mentioned :

According to information from “profil”, **the prosecutor's allegations against him are based, among other things, on photographs, which show how the 25-year-old poses in a protective bury with mutilated corpses.**

A former fellow-fighter of the Vorarlberger now exclusively describes the origin of the pictures. According to him, a reconnaissance unit of the 11th battalion of the Ukrainian army, which Ben had joined last year, was involved in serious engagements with pro-Russian separatists near the town of Popasna in the Lugansk Oblast.

On 23 and 30 July, the disputes called for a number of human lives on both sides. However, according to his comrades, Ben F. was not directly involved in the fighting. As a "tactical medic", he had been merely involved in retrieving corpses and transporting them away. On this occasion, the photos were taken.

So it seems that the accusation of war crimes refers to Ben's second stay in Donbass in Popasna, Luhansk region (see above).

The Austrian Prosecutor's Office specifically accuses Ben of having shot people who have already surrendered. So, what really happened in Popasna ? And what evidence does the prosecutor have besides the photos ?

By the way : If Ben only served as „tactical medic“, why is he seen in so many photos heavily armed ?

In July 2016, Ben had a contract with the Ukrainian army and was leader of the "Task Force Pluto" of the Right Sector.

This raises the question, why the prosecutor does not investigate the Austrian Alex Kirschbaum, too ?

„Kurier“ May 7, 2017

Quote : **Even the public prosecutor's office Wiener Neustadt, which investigates against Benjamin F., are not familiar with the identities of the three soldiers who were with Benjamin F., according to their spokesman Erich Habitzl. Two of them had already returned to Austria in May 2015. The third had spent several months with F. in the Ukraine.**

The third is Alex Kirschbaum and he fought in Ukraine from March 2015 till the end of 2016. That's 21 months !

What to think of the Wiener Neustadt public prosecutor if he can not even identify the three Austrians who have fought alongside Ben in the Donbass ?

On **February 17, 2017** an Austrian newspaper asked the Austrian military and the police about Benjamin Fischer.

Quote : **On the part of the police, it is only to be told that the facts are familiar to the authorities.** Similar cases of Vorarlbergs in the service of foreign armed forces are not known. Fischer did not have to reckon with penalties, however, since he was fighting neither for a foreign state nor for a terrorist organization.

But this is wrong ! In Austria it is prohibited by law for nationals to serve in the army of another country. This is a criminal offense.

And if it will be found that Fischer had been granted Ukrainian citizenship, he could be deprived of Austrian citizenship.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a "procedure for the withdrawal of citizenship" will be initiated if someone "active participated in international battles in the framework of an armed conflict" or "voluntary entered into the military service of a foreign state (for example, the Foreign Legion)". On the other hand, withdrawal of citizenship is only possible in those cases where a dual citizen is present.

If, however, it will be proved that Fischer had been granted Ukrainian citizenship, he could be deprived of Austrian citizenship. Remember : The MA 35, responsible for immigration and citizenship, initiated a procedure to remove Ben's passport - the consequence for the "voluntary entry into the military service of a foreign state".

But what would that mean for the indictment of war crimes when Ben would be no longer an Austrian citizen ?

### **Link list :**

Austrian media :

<http://derstandard.at/2000056790556/Oesterreicher-wegen-Verbrechen-in-Ukraine-Krise-in-Polen-festgenommen>  
<http://www.salzburg24.at/festnahme-von-oesterreicher-wegen-verbrechen-in-ukraine-krise/4985542>  
<http://orf.at/stories/2389511/>  
<http://www.oe24.at/oesterreich/chronik/Oesterreicher-wegen-Kriegsverbrechen-verhaftet/280478015>  
<http://www.oe24.at/welt/Ukraine-Soeldner-25-droht-lebenslange-Haft/280803255>  
<http://derstandard.at/2000056826062/Festgenommener-soll-bei-ukrainischen-Streitkraeften-registriert-gewesen-sein>  
<http://fm4v3.orf.at/stories/1749043/>  
<http://www.oe24.at/welt/Austro-Soeldner-kaempft-gegen-ISIS/164962352>  
<https://kurier.at/chronik/oesterreich/benjamin-f-das-soeldner-bataillon-des-heeres/262.154.035>  
<https://www.profil.at/ausland/ex-kameraden-ukraine-soeldners-ben-f-8118682>  
<https://www.profil.at/shortlist/ausland/spitzname-ben-laden-8132024>

Polish media :

<https://polskaniepodlegla.pl/kraj-swiat/item/11457-straz-graniczna-zatrzymala-austriackiego-zabojce-probowal-wjehac-do-polski>  
<http://www.dziennikwschodni.pl/chelm/mial-zabijac-rannych-i-wiezniow-25-letni-obywatel-austrii-zatrzymany-w-dorohusku,n,1000198521.html>

German media :

<http://diepresse.com/home/innenpolitik/5209758/Oesterreicher-in-Polen-festgenommen>  
<https://www.welt.de/newsticker/news2/article164137732/Oesterreicher-wegen-Verbrechen-im-Ukraine-Konflikt-in-Polen-festgenommen.html>  
<http://www.dw.com/de/vom-krieg-fasziniert-ein-%C3%B6sterreicher-im-donbass/a-38703598>

Ukrainian media :

[http://en.censor.net.ua/photo\\_news/438415/polish\\_border\\_guards\\_apprehended\\_25yearold\\_austrian\\_suspected\\_of\\_killing\\_prisoners\\_in\\_donbas\\_photo](http://en.censor.net.ua/photo_news/438415/polish_border_guards_apprehended_25yearold_austrian_suspected_of_killing_prisoners_in_donbas_photo)  
<http://ukropnews24.com/in-poland-arrested-an-austrian-fought-for-ldnr/>  
<http://ukraineunderattack.org/en/66262-ato-hq-russian-involvement-in-donbas-confirmed-yet-again-after-clash-on-july-23.html>  
[http://en.censor.net.ua/resonance/400432/major\\_yevhen\\_slominskyi\\_of\\_8th\\_spetsnaz\\_regiment\\_ro\\_ma\\_at\\_the\\_expense\\_of\\_his\\_life\\_gagged\\_machine\\_gunner](http://en.censor.net.ua/resonance/400432/major_yevhen_slominskyi_of_8th_spetsnaz_regiment_ro_ma_at_the_expense_of_his_life_gagged_machine_gunner)  
<http://www.ukrweekly.com/uwwp/canadian-physicians-return-to-ukraine-on-fifth-medical-mission/>

Links about Ben's past :

[https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/nationalist-interest-v23n4?utm\\_source=vicetwitterus](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/nationalist-interest-v23n4?utm_source=vicetwitterus)  
<http://dossier.kurier.at/de/y1nIKvJd/fischer-zieht-in-den-krieg/?page=flow>  
<http://www.vol.at/vorarlbergs-soeldner-benjamin-fischer-behoerden-geben-sich-bedeckt/5145947>  
[https://vk.com/wall75117363\\_119471](https://vk.com/wall75117363_119471)  
<https://medium.com/@DFRLab/the-foreign-fighters-battling-for-ukraine-c314e3c3e6e2>  
[http://so-l.ru/news/show/adrenalinshik\\_iz\\_pravogo\\_sektora\\_avstriyca\\_na\\_do](http://so-l.ru/news/show/adrenalinshik_iz_pravogo_sektora_avstriyca_na_do)  
<https://dninews.com/article/american-snipers-are-officially-war-donbass>

Ben in Syria :

<http://www.vol.at/22-jaehriger-vorarlberger-kaempft-mit-kurden-in-syrien-gegen-is/4153414>  
<http://fm4v3.orf.at/stories/1749043/>

Twitter Syria :

<https://twitter.com/mutludc/status/527884854793617408/photo/1>  
<https://twitter.com/ArmedResearch/status/528967366089400320/photo/1>

Videos from/about Ben in Austrian „Kurier“ :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hI4p0uyn19o>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCqPBBkR2l4>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaZ3z4r58U4>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7levaCHvc54>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-dm-KVW3XPU>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z199CF3yFNE>  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HnWlQ\\_K5AQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HnWlQ_K5AQ)

BelSat TV video :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hI4p0uyn19o>

Ben awarded by 11<sup>th</sup> battalion "Kyiv Rus" :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zN9KoXuhJ3s>

Ben signs in “Georgian legion” :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGiYXiiTdKc>

Craig Lang “Georgian legion” :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIYL2O4xRe0>

“The Boom Stick Brotherhood” :

<http://estost.photoshelter.com/gallery-image/Ukraine-The-Boom-Stick-Brotherhood-2016/G0000pUaa8dSgCog/I0000Epw.gF8acsg>

Photos Facebook Ben aka Ben Laden :

[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=1203055879735870&id=100000944079259&match=0YTQuNGI0LXRgCzQsdC10L0%3D](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1203055879735870&id=100000944079259&match=0YTQuNGI0LXRgCzQsdC10L0%3D)

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1203054679735990&set=pcb.1203055879735870&type=3&theater>

<http://kagemushanatako.livejournal.com/533166.html>

<http://kagemushanatako.livejournal.com/533166.html>

Safari trip :

[http://rusvesna.su/news/1461702223?fb\\_ref=Default](http://rusvesna.su/news/1461702223?fb_ref=Default)

<http://217.20.156.131/obronodess/topic/65395446309077>

Task Force Pluto :

<http://www.zsu-info.com/publikacii/ato/komanda-specpriznachennya-pluton-isto/>

<http://www.eurasianet.org/node/77941>

<http://www.woz.ch/1614/westliche-kaempfer-in-der-ostukraine/zwischen-dummheit-und-heldentum>

<http://217.20.156.131/obronodess/topic/65395446309077>