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## **russian helicopter pilot defected to Ukraine in disgust at ‘murder, tears, blood’ and ‘genocide’**

### ***російський пілот вертольота втік в Україну, розгніваний «вбивством, сльозами, кров'ю» та «геноцидом»***

*Головне управління розвідки Міноборони України у документальному фільмі «Збиті льотчики росії» розсекретило подробиці спецоперації «Синиця», у межах якої російський пілот передав вертоліт Мі-8АМТШ.російський вертолітник заявив, що не хоче продовжувати брати участь у «геноциді українського народу», і закликав своїх колишніх товаришів наслідувати його приклад. Головним мотивом свого вчинку М. Кузьмінєв називає категоричне несприйняття агресивної війни, яку розв'язала росія проти України, а також небажання бути причетним до воєнних злочинів. За словами льотчика, ризиковану операцію вдалося зберегти у таємниці та успішно завершити, оскільки військова розвідка України змогла організувати безпечний коридор.*

<https://nypost.com/2023/09/04/russian-helicopter-pilot-defected-over-genocide-of-ukraine/>

A Russian helicopter pilot who defected to Ukraine with his Mi-8 chopper said he did not want to continue taking part in the “genocide of the Ukrainian people” — and called on his former comrades to follow his example.

“It’s a real disgrace what’s happening here,” Maksim Kuzminov, 28, told a TV documentary, “Downed Russian Pilots,” that aired in Ukraine Sunday.

“Murder, tears, blood. People are simply killing each other.

“That’s all I can make of this and I don’t want to be a part of it,” he said while wearing a T-shirt with Ukraine’s coat of arms.

“If you do what I did, this kind of thing, you will not regret it at all,” Kuzminov told his fellow Russians of defecting to avoid aiding the brutal ongoing war.

Kuzminov said that when he finally landed his helicopter in an airfield in the Kharkiv region on Aug. 23, it capped off a multi-agency special operation six months in the making.

“I contacted representatives of Ukrainian intelligence, explained my situation,” he told the documentary.

“To which they offered this option: ‘Come on, we guarantee your safety, guarantee new documents, guarantee monetary compensation, a reward,’” he said.

Before his final escape, Kuzminov’s family was also smuggled out of Russia by operatives from Ukraine’s Defense Intelligence and the National Police, the documentary said.

Then, Kuzminov realized during one recent flight that he was near the border with Ukraine — and decided to make a run for it.

“I relayed my location. I said: ‘Let’s give it a try, I’m not far away,’” he said of messages to his handlers.

A Russian Mil Mi-8 military helicopter flies over a joint Russian and Turkish convoy (not pictured) as it patrols in oil fields near the town of al-Qahtaniyah, in Syria's northeastern Hasakeh province close to the Turkish border, on February 4, 2021.

Kuzminov turned over his Mi-8 helicopter to Ukraine after landing at an airfield in the Kharkiv region. “Having made a final decision, I flew at an extremely low altitude in radio silence mode,” the pilot recalled.

“No one understood what was going on with me at all. ...I flew across [into Ukraine], landed, they met me, and explained everything to me.”

The two other members of the helicopter crew with him were not in on his secret defection plot — and “decided not to surrender and died right after the landing,” Ukraine’s Defense Intelligence said.

The twin-turbine helicopter is said to be in working order and likely to be used by Ukraine’s armed forces, which have also claimed that the pilot brought “valuable documents” and “secret technical equipment.”

While decrying “the genocide of the Ukrainian people,” Kuzminov expressed confidence that the nation “will unequivocally win” the war because its people are united.

“When Ukraine wins is only a matter of time,” he added.

The pilot also urged his former brothers-in-arms in the Russian military to follow in his footsteps.

“You will be provided for, for the rest of your life with absolutely everything,” he said, addressing his troops in his homeland.

“You will be offered work everywhere, whatever you want to do. You will just discover for yourself a world of colors.”

Ukraine’s Defense Intelligence said that a defected pilot and his family “are in Ukraine and making plans for the future,” without identifying Kuzminov by name.