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# Top Gazprombank Executive Flees Russia to Join Ukraine War

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Igor Volobuev told Russian and Ukrainian media he left Russia on March 2 and joined Ukraine's territorial defense forces. **screen grab**

Igor Volobuev, vice president of state-owned Gazprombank, said he has fled Russia to fight alongside Ukrainian forces, becoming at least the fourth top executive or official known have made an abrupt exit from the country.

Volobuev told The Insider independent news website and Ukraine's liga.net business news site that he left Russia on March 2 and joined Ukraine's territorial defense forces.

"I couldn't watch from the sidelines what Russia was doing to my homeland," Volobuev, who was born in the northeastern Ukrainian town of Okhtyrka, said in interviews published late Tuesday.

"The Russians were killing my father, my acquaintances and close friends. My father lived in a cold basement for a month. People I had known since childhood told me they were ashamed of me."

Volobuev, 50, said he was dismissed after leaving Russia, ending a 33-year career within companies affiliated with state-owned gas giant Gazprom.

“Nobody in Russia knows about [my departure],” the former executive said.

Volobuev said he was part of Gazprombank’s PR team tasked with undermining Ukraine’s gas transportation system in the eyes of European consumers.

The United States slapped sanctions on Gazprombank the day Russia attacked Ukraine.

Volobuev also questioned official explanations of the back-to-back murder-suicides of former Gazprombank Vice President Vladislav Avaev in Moscow and former energy giant Novatek top manager Sergei Protosenya in Spain.

“I don’t believe that those were suicides,” he told liga.net, adding that Avail’s death may have been “staged because he may have known too much.”

Other top executives and officials known to have left Russia during the war include Sberbank first deputy chairman of the board Lev Khasis, presidential envoy Anatoly Chubais, and Aeroflot deputy CEO Andrei Panov.

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