

Ukrainian Prosecutors Charge Navalny Ally Volkov With 'Justifying' Russian Invasion – Reports

January 15, 2026



Leonid Volkov. [Leonid Volkov / X](#)

Ukrainian state prosecutors have charged Russian anti-corruption campaigner Leonid Volkov, the exiled former aide of the late opposition activist Alexei Navalny, with “justifying” the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, according to media reports published on Thursday.

Volkov has come under fire in recent days following the leak of private messages in which he celebrated the [staged death](#) of a Russian far-right paramilitary fighter serving alongside the Ukrainian armed forces.

In those messages, Volkov accused Russian Volunteer Corps founder and leader Denis Kapustin of holding neo-Nazi views and being a “gift to Kremlin propaganda.” He also called Ukraine’s former spy chief Kyrylo Budanov “a disgusting provincial political technologist.”

Authorities in Lithuania, where Volkov has lived since 2019, said they are [considering](#)

[revoking](#) the anti-Kremlin activist's residence permit, claiming he might now pose a national security threat.

Volkov has since expressed regret over his "emotional and harsh" comments in the leaked messages, but he refused to back down from the underlying points in his [criticism](#) of Kapustin, who is known for his ties to far-right extremist circles and for founding a clothing brand that used Nazi symbolism.

"I dislike neo-Nazis and believe it is wrong to support or cooperate with them," Volkov said in comments to Lithuanian media. "Fighting evil with evil is not the best idea."

Related article: [Russian Volunteer Corps Leader Is Still Alive, Ukraine's GUR Says](#)

Volkov also said he rejects claims by some Ukrainian officials that all Russian citizens are to blame for the war, calling accusations of collective responsibility "propagandistic rhetoric" that reinforces the Kremlin's view that the West is hostile toward Russians on the basis of nationality.

The independent news outlet SOTA, citing a document it said was a formal notice of criminal charges, [reported](#) that Ukrainian state prosecutors initiated a pre-trial investigation into Volkov on the suspicion that he "justified" the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. The charge carries a maximum sentence of eight years in prison and a minimum sentence of five years.

German broadcaster Deutsche Welle's Russian-language service [said](#) an anonymous Ukrainian law enforcement source confirmed that the charge against Volkov were real.

There was no immediate response from Ukraine's General Prosecutor's Office.

Last year, a Russian military court [sentenced](#) Volkov to 18 years in prison in absentia on a range of charges, including spreading "fake news" about the Russian military and "rehabilitating Nazism."

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