

# Member of Zelensky's Servant of the People party injures 26 in grenade attack

Jason Melanovski  
18 December 2023

Sergei Batrin, a local government official from President Volodymyr Zelensky's ruling Servant of the People party, injured 26 people by detonating three grenades during a local government meeting in the village of Keretsky in Ukraine's Transcarpathia region. Almost all of those injured were local deputies; two were policemen. At least six are in serious condition.

According to reports, Batrin himself is currently in critical condition at a local hospital, where his room is being guarded by police to prevent the victims' relatives from attempting to exact revenge on the attacker.

A few days before the attack, Batrin published a video in which he criticized the municipal government over the inclusion of funds in the 2024 budget for a local utility company.

Video of the meeting shows that moments before detonating the grenades Batrin demanded a report on last year's expenses before the 2024 budget was adopted and criticized the inclusion of a raise for the head of the Keretsky village council, Mikhail Mushka, during a time of war. Batrin and Mushka had reportedly clashed multiple times in the past.

After sparring with the local council over Mushka's raise, Batrin left the room for several minutes along with another council deputy and then returned alone to continue speaking. Video then shows Batrin standing by the door and asking to speak before removing the grenades from his pockets and tossing them into the middle of the meeting where they exploded.

Other reports indicate that Batrin was angry because he had not been nominated as secretary of the council.

Ukraine's Security Services (SBU), the country's equivalent of the FBI, have announced that the incident is being investigated as a terrorist act and have brought up charges of illegal weapon and ammunition handling against Batrin.

While Batrin is clearly mentally disturbed, the attack

cannot be dismissed as the isolated act of a lone crazed individual. It takes place amidst a definite political context as the NATO-provoked war continues and tears apart Ukrainian society in the process. The attack also underscores, yet again, that the talk about "democracy" in Ukraine, which has been used to justify the NATO war against Russia, is a complete fraud.

Batrin's act of terror takes place amidst organized state violence and a campaign of censorship directed against all forms of opposition to the war and the ruling Zelensky regime.

Significantly, according to initial reports, Mushka is a former member of the Opposition Platform for Life Party that was banned in March 2022, along with nine other left-wing and pro-Russian political parties following the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022.

At the time, the Opposition Platform for Life Party was the second-largest political party in Ukraine's parliament. It continued to gain support prior to the invasion and fears were expressed by Kiev's imperialist backers that the party could eventually "derail Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration," as the pro-war Atlantic Council think tank warned in October 2020.

In July 2020, in an attack reminiscent of Batrin's action, a grenade was thrown into the party's offices in the city of Poltava, leaving one of the office's workers injured.

Later in February 2021, the oligarch head of the Opposition Platform for Life party Viktor Medvedchuk was charged with treason and financing "terrorism" by the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine as part of the widespread campaign by the Zelensky government to eliminate any opposition political forces that supported a negotiated settlement to the civil war in Eastern Ukraine, which began in 2014.

This campaign was fully backed by the United States and the EU, and played a significant role in provoking the

full-scale war with Russia that has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians.

Batrin's attack also takes place amid worsening news on the war front where Ukraine troops are now entirely on the defensive after the failed "counteroffensive" of the spring and summer that resulted in zero net territorial gains and the loss of over a reported 125,000 soldiers in just a few months time.

According to former Zelensky presidential office advisor Alexey Arestovich, Batrin himself is a war veteran, and previously served in the 128th brigade.

"He became disabled and applied for social assistance, including for himself. They didn't want to listen to him, he found a way to attract attention to himself," Arestovich said. So far, there has been no official confirmation of Arestovich's information.

On the same day of Batrin's attack, the *New York Times* reported that Ukraine's military recruiters are using "harsh tactics" to conscript soldiers, "in some cases pulling men off the streets and whisking them to recruiting centers using intimidation and even physical force"—in a story that is at least six months too late and was already previously reported by the WSWS.

According to the *Times*, there are a number of factors hanging over Ukrainian society as forced conscription increases, among them "vague laws; brutal fighting, including high casualty numbers; and corruption." Combined with the state-organized crackdown on opposition and democratic rights, the violence of the war and conscription drive have created the conditions for such a violent anti-social and anti-democratic attack.

As even the *Times* implicitly acknowledged in its article, the ongoing war is ultimately part of broader escalating class war. The *Times* noted, "Among those remaining in the pool are many from impoverished circumstances. 'It's a war for poor people,' said one Kyiv-based lawyer, requesting anonymity so as not to publicly criticize the military."



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**