

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Toorak cricket club to Ukraine war zone: Russia takes Aussie prisoner

[James Hall](#) and [Michael Read](#), Australian Financial Review, Dec 23, 2024

The Albanese government urged Russia to respect international law on the treatment of prisoners of war after video emerged of an Australian man apparently captured while fighting against invading forces in Ukraine.

Oscar Jenkins, 32, originally from Melbourne but whose social media posts indicated he had been living in China, would likely be the subject of Russian propaganda, one security expert said, while an Australian-Ukrainian group warned Russian troops were known to mistreat captives taken in Ukraine.

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A video posted to the Telegram platform and circulated on other social media shows a man with an Australian accent, with his hands bound by tape, being interrogated, apparently in Ukraine. He identifies himself as Oscar Jenkins, 32.

In the footage, a man off-camera films Mr Jenkins while slapping him across the face and speaking in Russian, asking about why he was in [the Donbas region](#), according to multiple reports.

The man says in the footage he is a biology teacher. Later in the video, after being assaulted, he says he was being paid with Ukrainian currency to fight.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Monday said the video was “concerning news” and he was seeking more information through [Australia’s embassy in Moscow](#). He questioned the validity of the video.

“We’re working through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to provide support, including for this gentleman, trying to ascertain the details and the facts,” Mr Albanese said.

“We know that the Russians often put out information that isn’t right. So our embassy in Moscow is working, but in addition to that, [the Department of] Foreign Affairs and Trade are working here as well.”

Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations
about a week ago



Australian Oscar Jenkins captured by russian forces

The AFUO is devastated to learn about the capture of  Australian man, Oscar Jenkins, by russian forces whilst he was helping to defend Ukraine 

The distressing footage - which shows Oscar being interrogated and hit by his russian-speaking captor - is a stab in the heart for any Australian-Ukrainian.

Our community has family and loved ones on the frontline, in areas formerly occupied by russian forces, and in currently occupied regions of Ukraine. We know how brutal and v... [See more](#)

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Acting foreign minister and Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus urged the Russian government to fully adhere to its obligations under international humanitarian law, including regarding prisoners of war.

“Our immediate priority is understanding where Mr Jenkins is and confirming his wellbeing. We are providing consular support to Mr Jenkins’ family,” Mr Dreyfus said.

“I reiterate the government’s clear advice to all Australians – do not travel to Ukraine.”

In the video, the captor, who is assumed to be Russian, asks Mr Jenkins: “Where are you from?”

Mr Jenkins, looking confused and appearing not to understand the questions in Russian, is then struck before responding to questioning in English.

“I’m Australian,” Mr Jenkins said.

Under further questioning he says: “Oscar Jenkins. 32-year-old ... Live in Australia and Ukraine.”

If the details are confirmed, Mr Jenkins would be the first Australian combatant captured by Russian forces in Ukraine.

Glenn Kolomeitz, a former Australian Army officer and lawyer, estimated that more than 30 Australians were fighting with the Ukrainian foreign legion.

“I now suspect that this guy will be exploited for propaganda purposes, to apply some sort of leverage to the Australian government,” he told ABC radio.

Foreign hostages were valuable for Russia as bargaining chips to put pressure on foreign governments supporting the Ukrainian war effort or as propaganda tools, Dr Kolomeitz said.

Russia has said foreign citizens fighting for Ukraine will be prosecuted as mercenaries and face up to 15 years in jail, which would contravene international law.

“They’re not mercenaries,” Dr Kolomeitz said. “They are lawful combatants engaged in international armed conflict, and they’re therefore entitled to full prisoner-of-war protections.”

According to a LinkedIn profile matching Mr Jenkins’ details, he attended Melbourne Grammar School before working for seven years as a university lecturer in Tianjin, China.

Mr Jenkins was involved with the Toorak Prahran Cricket Club in Melbourne, winning a senior premiership with the club in 2013-14 and serving as a junior coach for three seasons, his LinkedIn states.

“Oscar is a loved and talented member of the Toorak Prahran Cricket Club,” club president Neil Gumley told ABC Radio.

The **Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations** said it was “devastated” to learn of Mr Jenkins’ capture.

“We know how brutal and violent Russian forces can be, the ways they seek to degrade and dehumanise their captives, their disrespect for norms of behaviour,” the organisation said in a statement.

– *with AAP*