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## **A mercenary from Great Britain was convicted in absentia for participating in the armed conflict on the side of the Ukrainian Armed Forces**



Based on the evidence collected by the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation, the court has convicted in absentia a British citizen who participated in hostilities as a foreign mercenary on the side of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Mark John Ayres has been found guilty of committing a crime under Part 3, Article 359 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (participation of a mercenary in an armed conflict).

The investigation and the court have established that in March 2022, Ayres, with the intent of receiving monetary compensation, arrived in Ukraine to participate as a mercenary in the armed conflict and military actions on the side of Ukrainian security forces against the Armed Forces of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), Luhansk People's Republic (LPR), and the Russian Federation. In Ukraine, he underwent military training aimed at acquiring skills in handling combat military

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weapons, after which he joined the nationalist battalion "Azov," which is banned in the Russian Federation.

From March 2022 to March 2024, Ayres, following the orders of superior commanders, participated in the armed conflict against the DPR and Russian security forces for monetary compensation, thus contributing to the continuation of the conflict and creating instability in the region.

The investigation and the court have established and proven Ayres' involvement in the alleged crime. During the preliminary investigation, witnesses have been questioned, who fully confirmed the defendant's crime.

The court sentenced Ayres in absentia to 14 years of imprisonment to be served in a high-security prison. He has been placed on an international wanted list.

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