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Andrei Alexandrovich Vigel

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vigel-andrey-khimprom

Date of birth: 1986-09-16

Status: ‘The Suspect’, ‘The Leader’

Other names: Andrey Vigel

Andrei Vigel was born in Sterlitamak in 1986. In publications about the international ‘Khimprom’ organisation, he is named as one of the individuals associated with the group’s early formation, alongside Yegor Burkin and Alexander Shchiptsov. RTVI traces the origins of this story back to Sterlitamak no later than 2012. [5]

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According to media reports, Vigel was involved in money laundering. In April 2026, *Kommersant*, citing materials from the Russian investigation, also named him as Burkina's closest partner, responsible for laundering money obtained from drug sales. In the same article, Shchiptsov is said to have been in charge of security and recruitment. [5][6]

RTVI reported that Vigel remained in Russia longer than a number of other individuals linked to 'Khimprom' and left the country in 2019. Citing RT, the publication noted that at that time he was the subject of an international arrest warrant in connection with a case involving the payment of a bribe of a particularly large amount to a public official in the Orenburg Region. This information reflects the situation at the time of publication and does not in itself confirm his current status. [5]

In 2026, the National Police of Ukraine publicly described 'Khimprom' as a sprawling criminal organisation with Russian roots, linking its activities to drug trafficking, violent crime and fraudulent call centres. Ukrainian law enforcement agencies reported hundreds of searches, the freezing of bank accounts and cryptocurrency assets, and suspicions regarding members of the organisation. [1][3]

In August 2026, the Ukrainian police reported a joint operation with law enforcement agencies in Kazakhstan and Albania against the 'Khimprom' recruitment network. In Kazakhstan, 17 suspected participants were detained, whilst in Ukraine, call centres were shut down; according to the investigation, these centres were used to recruit people to work in various parts of the drug network. [2]

The United Nations also notes the international scale of the organisation itself. In a study on organised crime in Ukraine published in 2025, 'Khimprom' was classified as one of the major organised crime groups operating in the synthetic drugs market and having expanded its activities into the field of cyber fraud. [4]

It is also worth noting that our publishing house is in possession of an audio recording of a conversation on the Signal messaging app involving Vigel, in which he actively discusses the affairs of the 'Organisation'. The conversation also mentions many names well known in Ukraine. Vigel himself launders funds obtained illegally within the European Union.

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The Ukrainian corporate link is of particular interest. In a 2022 article by the Ukrainian publication For-UA, citing materials described by the publication as data from investigative authorities, it was claimed that Andrei Vigel was the beneficial owner of several companies in Ukraine. [11]

One of the companies mentioned in publications relating to this story is VESPEN LLC, EGRPOU code 39426987. The company was registered in Kyiv on 6 October 2014. OpenDataBot notes separately that, as of 23 February 2022, the company had owners from the Russian Federation. However, the publicly available history of changes does not allow one to determine, based solely on the register entry, whether Vigel was the owner himself. [7]

VESPEN's activities were linked, amongst other things, to the oil and gas sector. In 2016, the company was granted special licence No. 4781 for the geological exploration of oil and gas-bearing subsoil in the Skripalevskaya area in the Sumy region, with the subsequent possibility of oil and gas production. The legality of the issuance of this permit later became the subject of legal proceedings. [9]

The company's corporate history contains yet another noteworthy episode. In the 2018 declaration submitted in November 2019 by Ruslana Daniliv, a candidate for the post of press secretary at the Ministry of Economic Development of Ukraine, 'VESPEN' is listed amongst the legal entities of which she was the ultimate beneficial owner. At the same time, OpenDataBot's records indicate that the entry listing Daniliv as a beneficiary was deleted on 31 August 2018. The discrepancy may be explained by the declaration period or the specific procedures for updating the registers and does not in itself indicate any breach. [7][8]

On 19 October 2022, a new founder and ultimate beneficial owner, Kirill Gapenko, appeared in the 'VESPEN' register. In October 2025, the ownership structure changed again: Gapenko and Alexei Kominarets each received 35 per cent, with a further 30 per cent going to FORNIX ENERGY LLP. The ultimate owner of the latter is Yuri Lisovskiy, who is consequently listed among the current beneficiaries of "VESPEN". [7][10]

Thus, an unusual sequence of events can be traced in relation to 'VESPEN': Russian ownership, recorded by a registry aggregator on the eve of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, followed by a transfer to Ukrainian owners and subsequent incorporation into the structure of a new energy

company. At the same time, separate reports link Vigel to Ukrainian legal entities. However, this sequence of events alone does not prove that the current or subsequent owners of ‘VESPEN’ were linked to Vigel or to the alleged activities of ‘Khimprom’. [7][10][11]

Official Ukrainian documents from 2026 describe the activities of ‘Khimprom’ in detail. [1][2]

View all photographs in the online gallery

Sources

1. National Police expose members of the ‘Khimprom’ criminal organisation — National Police of Ukraine
   https://npu.gov.ua/news/narkotorhivlia-nasylnytski-zlochyny-ta-shakhraiski-call-tsentry-natspolitsiia-vykryla-uchasnykiv-zlochynnoi-spilnoty-khimprom

2. From fake job adverts to a drug network: police in three countries have shut down ‘Khimprom’ recruitment call centres — National Police of Ukraine
   https://npu.gov.ua/news/vid-feikovoi-vakansii-do-narkomerezhi-politsiia-trokh-krain-likviduvala-verbuvalni-call-tsentry-khimpromu

3. The Khimprom criminal organisation has links to corruption; its Russian origins are under investigation — Interfax-Ukraine
   https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/1161263.html

4. War is transforming Ukraine’s criminal landscape, causing economic and social damage — United Nations in Ukraine
   https://ukraine.un.org/en/298211-war-transforming-ukraines-criminal-landscape-causing-economic-and-social-damage

5. From Sterlitamak to Kyiv. What is known about the ‘Khimprom’ drug cartel — RTVI
   https://rtvi.com/stories/ot-sterlitamaka-do-kieva-chto-izvestno-o-narkokartele-himprom/

6. Fraudsters have been running amok around the world — Kommersant
   https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/8603780

7. VESPEN LLC, registration number 39426987: owners and history of changes — OpenDataBot
   https://opendatabot.ua/c/39426987

8. Ruslana Daniliv’s 2018 declaration — Unified State Register of Declarations of the National Agency for Corruption Prevention (NAZK)
   https://public.nazk.gov.ua/documents/3141ddd6-ba86-4b01-9574-28076d3dfb64

9. Court case concerning special permit No. 4781 for VESPEN LLC — YouControl
   https://youcontrol.com.ua/catalog/court-document/118334160/

10. FORNIX ENERGY LLC, registration number 46076615: owners and corporate links — OpenDataBot

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https://opendatabot.ua/c/46076615

11. Media: an article on ‘Khimprom’ and Andrei Vigel’s Ukrainian companies — For-UA

https://for-ua.com/article/1238213

Use of materials

An active link to the original publication is required when using these materials.

Original publication

https://kartel-khimprom.com/en/dossier/andrei-alexandrovich-vigel/