



"We do not attack civilians..."

**The Green Corridor in Lypivka
as a trap set by the Russian
occupying forces**





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While documenting the consequences of the Russian occupation immediately after the liberation of the Kyiv Oblast on 3 April 2022, Iryna Dovhan and I stumbled upon a column of burnt out cars stretching along the road from Lypivka to Korolivka, two villages in the Bucha Rayon, Kyiv Oblast, in the Makariv settlement hromada. We understood at once that we were dealing with a Russian war crime.

The wrecks were lined up along the road one behind the other. Beside them lay the bodies of dogs that had been shot. Then, as we approached, we saw the passengers' personal belongings: scattered packages of food for children, clothes, women's cosmetics. With trepidation, we peered into the other burnt vehicles, hoping that we would not find any human remains. Unfortunately, we saw a handful of charred bones. As it later turned out, this was all that remained of two adults and a child.

Yet, even then, we did not fully grasp the extent of the cruelty of the crime we were facing. Only during conversations with the survivors did we understand the tragedy that had unfolded

on this rural road – what inhuman evil had triumphed. How else to describe the wish for a “safe journey” for people heading to execution, or giving food rations to a child who would be burned alive half an hour later with their mother and grandfather?

The execution of the evacuation column was not a random act and there cannot be any discussion of an error. By establishing a so-called “green corridor” for evacuation from occupied Lypivka, Russian soldiers deliberately lured people into a deadly trap – people who simply wanted to save themselves and their families. By guaranteeing the evacuees “safe passage”, most likely to divert the attention of the Ukrainian Armed Forces stationed just 1.5 kilometers away, they planned to launch assaults on the next towns in the Kyiv Oblast.

After attacking the column of civilian vehicles, Russian military personnel tried to shoot Ukrainian civilians fleeing the massacre through the fields. Their zeal in trying to exterminate all the witnesses shows that they knowingly contrived to commit this war crime.

Witness C18: When we were leaving, he [a Russian soldier – ed.] said, “You’ll go out this way. Have a safe trip!” And waved to me. [...] You see, I’m 63 years old, my daughter is driving, and there’s a child in the back! There were lots of children! What are you... What are you doing? You’re waving at me, knowing we’ll be shot.

Witness C21: A soldier who causes even the slightest harm to a civilian is already a criminal. And one who kills demonstratively, easily, in an open field, by shooting at an evacuation column, must answer for his crimes!

This report was created to show that the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation intentionally commit war crimes against the civilian populace of Ukraine and use them

as a tool of warfare. Such actions call for a strong response from the international community and require that the perpetrators be held accountable.

Monika Andruszewska
report Coordinator, journalist

The results of the report by the Raphael Lemkin Center for Documenting Russian Crimes in Ukraine were prepared as part of field research in the Makariv settlement hromada, Bucha Rayon, Kyiv Oblast. Personal interviews were conducted at the witnesses' place of residence, taking into account the psychological comfort of the interviewees.

The interviews were held between April 2022 and November 2023.

The Lemkin Center first encountered the story of the shooting of a civilian convoy in early April 2022, after the de-occupation of the Kyiv Oblast. The attack took place on 12 March 2022 on the local road between the villages of Lypivka and Korolivka.

The Center began documenting the remains of the burned-out convoy directly at the crime scene on 3 April 2022. Recognizing this situation as a war crime against civilians, they began a systematic search for survivors, interviewing them, and documenting the fate

of civilians in each car that was involved in the event.

The report is based on photos and videos taken by the Lemkin Center or passed on by witnesses. The report also uses documents provided by the local administration, as well as maps, excerpts from international law statutes, and other legal documents related to the protection of civilian rights.

The testimonies were collected in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and repealing Directive 95/46/EC, as well as the Ukrainian Law on Personal Data Protection No. 2297-VI of 1 June 2010. Each interviewee was informed in advance of the purpose of the information collection and where the data will be stored.

In accordance with initial agreements, the testimonies were anonymized.





Testimonies

← Fig. 1.
A civilian car after being
fired on by Russian
occupation forces,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

1.

Shelling of the civilian vehicle convoy from heavy weapons by the Russian occupation forces on 11–12 March 2022

On 12 March 2022, a civilian convoy of 14 vehicles was shot at by heavy weapons of the Russian occupation forces on a local road on the territory of the Makariv settlement hromada, Bucha Rayon, Kyiv Oblast, between the settlements of Lypivka and Korolivka. It is not presently known which unit was responsible for the massacre – this is under investigation. The convoy included civilians from the village of Lypivka and neighboring settlements who were evacuating by private vehicles from territories occupied by the Russian forces.

The convoy comprised approximately 50 civilians (including nine children) and domestic animals at the time of the shelling.

Residents of the village of Lypivka in the Makariv settlement hromada, Bucha Rayon, Kyiv Oblast and residents from surrounding Ukrainian villages occupied by Russian troops tried to flee due to the growing terror and danger of civilian abductions, rape, murder and destruction or appropriation of assets and homes by the occupiers.

On 11 March 2022, cars with locals and residents of neighboring settlements began to gather in the village of Lypivka for evacuation. Representatives of the Russian occupying forces did not allow the cars to freely leave the village, promising to provide a so-called “green corridor” in order later on to travel to Ukrainian-controlled territory.

At 3:30 p.m. Kyiv time on 12 March 2022, the convoy numbered about 14 cars with civilians.

At around 4 p.m., two Russian soldiers arrived in a red civilian car marked with the letter “V” and ordered people to hurry, get into their cars and form a column. They ordered everybody to drive slowly (no faster than 50 km/h) and in one lane because, they claimed, the opposite lane was mined.

All the cars in the civilian convoy were marked with white ribbons and the words “Children”, in accordance with the Hague Convention.

The expected time of travel from Lypivka to Korolivka should not have exceeded more than 10 minutes; the distance between the villages was about 4 km.

At the same time as the civilian convoy was leaving Lypivka, a column of the Russian occupation forces' heavy equipment set out from the nearby village of Andriivka. These started shelling when the first civilian vehicles were at an approximate distance of 500–800 m from the village of Korolivka.

Six people (including one child) were killed as a result of shelling by the Russian occupying forces.

Seven people, including two children, were wounded.

Around 10 pets also died; these were burnt in cars or shot at close range on the road.

The last two cars to leave the village of Lypivka with 11 evacuees returned to the occupied territories, to Lypivka, without any casualties.

Testimonies provided to the Raphael Lemkin Center for Documenting Russian Crimes in Ukraine indicate that the actions of the Russian occupation forces were aimed at causing maximum civilian casualties, and that the "green corridor" itself carried the hallmarks of a pre-prepared trap.

The gathered evidence is organized in the report according to the course of the incident on 11–12 March and the preconditions that led to it.





1.1. Maps

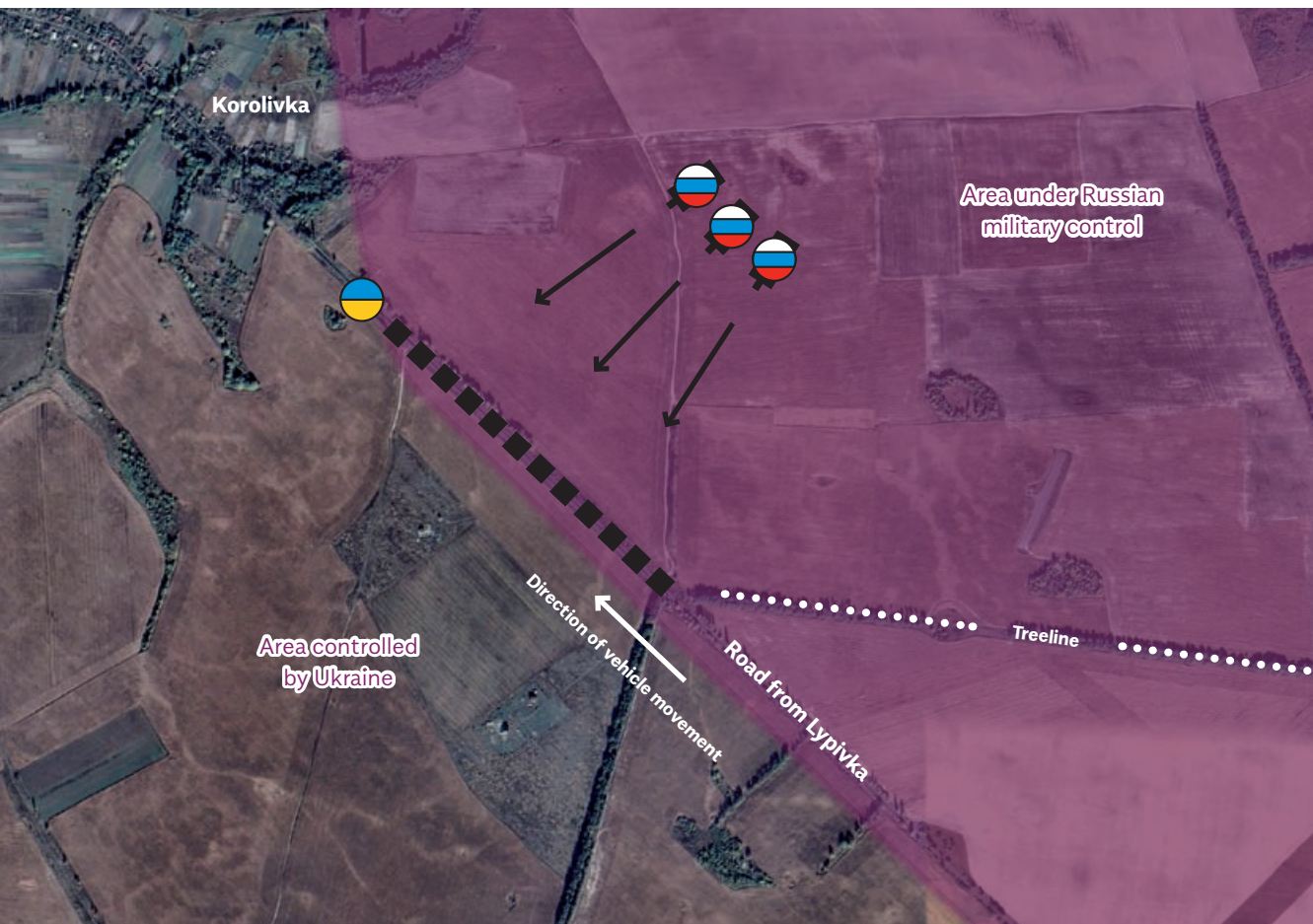
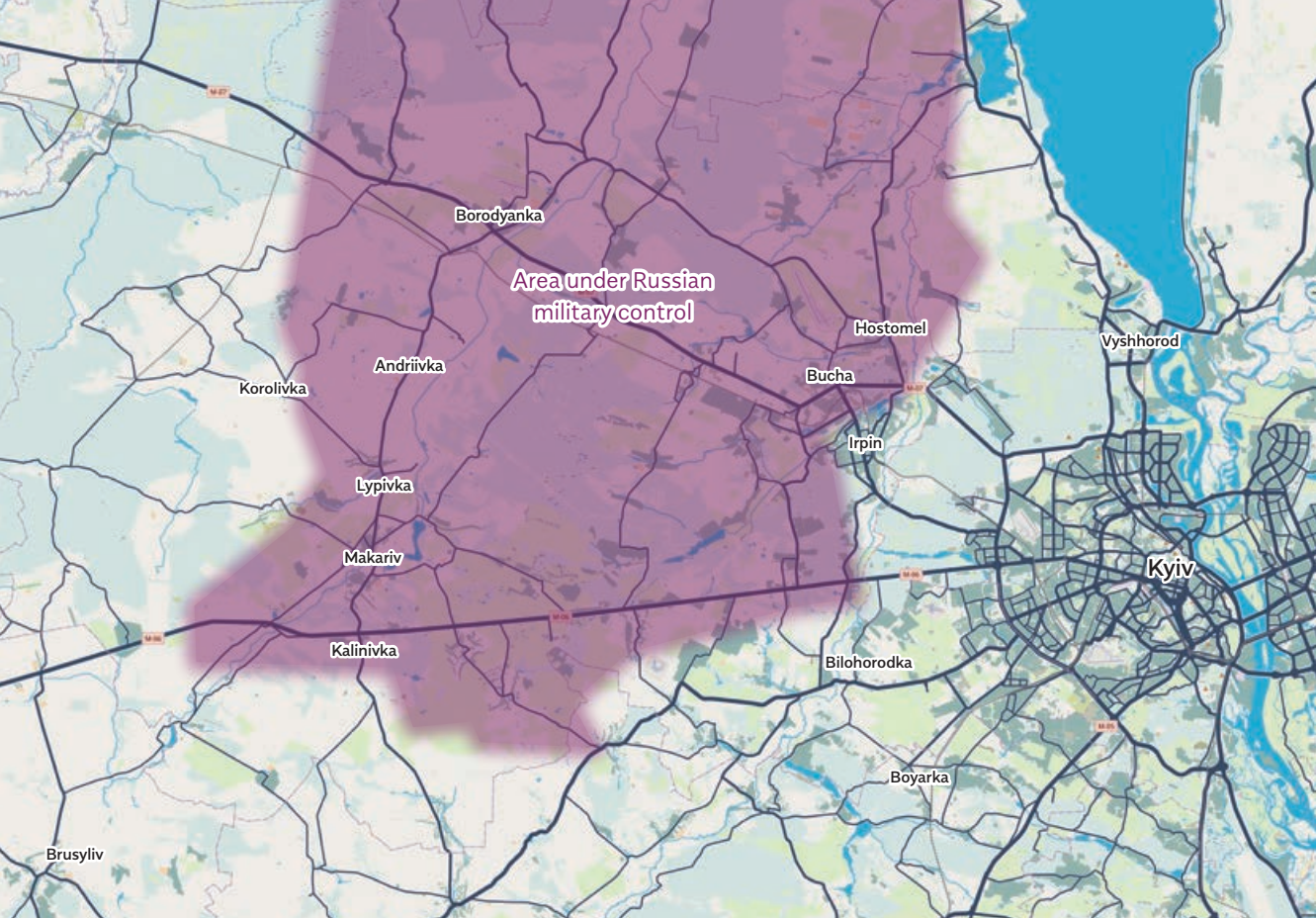
Map 1
Area under Russian military control
on 12 March 2022

Map data © OpenStreetMap

Map 2
Road from Lypivka on 12 March 2022

Image © CNES / Airbus, Maxar Technologies,
Map data © 2025 Google

-  Ukrainian checkpoint
-  Vehicles in evacuation column
-  Russian armored vehicles
-  Direction of Russian shelling



2. Life under Russian occupation

The village of Lypivka and the surrounding area were occupied by Russian troops at the very beginning of the full-scale military invasion of Ukraine on 26–27 February 2022, and remained under occupation until 30 March 2022. The locals whose cars joined the convoy came both from Lypivka and from the neighboring areas of Makariv, Plakhtianka, and Havronshchyna, which were also occupied by the aggressor's troops.

The testimonies collected by the Raphael Lemkin Center for Documenting Russian Crimes in Ukraine describe the terror of the Russian occupation forces against Ukrainian civilians.

Witness C2: They told us they had come to liberate us.

2.1. Deprivation of medical assistance

Witness C3: Neither a pharmacy nor a doctor was available there.

Witness C2: On 27 February, when a convoy [of Russian military equipment – ed.] was passing, one of our residents stood there out of curiosity, and they shot him. He had an exit wound in his arm and the bullet remained in his stomach. And they could not take him anywhere because they [the Russian military – ed.] had already blocked the road out of the village. There was no access to medical care. He died on 1 March.

Witness C2: One of the women was injured. She has been disabled since childhood. Russian soldiers entered her house and threw a grenade. The grenade exploded and the shrapnel damaged tendons and now her left arm is numb. Nothing can be done.



Fig. 2.
A rope used to tie up
civilians before execution,
Bucha Rayon, April 2022
(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

Witness C2: During the occupation it was impossible to call an ambulance, police or fire rescue to the village. The exit from the village was blocked.

Witness C4: Russian soldiers broke down the gate and fired. And then they entered... We shouted: "Don't shoot! There are people here!" They threw a grenade, and its shrapnel ricocheted off and flew toward me, straight into the bedroom. It hit me in the shoulder. For a month they didn't let our doctor come to see me.

2.2. Restrictions on free movement

The Russian occupation forces demanded that civilians wear white ribbons on their clothes.

Witness C5: If you wanted to go out, you had to wear a white armband. Once my god-father went out and they told him, "If we see you again, we will shoot you."

Witness C6: We couldn't even leave the yard as a sniper was sitting on the roof of the house next door.

Witness C7: It was forbidden to be outside after 4 p.m.; any movement on the street was forbidden. If they saw you somewhere outside in the yard, they would shoot you without hesitation. If their troops passed by you, you had to sit on the ground. You couldn't look them in the eye.

Witness C2: If you stay, you can die; if you leave, you can die.



2.3. Terror used against civilians at their places of residence

Witness C8: They often came to our house, every day.

Witness C9: We had to hide in the basements...

Witness C9: If a Russian soldier didn't like something, he immediately snatched up his rifle, reloaded it, threatened that he would shoot us all on the spot. It was terrible. Then they took my father and me outside, to the corner of the yard, shot at the ground by our feet, and shot over our heads.

Witness C6: Drunk, unpredictable people [Russian soldiers – ed.] came and fired... They wanted to take my younger son away...

Fig. 3.
A Russian sniper's
firing position on the
territory of a civilian
building, Bucha Rayon,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)



Fig. 4.
A looted room in
a witness' house,
Lypivka village,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

2.4. Plundering and destruction of property

Witness C5: The "Orcs" [a term sometimes used by Ukrainians to refer to Russian soldiers – ed.] took my car.

Witness C2: They [Russian soldiers – ed.] broke into all the stores. We saw them carrying out large bags of food. They broke into all the houses whose owners had left.

Witness C3: I saw them [Russian soldiers – ed.] going from house to house and carrying out food.

Witness C2: At our municipal office, they broke the glass in the door at the handle, opened the door from the inside and entered that way. Later, computer monitors from the municipal office were found in their so-called "hospital".

Witness C20: When we got back [to the house – ed.], it was a mess. They had thrown a grenade into the washing machine. This happened not only at our house. I think they were most upset by the toilet and washing machine at home. That's what they didn't have at home. Jealousy drove them crazy.

Witness C21: They fired 19 shots at the keyhole! This goes beyond comprehension... What for? They shot at the refrigerator with a machine gun, do you understand? One of them said, "Wow. You guys are living well here. You can sell a fridge like that and buy half a village in our country."



Witness C20: The Russian military broke the windows and fired machine guns directly into the houses to set them on fire. They shot at the cars until they started to burn.

Witness C21: First of all, they are simply inhuman... Well, to be honest, if you told me to choose a word and somehow define them, I swear – I couldn't! Because... the Mongolian-Tatar horde was nothing compared to them!

2.5. Deprivation of the means of livelihood

Witness C5: There were times when there was no food. The Russians killed a big pig belonging to a neighbor. They also shot my neighbor's rabbits and chickens.

One of the witnesses claims that the Russian occupying forces also killed his own farm animals without reason.

Fig. 5.
A microwave stolen
from Lypivka residents,
April 2022
(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

Witness C9: We had sows. And they shot them just for fun... They didn't want to eat them, they just shot them...

Witness C9: Due to shelling, the animal watering system broke down and the farm was flooded with water. The water reached up to the knees. It was cold, wet... The animals started to die... We asked for permission to fix anything at all. When we got there, we saw that there was nothing more we could do. The first to die were the quails. About 5,000 adult quail.

2.6. Abuse of domestic animals

Witness C21: Her name was Lala. My little girl, a Pekingese... I will never forgive myself for not taking her with me [when I left – ed.]. They just locked her in the garage and gave her no water. They didn't let me go there. I couldn't go home from 2–11 March. When I came back on March 11, she was so poor; she couldn't stand up anymore...

2.7. Stationing armed units among civilians

Witness C2: We could see their headquarters from our window, in the shop in the village center. From time to time, when we went visiting our parents, we saw their equipment entrenched in the yards.

Witness C8: Our house was next to the Russian base. We were afraid. We moved in with my husband's parents. Since 27 February, we were no longer able leave or evacuate to a safe place. For about two weeks we sat in the basement... It was cold, about 10 degrees [Celsius]. We lit a candle and it got kind of warmer.

Witness C20: Our house is located at the intersection of roads. You could see that the command headquarters were there. The BTR [Russian armored personnel carrier (APC) – ed.] was parked in our yard.

Witness C3: We had a tank in the yard; they did some damage with that tank. The Russians lived in our house.

Witness C9: Their base was located not far from us at the Makariv Golf Club. A large column of military vehicles was stationed there. Heavy military equipment was there and there were BUKs [rocket launchers – ed.], three of them, infantry fighting vehicles [APCs – ed.], tanks. They broke the gate to drive the equipment in. We saw gunshots from Grads [multi-propelled rocket launchers – ed.]. This happened three times a day. The direction of



their shelling was Kyiv, Makariv and Nalivaykovka. We heard mortar shells flying, we heard a helicopter hovering above us and firing in the direction of the gas station. Then they fired from tanks in the direction of Makariv. At the tall buildings. They were high-rise buildings where people lived. They were happy when they hit. They shouted: "Yes, yes, we got it!"

Witness C7: A Buryat got into my car. In front of the car lay a body with a crushed skull. The Buryat said, "What's wrong? Drive him over! Don't be afraid! He's a traitor! He betrayed our positions!" I said that that was not possible. "There is another car coming from behind, and there is a child in it!"

Witness C8: They told us that the Ukrainian military was shooting the convoys, not them. They scared us so much that we stayed put and went nowhere.

Fig. 6.
Destroyed Russian
armored vehicle at
the golf club, 2022,
Havronshchyna,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

3.

Decisions of civilians to flee settlements occupied by Russian troops

At the time of the decision to leave, most residents had already spent 14–15 days under occupation. Witnesses who shared their testimonies with the Raphael Lemkin Center for Documenting Russian Crimes in Ukraine describe the various reasons that led to the evacuation: threat to life, violence, inhuman treatment, rape, loss of home and other places of shelter.

Witness C21: People just wanted to leave the hostile zone and take their children with them.

Witness C12: I saw what the Russians were doing, simple as that. What were they doing? For example, they would drive up to a house with a high fence like this one... made of corrugated metal, with no view of the yard. They would come and shell it with an APC, knock it down, shell the houses from APCs...

Witness C13: It was no longer possible to stand what was happening. They blew up the neighbors' shed; they had to hide from the shelling... We thought they would demolish the house or the shed and kill us.

The main reason for the witnesses' departure from the occupied territories was the destruction of their homes by Russian occupation forces. Some recall the immediate threat of losing their own lives or those of their loved ones.

Witness C12: [...] and we just went out. I don't know, maybe five minutes went by and there was a shot, a bang. I turned around, and there was smoke... It was a wooden house. Of course, it was burning fast... And there was no light or water – nothing! How to put it out? I left the house in the clothes I had on... I was wearing a jacket. And so I remained. Documents – everything burned up in the house. My beloved cat Vityok was killed. Every morning he greeted me. He usually walked me to work. And in the evening he waited here, next to the cafe, when I returned from work. And he died because he was at home at the time of the fire.



Witness C21: I heard the slamming of plates. I went down the spiral staircase... I saw my neighbor's house on fire. I saw that the Moskal [Moskal is an ethnic slur for "Russian", formerly term for the Tsar's Russian soldiers – ed.] was already outside my shop, with binoculars, surveilling... They must have spotted me... I ran up the stairs, thinking to take the documents. Then I heard a bang – the gate, everything was smashed. The APC drove in – my van was standing just here in the yard. They got into the van and started shooting... First they fired at the house, and then at the summer kitchen. I hid behind the summer kitchen. I saw a neighbor throwing his children over the fence, a girl, I don't know, maybe 6 or 7 years old, and another a little bigger. And the wife... And we and those children ran away through the gardens... And they were hammering right at us.

Witness C18: [...] I saw my daughter walking. And at that moment – fighters. Right over the house! Low, low, low – that's how they flew... It froze me, I was so scared. I said: "It's over! We have to get out of here somehow! Daughter, we're leaving, because I'm afraid for my grandson."

Witness C12: There were these people [Russian soldiers – ed.] who made us kneel, stripped us to our underwear under the barrels of their machine guns. Imagine, there are ten of them, and they point a machine gun at you, and you kneel down and strip down to your underwear. I can't understand one thing; I still don't understand what they were looking for and what they wanted.

Fig. 7.
A room in a private house after being looted by Russian troops, Lypivka village, April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)



Witness C9: We were driving and there was a building standing there; we turned around, and the roof of this building was already lying in the road...

The threat of sexual violence against women was also a reason for the decision to leave the occupied territories.

Witness C8: Once I went out because I felt bad, it was such a cramped space [in the basement – ed.]. There were military men there [in the yard – ed.]. One of them advised me not to go outside when the military were there, because the first cases of rape had already been reported... My boyfriend has a very young mother, and I am 20 years old. We decided to leave because we didn't have the strength to take it anymore.

Witness C8: We women tried not to leave. We constantly felt fear and tried to stay away [from the military – ed.].

Witness C20: They raped and killed a woman over there [nearby – ed.].

Fig. 8.
Civilian car from the
shelled evacuation
column, Lypivka village,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

Some witnesses were expelled from their homes by the Russian military.

Witness C3: The Russians came and told us to leave. "You have an hour and a half to leave this place!"

Witness C20: Russian soldiers came in the morning of 12 March, I think it was around 9 a.m... They were some kind of troops, maybe special forces. I don't know. They were all tall, and equal to a man... Their equipment was top of the range, they were clad in everything... They told us to gather our things and leave, because the shelling would start any moment.

Witness C21: Kadyrov's men [Chechen, pro-Kremlin mercenaries – ed.] came and said, "If you're not gone by the evening, we will kill you!"

Residents left the occupied areas with entire families, including pets, taking neighbors and a minimum of possessions. According to witnesses, most of the passengers in the cars were women, children and the elderly.

Witness C21: On 12 March, an evacuation column of 14 vehicles was formed. Among them were four vans and mostly passenger cars, mostly women and children. I think 70% were women and children. Or elderly people...

Witness C20: There were five of us traveling: my husband, me, my daughter-in-law and two grandchildren. A neighbor, his wife and another neighbor. And other neighbors were driving from this side – two adults, two children and two dogs.

Witness C18: Me, my daughter and my grandson.

Witness C19: I was holding my daughter in my arms. My mother was sitting in the front, my brother was driving the car, two neighbors were sitting next to me.

Witness C6: They told me that the women should drive the cars because the men would be shot.

Witness C8: Everyone tried to leave. We took the bare minimum of stuff, tried to take as many people as possible to save everyone. There were buses, they could fit up to 15 people. People also tried to take pets.

4.

Unsuccessful attempts to escape the occupied territories and agglomeration of civilian vehicles in Lypivka village

On Friday, 11 March 2022, cars with locals and residents of neighboring settlements occupied by Russian troops began to gather in Lypivka. The occupiers promised that they would soon provide a green corridor to enable them to leave.

The occupying forces deliberately prevented the people from leaving the village. Gradually, a convoy was formed and the number of cars increased. Lypivka residents helped non-locals with shelter and food.

Most witnesses asserted that, in their opinion, the Russian military tried to gather as many vehicles with civilians as possible in one place in order to inflict maximum damage.

Witness C14: We were to leave on 11 March. We got into the cars and headed to Korolivka. They [the Russian soldiers – ed.] told us, “The road is mined, no one will let you out... We will have it demined by tomorrow and maybe you will be able to get out...” We tried to travel to Makariv, but we were not allowed to go there either. We headed back.

Witness C14: There was a small convoy of 5 or 6 cars. They didn’t let us out either. We waited until the next day.

Witness C21: On 11 March other people’s cars came to our village from Makariv and Havronshchyna. But they did not let them out.

Witness C17: It was dangerous to stay here; we wanted to get our family out of here. They [the Russian soldiers – ed.] made us go all over the village from 9 a.m. until about 4 or 5 p.m.

Witness C12: We tried through Pochepyn – they didn’t let us out. We tried in the direction of Korolivka – they didn’t let us out there either...

Witness C14: We waited until morning – until 9 a.m. We were getting ready. Everyone who wanted to leave was there. “Come on, get in the cars, let’s go.” And



we started to leave... We went to Korolivka. We were told, "No, they won't let you out this way." We drove in the direction of Makariv. We asked for permission to leave – they didn't let us out there either. We headed back.

Witness C9: Some said we could leave, others said we couldn't... and so we drove around until 4 p.m. From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. we drove around Lypivka.

Witness C22: There was another attempt to leave on 12 March. Two more cars with people joined.

Witness C3: At the exit from Lypivka near the golf club they [Russian military officers – ed.] did not want to let us go. They said it was mined, that we couldn't go. Then they let us go. We went through Lypivka and met 10 vehicles from Makariv there.

Witness C3: We changed places in the column, because we circled around Lypivka and didn't know which way to go.

Fig. 9.
Parts of a witness'
burnt-out car,
Lypivka village,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

Representatives of the Russian occupation forces pretended to help the residents and assured them that passage was safe.

Witness C20: We arrived at their first checkpoint, in the direction of Lypivka. We stopped. My husband said, "Guys, I have to change the tire, I can't drive like this." They helped us... They held the car up with their hands, without a jack. They changed the wheel for us. They took it from somewhere... From some parking lot – there were several broken cars standing nearby. They took a spare wheel from somewhere so that we didn't have to take out our own.

Witness C1: We first encountered them at the first checkpoint, I remember it well... They kept saying, "We do not attack civilians, ordinary people! All this is done by your people! The Banderites [alluding to Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), anti-Soviet partisans in the Second World War. – ed.] are shooting at cars, you can't go there. You can't go that way, unless it's to Belarus..."

Witness C20: They even gave the children five food rations.

Witness C1: "Where are you going?" [We said – ed.], "To relatives in Zhytomyr." "You can't go through here! Your people are shelling everything here." "Don't you want to go to us, to Russia?" he said. "Why should we go to Russia? We're going to Zhytomyr."

Witness C14: When we were coming back, APCs were coming here... Again we were sent back to the farm on the hill.

Witness C20: In fact they [the Russian soldiers – ed.] said that a column of APCs would pass by and then they would let us through. These were their words. And they were probably waiting for some order or something... I don't know.

One witness reports that when she and her daughter returned home after an unsuccessful attempt to leave the occupied territory, she discovered that Russian military officers had killed her husband during their absence.

Witness C11: We came home, and my husband was lying on the ground having been shot. In the backyard. It was 11 March. My husband had two wounds on his legs, two wounds on his hands, two wounds in his heart, in his sternum and in his face. There were nine bullets. We arrived and he was lying in the yard. We buried him in the garden.

One witness recalls that immediately after he left the house, the Russian army began looting his property.

Witness C9: We kept asking for permission to leave. We were told, "Command isn't allowing you to leave, stay here, stay here..." All that time, until 11 [of



Fig. 10.
Temporary grave in the
backyard of a residential
building, Bucha Rayon,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

March – ed.], they didn't let us leave. The first time we were let out on 11 March, the Yakuts were there, and they said we could leave safely through Makariv: "Go this way." We left, and when we approached the borders of the brickyard, there was a [felled – ed.] poplar tree lying there... a huge poplar... We did not risk going through the field, because it could have been mined... We went back to the house, and they were already carrying everything they could out of the house. They had our clothes on them, everything... It took literally half an hour. They immediately started robbing us. I mean, they knew they were sending us to our deaths... That's why they were so boldly taking everything out of the house, because they thought, "Oh, they'll be dealt with..."

There were cases where exits from the village of Lypivka were deliberately blocked.

Witness C9: The most interesting thing in all this is that the Buryats sent us there [it is unknown what unit that was – ed.], they planned it. That is, they knew they were sending us there, they knew we would be in the open, they

knew they could shoot us there... We just stood there – a field on one side, a field on the other side too... and their soldiers.

Witness C1: We reached that road and saw that the way to Makariv was blocked; they had chopped down trees and everything was blocked with them...

People from neighboring villages who couldn't leave spent the night in Lypivka and were fed by the villagers.

Witness C20: They stayed overnight at people's houses... Because they could neither return nor leave.

Witness C6: A local came and let us wait at his friends' house... As soon as we got there, the Russians came again and said, "Everybody out. Hands up..." They checked our clothes, cars, looked through everything to make sure we didn't have weapons. They said, "If you have a gun, you will be shot, if you have a phone, you will be shot." Execution for everything.

Witness C8: We drove around Lypivka for two days. They [the Russian soldiers – ed.] must have known that this was an evacuation column. We stopped at the checkpoint many times when we tried to leave. We were only let through the fourth time. I think they deliberately delayed us until as many people as possible gathered in order to cause as much damage as possible.

Witness C19: I think that if they hadn't been planning anything, the equipment wouldn't have been sent into the fields and they wouldn't have had us drive around the village for so long.

Witness C12: I can honestly say that I felt something like anxiety. Anxiety, you know, that I shouldn't go, that something was wrong. Something was not right. But I kept having this thought, "What if I stay here, what will happen here?"

5.

Departure of the evacuation column from the Russian-occupied village of Lypivka

The witnesses' cars were marked as civilian with white ribbons, to show the troops on both sides of the conflict that the column was not a military target.

Witness C22: A Russian soldier came to us and said, "Take white cloths, hang them up and evacuate. No one will shoot at you!"

Witness C7: They [representatives of the Russian occupation forces – ed.] told me that I had to tie white ribbons on the car.

Witness C15: Vehicles with children were marked with "Children" – in Russian and Ukrainian. We started out sometime after 4 p.m., that is, they allowed us to go in the direction of Korolivka...

Russian servicemen painted the letter "V" on one of the witness' vehicles – the same letter they used to mark their combat vehicles that took part in the invasion of Ukraine. Such signs put civilians at risk, as Ukrainian military officers identified them as markings of enemy vehicles or sabotage groups. People tried to remove or cover them up.

Witness C5: They [the Russian military – ed.] brought paint... They painted [the cars – ed.] with these English "V" letters. It was the kind of paint that couldn't be washed off.

At around 4 p.m., two representatives of the Russian occupation forces arrived in a stolen red civilian car bearing the letter "V". They ordered people to quickly get into their cars and form a column.

Witness C6: The Russians came in a car, it was a red car, probably someone else's [stolen from one of the residents – ed.]. They said we were in the way. They let us leave. They drove with us to the edge of Lypivka, showed us where the mines were...



Witness C5: I brought people tea. I told them not to go at night. Then I saw a Russian jumping out of a Moskvitch station wagon and shouting, “We’re letting you out! Drive towards the cemetery! We’re letting you out!”

Witness C20: “Run to the cars and drive one behind the other, don’t turn, don’t come back, don’t do anything, because the road is mined,” they said. They led us outside the village. They turned down the opposite lane and drove away.

Witness C20: They said beforehand that this lane was mined, but their driver turned back anyway. The one who accompanied us. They turned around and drove back in the opposite lane.

Witness C21: They said, “We are letting you out, everything is fine. Whatever happens to you out there – we are not responsible for that.”

Witness C6: When we left, our car was third. My mother was driving with an icon in her hands, because she was very afraid.

Witness C22: A Russian soldier took the entire convoy to a checkpoint near Korolivka village. Before that, he went down the line telling everyone not to drive

Fig. 11.
A destroyed Russian
combat vehicle
(BWP-2), Bucha Rayon,
April 2022
(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)



faster than 20 km/h. We had to drive in single file, not divert onto the sides because there were mines... We had to keep 20–30 meters between cars. A Russian soldier in a red car stayed behind. He was waiting for the whole convoy to leave. We passed the checkpoint without being checked.

After two days of unsuccessful attempts to leave, the convoy moved towards Korolivka at around 4 p.m. on 12 March. According to witnesses, when the convoy left Lypivka, the Russian military behaved in an unusual way; they neither checked people's belongings and documents nor confiscated or checked mobile phones. The witnesses had the impression that the Russians had only one goal: to get them on their way as quickly as possible.

Witness C12: We were traveling in a convoy. They [the Russian military – ed.] did not even stop us. The only thing was when leaving, they ordered us to drive on the right side, in a line, no one should overtake anyone, no one should drive fast, but slowly; everyone drove on the same side. Now I understand a little bit why they did that...

Witness C20: We had our documents, but nobody looked at them, no Russian military checkpoint checked our documents or asked us anything, there was absolutely nothing. We went through the checkpoint they had previously forbidden us from crossing. Buryats were there. Now they didn't stop anyone.

Witness C12: There was a certain feeling... You know, people said all sorts of things... They [the Russian military – ed.] took away mobile phones and damaged them... And now they didn't even bother us.

Fig. 12.
A civilian house
where the command
post of the Russian
occupation forces was
set up, Bucha Rayon,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

At the final stages of departing from Lypivka, when the convoy was preparing to set out for Korolivka, most witnesses noticed the amount of heavy equipment near the exit from the village. Most of the witnesses did not understand the nature of the weapons and called them “tanks.”

Witness C1: I do remember my mother saying, “Tanks.” I looked and saw a tank with the letter “Z” on it. We drove on. My mother kept saying, “There are more tanks...” But somehow I didn’t pay attention to that.

Witness C21: We left... We stopped at the edge of Lypivka, near the cemetery. They [the Russians – ed.] parked their car, as I understood, where the mines were, and showed us where to head. They started to drive towards Korolivka. We had about 350 meters to Korolivka. As we were driving, I saw three Russian armored personnel carriers coming from Andriivka and forming into a battle line...

Witness C8: I noticed that a Russian soldier was sitting in a trench near us. He was preparing the magazine in his assault rifle. He got ready and was aiming the sights. I realized that they were preparing something very bad, some kind of provocation.

Witness C20: My daughter-in-law turned her head to the right and looked at the field, she said, “Tanks are coming”. Along the road between Lypivka and Andriivka.

Witness C18: We passed a strip of forest, went a little further, and there were three tanks.

The Russian military explained that all cars should drive in one lane, in single file, because the opposite lane was mined. They ordered not to drive faster than 50 km/h and to keep a short distance between vehicles. They promised to escort the convoy.

Witness C17: We left. The Russian military let us out and ordered us to drive about 40–50 km/h. There was Russian heavy military equipment on the side of Andriivka, as the road to Korolivka cuts through a field. They had already lined up there waiting for the convoy.

Witness C19: The Russians said, “Drive only in one lane, so there is some distance between the cars.” So we did. We felt happy.

Witness C21: We headed out in a convoy of 14 cars. We drove in a convoy under white flags. Everything was as it should be: white ribbons and the signs reading “Children”.

Witness C13: We got to Lypivka cemetery and thought it was over. We breathed a sigh of relief. But I prayed all the way, I really prayed...

6.

Shelling of the evacuating convoy by the Russian occupation forces

The column of vehicles slowly drove past the cemetery in Lypivka. The people in the cars spotted Russian heavy military equipment – four APCs, one of which stood still, while the rest moved across the field between Lypivka and Andriivka (they did not initially drive towards the column of civilian vehicles). When the first vehicles had almost reached Korolivka, Russian combat vehicles began firing from the direction of occupied Andriivka.

Witness C1: I was thinking, "It will get dark soon. There is a curfew. We have to spend the night somewhere." I was thinking about where to spend the night. I was almost there. We could see Korolivka. And then they started shooting at us.

Witness C14: I thought, "Thank God we are leaving, thank God they let us leave...". We left, I turned my head, looked, and there were APCs standing in the field... And they just started shooting at us. All I saw were lights...

Witness C9: When I looked in the mirrors, I saw through the rear window that they fired tracer ammunition from behind us... a glowing one. Then the firing started...

Witness C6: As soon as we left the village, the shelling began. At first there were only shells, tracers, as they say... burning. The shelling came from the right-hand side.

Witness C15: [...] at first tracers, burning, such red ones... To shoot more accurately at us. And then came the ordinary ones... And they flew and flew and flew...

Witness C13: I said, "There's a tank!" It was hiding off to one side. My husband shouted, "Don't turn your head! Drive straight, sit straight!". And it started... I don't know how we survived.

Witness C1: They did that – first they shot at the wheels, then a little higher...



Witness C20: When they started shooting, the first cars slowed down, and then they rushed forward, the first five cars managed to get past.

Witness C8: There were shells that did not hit us, some exploded nearby. Shrapnel flew at the car, it was severely damaged not only by the shell that hit us, but also by shrapnel.

Witness C20: They were coming from the right-hand side. I saw a fireball that hit the car. I turned my head and saw it about 15 meters from the car, and then I heard a bang.

Witness C7: I was second in the evacuation column and everything was fine. When we got to the intersection, we heard gunshots. I thought they wanted to scare us. I was driving at a speed of 40 km/h. Calmly, so as not to provoke aggression. The man in front of me stopped. But we drove on and the heavy shooting started. Everything was flying over the car. I leaned low over the steering wheel, because I didn't want to lose my head. When I looked at the field, Russian APCs were coming from the direction of An-driivka; they were firing large-caliber weapons. They hit the windshield,

Fig. 13.
A shot-through car
from the evacuating
convoy, Lypivka village,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

but not the body. Perhaps it was because my car was low and the others were higher.

Witness C1: A car stopped in front of us. I thought that maybe they wanted us to stop, that maybe they wanted to check us again or something like that...

Witness C21: The firing began; they started hitting the first cars. When the column of vehicles stopped, they started firing all over.

Witness C15: We were in the middle of the road... And then it started... Boom! Boom! Boom! From the right-hand side... Somewhere from a distance of maybe 600–800 meters. For a machine gun... [that's close range – ed.].

Witness C22: I heard a shot. At first it was a warning shot, and then a series of shots followed. I realized that they were shooting at us. Then I heard gunfire as if from heavy equipment. The ground exploded in front of me. I saw something shining in front of the car – it was flying fast. I shouted to my family, "Get down!" I leaned suddenly and heard an explosion in the car and saw pieces of skin. I realized that someone had been hit. My mother screamed. She said, "Don't look back." I turned around, my father was seemingly sitting, my wife was sitting with her head thrown back, and my son was sitting in the middle with his head bowed. I thought they were all dead, because there was no reaction. No one was moving. We stopped because the car in front of us stalled.

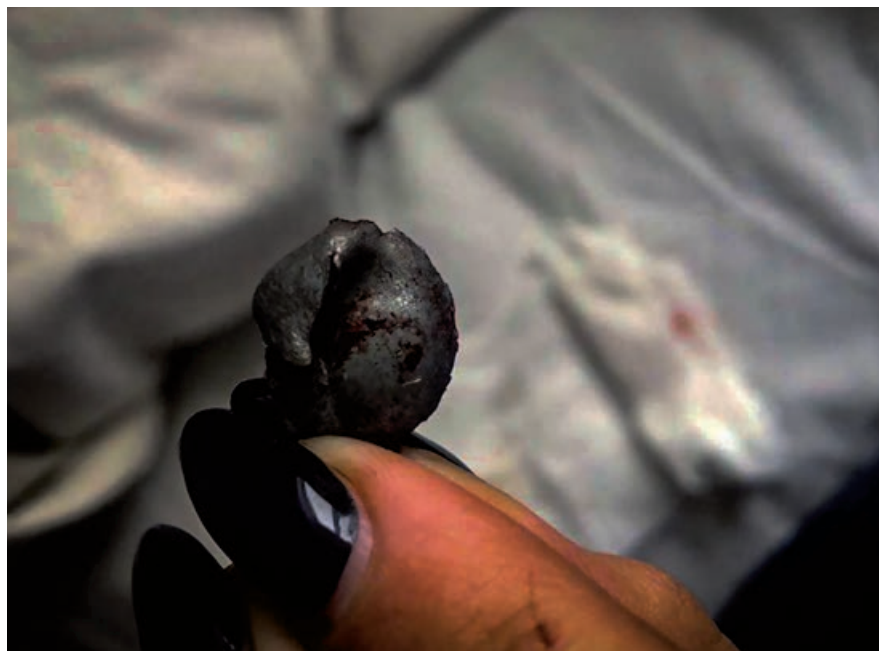
Witness C19: Our car was on fire. When we jumped out, the car in front of us rolled backwards, hit ours and ours starting burning more.

Witness C1: There was a car behind us – they hit it right in the cab.

Witness C13: The firing started... My daughter screamed: "They hit the door! The car has two front doors. We could only get out through one door. Through the other door it was impossible, because they were shooting.

Witness C18: My daughter said, "Mom, hide the child" – my grandson – "they are shooting at us!" I didn't understand that they were shooting at us. How could they shoot at us? They released us, so how could they shoot at us now? But somehow I hid him. My daughter tried to start the car, but there was smoke coming out...

Witness C1: The column stood still. I said to my mother, "Mom, hide the child!" because he was still sitting in the car seat and was up high, right by the window. There was even a piece of paper that said "CHILDREN"... But that didn't stop them. Then the column moved on... I heard them drive away, but the car in front of us sort of hesitated... At that moment a shell hit the radiator and steam began to fly. The car stopped, and the car in front of me drove away. It was hit by a bullet, something clanked, someone shouted, but it drove away. We could not.



Witness C18: I remember exactly that I grabbed him hard... I hadn't strapped my grandson into the car seat. I tugged him by the shoulder, over to me...

Witness C8: When we got hit, I noticed a car explode behind us. We were hit. We were injured, but thank God we survived, but the car behind us exploded.

Witness C21: The APCs were shooting. Open fields on both sides. What saved us was that the road was slightly elevated, so people could roll into the ditch if they survived. The neighbor who was driving ahead of me overturned, but crawled out into the field – he was also injured, around the neck... Then he died in the hospital.

Witness C11: There was a wounded child, we heard a cry, "Mommy, there is blood on my hand!"

Witness C12: You could hear the whistling of the shells, even in the car you could hear them whistling... The car in front of us caught fire. We stopped. We jumped into the ditch. We lay in that ditch. Then, some heavy equipment arrived; I don't know what kind, but heavy. They [the Russians – ed.] did not come out onto the road.

Because representatives of the Russian occupying forces unequivocally claimed that the opposite lane was mined, some people decided not to bypass the destroyed vehicles in front of them and instead stopped. People jumped out of their cars and threw themselves into the ditch at the edge of the road. According

Fig. 14.
Shrapnel removed
from a witness' wound,
Lypivka village,
April 2022

(Photo: witness' private
archive)

to witnesses, the intensity of the fire was so great that they could not lift their heads.

Witness C20: We stopped, and then... Should we go around? We couldn't go around... They were shooting... They said the road was mined, so nobody risked going around.

Witness C12: We went through hell... I raised my head and saw a man running, running and burning... A civilian – running and burning...

Witness C9: I saw that my father's car was hit in the door... I was in shock then. When we were hit, everything was ringing in our ears, we couldn't hear anything, we couldn't understand anything... We were heavily shot at...

Witness C21: All the time, as we were driving, they were constantly firing... At all the cars....

Witness C22: I stopped abruptly, and at that moment the car was hit from behind. I stood there for about seven seconds in total. Everything happened very quickly. Then I looked ahead, and smoke was coming out of the car in front of me. It started moving. I followed it. I didn't know where the shots were coming from. When I looked behind me, I saw that the cars were on fire. The shots didn't stop... My mother said my father was alive. My wife was breathing, she licked her lips. Her face and hands were cut. She was injured in the area of her heart, had punctured lungs, and was hit in the head. She shielded our son with her body. Our son was injured in the arm, near the right shoulder blade. There were two pieces of shrapnel there. My father died right after the explosion. His face looked normal, but the back of his head was gone. And all those pieces, pieces of his skull, were all over the car. The seats were shot through. In the trunk were documents, a laptop – everything was shot through. My mother and I were not hit. I only had a small piece of shrapnel in my back.

A shell hit one of the cars in the middle of the evacuation convoy. There were five people in the vehicle at the time – two children aged 6 and 11, and three adults. After the shell hit, the younger child was thrown out of the car onto the left side of the road; the older child, mother, and grandfather, who was driving the car, were all killed.

Witness C15: I was in the ditch... when the car behind us caught fire. There were children there – they were screaming! They couldn't get out! I realized they were burning alive in the car.

Witness C15: Those children... It was a nightmare! They were screaming in the car behind us... It was such a child's scream! They were burning alive!

Witness C20: We were in the middle of the convoy. Five cars passed, there were two in front of us – one stopped, the other stopped... When I turned my head, I saw a flying shell. I saw it about 15–20 meters from the car.



Witness C20: Everything happened very quickly. When we stopped and I turned my head, the shell was flying... Flying... I saw it flying, like an oval fire towards the car. It hit the roof of the car between my husband and me. I don't know how I survived...

Witness C20: [The witness' grandson – ed.] says he jumped out himself. But I think he was thrown out by the explosion. He saw everything. He saw how his grandfather's hat fell off, how his mother fell onto the front seat, as if she had leaned forward. He saw how [the witness' second grandson – ed.] fell onto seat. He saw everything. [The grandson – ed.] was sitting behind the driver, on the left side... People were jumping out on the left side, onto the roadside.

Witness C19: His little brother died, and mom and grandpa... As it turned out, he jumped out of the car with his grandma...

Witness C20: When this happened, I started shaking my husband. There was no trace of blood on him – I saw nothing, nothing. His head was just shaking, and that was it, he showed no signs of life. Absolutely none. When this

Fig. 15.
A hole from a shell
in the roof of
a witness' car, Lypivka
village, April 2022
(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)



Fig. 16.
A witness by his van
destroyed by Russian
troops, Lypivka village,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

happened, some kind of disk fell on my head, something like that, you know, like they have on old stoves in the village – just the plate, like a disk... This disk fell on my head, and my hair started burning. I had a scarf on my head, a scarf wrapped around my head. The disk slid off it. I had a bag with documents wrapped around my arm. The disk fell into the bag and started burning. There were phones in it, everything... I grabbed the disk with my hand, opened the door, and threw it out of the car. It's this hand, here are the shrapnel marks. This finger, you can see here, it was burnt, everything was burnt. I threw it out of the car. I tried to get out. I got out and immediately fell down. I fell down onto the asphalt.

Witness C20: Then I got up and pulled the door. My daughter-in-law was sitting behind me. I pulled the door, but I couldn't open it. Either it got jammed by the shell explosion, or... I don't know...

Witness C20: I saw that the car was engulfed in flames. The roof started burning above us. Everyone was wearing down jackets. I couldn't pull them out. We couldn't lift our heads because of the shelling. The jackets caught fire. I realized I wouldn't be able to get them out.



Witness C20: I noticed that my grandson wasn't in the car. I got out of the car, I was walking, staggering... I remember getting up, circling around the car, and shouting to him.

Witness C12: I know I dragged him to the roadside because he was standing there and crying. I lifted my head – he [the C20 witness' grandson – ed.] was standing at the edge of the road... The shelling was still going, and he was standing and crying... He was injured. I ran up and pulled him by the leg... I covered him as best as I could. I asked, "Where does it hurt?"

Witness C20: I found him on the roadside... Actually, I fell down next to him. A shell fell next to us... They kept shooting and shooting, the neighbor was injured. He jumped out of the car, but he was injured in the shoulder. Maybe he was injured by that shell, because they were right behind us.

Witness C3: Everything was hitting the car... Our car kept getting hit and everything was flying in front of our faces... We got hit in the hood... And the hood flew off. We jumped out of the car... The family's [of witness C20 – ed.]

Fig. 17.
A witness' burnt-out
car with human
remains, Lypivka village,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)



car was on fire... The husband, daughter-in-law, and the boy, their grandson, all burned.

Witness C21: The woman was seriously injured, her whole face was covered in blood... She was in such shock that someone pulled her legs to make her fall because they were still shelling.

Witness C13: The car in front of us exploded, and burning, started rolling towards us... When we slid down there [into the ditch], we saw a woman. I looked at her, her whole face was covered in blood. She screamed: "He's on fire! The child is on fire!" Oh God! I can't talk about it... Her husband was driving, the grandson and daughter stayed in the car... Did they die right away, or not? Their car exploded... Only that woman and her grandson got out.

Fig. 18.
A witness' burnt-out
car with human
remains, Lypivka
village, April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

The shelling caused some people to lose orientation due to shock.

Witness C21: It was March, not a single leaf on the trees, open fields – open field to right and to left.



Witness C19: We didn't flee, we just jumped out of the car... We looked around, and the boy and grandma in front of us got out of the burning car... Grandma was injured in the head, the boy had something wrong with his leg. We started calling for them to come to us, to hide, because the shooting was everywhere, everything was flying about... We had to hide from it... Then they crawled towards us.

Witness C13: Shock, that's it. I screamed, I sat down. What saved us was that the ditch was deep. If it wasn't for that ditch, we wouldn't be here now... I sat and looked at them, and they looked at me with those eyes. Then I thought, "God, what's wrong with me? Why am I screaming?" I looked at the blood flowing and started trying to stop it...

Witness C15: The first car caught fire. I looked, women jumped out... And immediately bullets were flying, I saw they'd reach me soon... I moved back a bit. I said to my wife, "We have to get out!" She jumped across the driver's seat. I said to the women in the front: "Get down, quick!" – there were two women in the front – "Into the ditch! Into the ditch!"

Fig. 19.
A destroyed car of
one of the witnesses,
Lypivka village,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)



Civilians tried to hide in ditches by the road or fled into the fields to get away from the Russian military vehicles.

Witness C1: I tried to start the car, but it wouldn't start. I thought, "Where? Where?!" I turned my head and saw a ditch on the opposite side, where there was no shooting. I said to my mom, "Mom, let's jump into the ditch!" Staying in the car was no longer safe. Moreover, when we stopped, there were cars behind us. They hit the one behind us, it almost immediately caught fire. A woman was screaming inside. I didn't turn around – but I heard the explosion, I heard the scream. We jumped out, we fell into that ditch...

Witness C18: At that moment, my daughter said to me, "Mom, get out!" I have arthritis, I can barely get into a car. I don't know how I jumped out so quickly...

Witness C21: I started shouting at everyone to jump out.

Witness C17: I jumped out immediately. I have three doors in my car. I opened the side ones and pulled my cousin into the ditch. Then I went back for my mother.

Fig. 20.
A destroyed car of
one of the witnesses,
Lypivka village,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

Witness C11: My daughter and I ran to the ditch where he [witness C21 – ed.] was lying... He was covered in blood...

Witness C1: We lay there, and everything was flying right above our heads... We couldn't lift our heads.

Witness C15: They were shooting... I saw the engine shot through, the windshield shattered, there were holes from the shots of a heavy machine gun... They were deliberately shooting at my car. I crawled out. Then I remembered that our passports were still there... I reached with my hand, just my hand – bullets were whizzing past... I grabbed the two passports and rolled into the ditch.

Witness C14: When I got out of the car, I thought, "Lord, if they hit me, I hope they hit me in the back, so I don't block the other people, so they don't die because of me." When I was getting out, I saw lights [tracer ammunition – ed.] passing me. I realized that if I got hit in the head, it's over, they'd die along with me in the car. I mean, they wouldn't be able to get out because of me. How would they get out through the only door? It was impossible!

Witness C19: I'm wondering now, how did we all manage to jump out through the same door?

Witness C14: Behind me were two women, a 12-year-old girl, a dog, a man, and two people in the front, near the driver. And there were six or seven people, I don't know how we got out through that pile of seats and roof. We jumped out through the driver's door into the ditch... When I jumped out, the cars were already on fire.

Witness C19: I started shouting to jump out of the car because a projectile had already hit the car in front of us and it was starting to burn... So we jumped out.

■ Russian mortar shells hit the ditch where people were taking cover.

Witness C3: Everyone ran into the field. They ground us down in that field... That's when I got injured. I got injured, just like all the people lying there... In one second, we all got injured. The child of the family [witness C20 – ed.] was injured, they were lying in a group near us... Near the neighbor, there was an iron fragment, his legs were wounded. He was still crawling with us.

Witness C14: The car was on fire, we jumped into the ditch. We lay there. There were women with children. A shell fell, I heard the explosion, but I lay with my back turned. I heard explosions, I lay there and didn't turn around. I turned around when the little children started screaming. The children started screaming very loudly and a shell fell among them.

Witness C14: They were children from other cars, about five, six, seven years old... The children started screaming, [the Russians – ed.] threw a shell or a grenade.



They drove closer. Not only were they shooting at us continuously, but then they drove closer and just started throwing things, and they exploded. They exploded because there were craters from the explosions... I didn't see what it was. Such craters were made... We were still lying there, everything was exploding, falling... We lay there for, I don't know, maybe 15 minutes in one place. We wriggled like worms, it was burning, bullets were flying. And we didn't know where to go. Honestly, we just didn't know where to go... Shells were falling nearby, three meters away, and it was burning. You couldn't crawl into the field, they'd shoot you. And there, in that place, you didn't know what awaited you.

Witness C21: The grass started burning... Children, women crying... When the vans caught fire, the fuel started burning – black smoke began to come out. Everyone was lying and crying... I said, “I’m getting up!” They kept saying, “Don’t get up!” I got up and immediately fell, because my right leg...

Witness C21: I opened the doors... There were no people anymore. I came out last... I remember exactly how I opened the doors, I don't know if I managed to stand on the ground or not – when it hit! It threw me back. I got hit

Fig. 21.
Personal belongings
of victims from
a destroyed car,
Lypivka village,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)



by shrapnel under the eyebrow, everything was covered in blood, a piece of skin torn off here... I couldn't lift my head! They were hitting us so hard...

Witness C12: At the edge of the road, about a meter from the ditch where we were lying, something exploded... It was a very strong explosion! I don't remember it very well because, to tell the truth, I was unconscious for a few seconds. My right ear started bleeding immediately... To this day, I don't hear very well...

Russian heavy equipment approached the convoy, and shooting began from close range at the cars and people trying to flee into the fields.

Witness C18: The tanks were far from the road. When we jumped out, we heard them getting closer. They were coming from the other side. We were on one side, they were on the other. They drove up and shot at every car...

Witness C13: We had to lie there for 10 minutes, pressing ourselves into the ground, because the bullets were whizzing past so much, falling right next to

Fig. 22.
A witness' burnt-out
car with human
remains,
Lypivka village,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

Найменування міністерства, іншого органу виконавчої влади, підприємства, установи, організації, до сфери управління якого належить заклад охорони здоров'я ЛІПІВКА СПАСІНА Найменування та місцезнаходження (повна поштова адреса) закладу охорони здоров'я, де заповнюється форма Код за ЄДРПОУ: [] [] [] [] [] []		МЕДИЧНА ДОКУМЕНТАЦІЯ Форма первинної облікової документації 9277 № 027/о ЗАТВЕРДЖЕНО Наказ МОЗ України 114022012 № 11101	
ВИПИСКА із медичної карти амбулаторного (стаціонарного) хворого			
у <u>г. м. Липівка</u> (найменування і місцезнаходження закладу охорони здоров'я, куди направляється виписка)			
1. Прізвище, ім'я по батькові хворого			
2. Дата народження (число, місяць, рік)			
3. Місце проживання хворого: область, район, місто(село), вулиця, будинок, кв.			
4. Місце роботи (посада)			
5. Дати: а) в амбулаторно-поліклінічному закладі: захворювання, направлення на стаціонар			
б) у стаціонарі: надходження, виписки або смерті (підкреслити)			
6. Повний діагноз (основне захворювання, супутні захворювання та ускладнення):			
<u>Вогнищевий інфекційний</u> <u>процес у вигляді плевриту</u> <u>з місцями ураження серцево-судинної</u> <u>системи</u>			

our feet... I said, "Let's hurry, we have to crawl, they're shooting." When we lay down, we heard a tank coming... It was coming from the direction of Lypivka.

Witness C1: We were lying there, it was quiet... Then the "Orcs" [Russians – ed.] fired at every car with large-caliber shells. Later [after the liberation of the town – ed.] when we saw our car, there was a shell left in it – a large tube. Our car was hit first – we were terrified! Earlier, we thought they would stop shooting, we would get up, and at least take the documents from the car... But when they hit our car, that was the end – it was all over!

Witness C17: Everything was exploding, and I got hit in the arm with a piece of asphalt or something like that...

Fig. 23.
Excerpt from an
injured child's medical
documentation

(Photo: witness' private
archive)

- Witness C21:** I really thought that they would just drive across the road and shoot us.
- Witness C12:** There was noise... The roar of heavy machines... Either tanks or APCs... They drove up and immediately started shooting. I don't know what they were shooting from. We were lying in the ditch, and many people were maimed and injured by shrapnel.
- Witness C21:** The APCs were shooting with heavy calibers. They were shooting so hard that I couldn't lift my head.
- Witness C1:** Our car was hit, the glass shattered, but for some reason, it didn't explode. All the other cars started burning, we had to run away. But where? Run away where? Forward or backward?
- Witness C1:** How to act? What to do? We were in a field, we couldn't raise our heads because they were shooting at us... Just lie down and wait... But we couldn't lie down and wait like that because the car next to us was burning. At one point, they stopped shooting. A man from the car behind us got up, I don't know, maybe he wanted to get into the car, maybe start it, maybe just open it because their cat was there, meowing... He stuck his head out and they started shooting at him.
- Witness C17:** The APCs also began to approach the road, and ours [Ukrainian military – ed.] opened fire... They were almost at the road. Ours fired at them [the Russian heavy equipment – ed.]. Ours only fired a few shots and they immediately drove away.
- Witness C8:** I was injured in the arm, I couldn't feel my shoulder, the shelling didn't stop... Honestly, I sat there and waited for death. I was sure we wouldn't get out of there alive. Our car was hit, my husband was injured, I didn't know how serious his injuries were, if he could move. I didn't know what had happened to his parents. Even if we were able to drive, the car in front of us was immobilized. We would have died on the spot. But we were very lucky.
- Witness C11:** There was also a wounded man... We saw him lying in the field and he was shot there.
- Witness C6:** My husband's car was riddled with bullets. My son was hit by a 30-millimeter shell, my daughter-in-law was injured by shrapnel. A shell or shrapnel, I don't know how it happened, tore all the muscles in my son's arm and went through the window..
- Witness C21:** When my car caught fire, I told people that this was our only chance. Black smoke started coming out, the fuel started burning. Hiding in the smoke, we started running away.



7.

Killing of domestic animals being transported by civilians

Many locals took their cats and dogs with them. Most of them were burnt alive in the cars, unable to escape. Some of the pets fleeing from the burning cars were shot at close range by the Russian occupation forces.

Witness C21: There were many pets in the convoy. People did not leave their pets. And they started to run out... On the field you could even see them shooting at the pets. They were simply inhuman... My little pet burnt to death inside my car.

Witness C15: I feel sorry for my cat. My little cat. He was a handsome one. I named him Kapa. He burnt to death... He meowed until the end.

Witness C21: Yes, this is my little dog. A little mongrel, a girl. She burnt to death. She couldn't get out.

Witness C13: Anything that squeaked, meowed, barked in the cars. They shot at the cars that were on fire and exterminated the animals.

Fig. 24.
A shot dog from the civilian
evacuation column, Lypivka
village, April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

Fig. 25.
A witness' burnt-out car
with the remains of a dog,
Lypivka village, April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

8.

Escape of civilians from shelling

The survivors took three different escape routes:

- 1) Those who were first in the convoy and were able to reach the Ukrainian military post in their own vehicles;
- 2) Those who escaped from the ditch into a field and to a farm where they spent the night;
- 3) Those who crawled across the fields to a Ukrainian checkpoint, where they were evacuated by the Ukrainian military.

8.1. Those who were first in the convoy and were able to reach the Ukrainian military post in their own vehicles

The passengers of the first five vehicles arrived at the Ukrainian army checkpoint at the entrance to the village of Korolivka. They were then directed to the Zhytomyr Oblast to receive medical assistance. The survivors provided information about the column being fired upon and about the wounded lying in the field.

Witness C9: We kept going because we wanted to live. I was wounded in the shoulder, my girlfriend was also wounded. It started to hurt very badly. It turned out to be a 30-caliber shell from an armored personnel carrier; the shell went through the front pillar of the vehicle and went through my shoulder. It tore off the pectoral muscle and a piece of the anterior delta. It was all scattered around the cabin... Muscles, tissue, everything was tossed around in the car... I looked at my girlfriend, she had blood on her face. She said that her body was going numb... She was shot in the upper deltoid.

Witness C8: Then we came to the first Ukrainian checkpoint... I opened the door and shouted, "There are wounded!" And they let us pass immediately. Later we found a Ukrainian soldier in the woods who took us through all the



checkpoints so that we would not be detained and could get medical help as soon as possible.

Witness C7: As I was going to our men, I braked sharply and a missile flew in front of me and did not hit me. It was a stroke of luck, as they say... I was luckier than others. There were five cars that left us.

Witness C7: My neighbors survived. I was very worried about them because they had a small child.

Witness C6: The neighbor started to flash his headlights. When we stopped, he said that his father had no head and his wife was badly injured. When my daughter-in-law got out of the car, she was covered in blood and said they were wounded. The whole car was covered in blood. There was no one to drive the car, so our wounded neighbor had to drive another 40 kilometers.

Witness C9: I thought my neighbor was fine because he was driving, but then it turned out that his father had no head, his head had been torn off... And his wife must have had internal bleeding because her lungs were pierced. She was dying...

Witness C9: The driver was in a state of severe shock... His son, who was sitting between the murdered grandfather and mother, was also hit; he got shrapnel in his back, but luckily, the shrapnel didn't reach his lungs...

Fig. 26.
A witness' car after shelling by Russian troops, Makariv village, 2022

(Photo: Roman Taybov)

Witness C7: He was injured in the arm, the child was injured, and his wife was hit from behind. She didn't survive... When he realized that his wife was dead, he started shouting: "Give me a rifle, I'll shoot them!" I said, "Wait, you still have a child, they're taking your child to the ambulance!"

Witness C22: I thought we could save my wife. We drove for another 20–30 minutes, then they pulled her out of the car, tried to resuscitate her, but after 10 minutes my wife died.

8.2. Those who escaped from the ditch into a field and to a farm where they spent the night

Some of the people who survived the shelling of the evacuation column fled to the fields, where they hid until night. Later, some crossed through the cornfield to a farm, where one of the witnesses went for help. Due to the lack of phone signal, these people did not know what the current situation was.

Witness C21: I knew our side had thermal imaging cameras. And the Russians did too. We were in the middle of the field... It was corn... It was hard to walk...

Witness C21: We reached some young pines. We sat there until late at night... At night, I took them to the farm. When we passed Korolivka on the left side, there was a farm. We made our way there.

Witness C11: We walked through the fields, and then we spent the night in the buildings of the farm. We covered ourselves with sacks... Later, I don't know after how much time, we wanted to drink water. We didn't know if the owners were our people or maybe Russians... I went to a man, he poured water for us. He took us in... We stayed for two days.

Witness C21: We stayed in the barn until morning. It was cold, everyone was wet.

Witness C21: We didn't know where our people were, or where the Russians were... We walked, not knowing where we were going. In the morning, a woman said, "I'll go check what's happening there. How it is. I'm leaving my daughter in your care." And she went. We wanted to drink. It was so cold, as we walked through the field...

Witness C21: She brought a man, brought water. He told us we were on our [Ukrainian – ed.] side of the front...



8.3. Those who crawled across the fields to a Ukrainian checkpoint, where they were evacuated by the Ukrainian military

Witness C18: We started crawling... At that moment, the shelling began.

Witness C20: We were crawling along the road, through the grass... They kept shooting one after another. Cars were on fire, tanks started exploding, the grass on the roadside caught fire. Those who survived were crawling.

Witness C19: I remember the grandmother of a four-year-old boy who was with us. She said, "My grandson is usually so calm, so quiet, you can't make him do anything, like running or anything... I tell him, 'I'm tired,' and he says, 'No, grandma, we're crawling, we're crawling, we have to crawl, grandma!'"

Witness C15: All the cars were on fire... I still had a full tank of gas. I said, "Let's run away quickly! We have a full tank, it's going to explode soon!"

Witness C18: Everyone was lying down because they kept shooting. My daughter said, "Mom, let's crawl because the car's fuel tank will explode!" It was very dry, those days the grass was dry and the sedge was dry... "If it catches fire," she said, "we'll burn."

Witness C13: Then the lads started screaming, "Let's do something, the cars will explode soon!" We heard military vehicles approaching... We thought they

Fig. 27.
A stretch of
mined roadside,
Bucha Rayon,
2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

would finish us off with tanks or something like that. I don't know how long we lay there.

Witness C12: When I was crawling, I almost stumbled upon something... A mine. Is that what it's called? Green, big.

Witnesses tried to help the wounded crawl and shielded the children with their bodies.

Witness C14: I was crawling and crawling to the boy. [The C20 witness' grandson – ed.], and next to him lay his grandmother, covered in blood... Her skin was all torn. And the boy had a wounded leg... His knee was torn and he got shrapnel in his stomach. The shrapnel went through his stomach into his intestines.

Witness C14: I will never forget those eyes... The grandmother's... Her whole face was bloody. She opened her eyes, looked at me, and asked, "Please, don't leave my grandson..."

Witness C14: Imagine, I couldn't crawl with him to the field. I couldn't even lift my head in the ditch. I couldn't crawl because there was a fire... I couldn't crawl to the field because I knew they would shoot both me and the child... I just crawled through the fire and that's it. I extinguished the fire with my sleeve and dragged the child... There was fire, there was shelling; shells were falling.

Witness C14: I started crawling with the boy... I didn't have the strength to pull him because I scraped my knees. I crawled with him and then the ditch started burning again. I realized that we would both burn there in that ditch... I started extinguishing it, throwing dirt, but the ground was frozen. I started extinguishing the fire with my sleeve and covering the boy. I pulled him onto the field and extinguished the fire with my sleeve... I extinguished the fire so the child wouldn't burn.

Witness C20: It was a head injury. I was bleeding heavily... I was drenched in blood. I wiped it with a cloth and blood poured into my eyes again, I felt dizzy.

Witness C14: He was conscious and kept asking me questions. "Is my mom crawling? Is my mom crawling?" And his mom had burned in the car... His 11-year-old brother, mom, and grandfather had all burned... Only the grandmother had jumped out of the car with him, and that's all.

Witness C19: You know, in such a situation, children grow up quickly... They didn't scream anymore.

Witness C18: We were crawling, and my grandson was saying to me, "Grandma, I need to pee!" Lying down, I unzipped his coveralls where he lay, because he had to pee... We crawled, literally, half a step. "Grandma, I need to pee!" Three times. He was scared... He was terrified.



Witness C14: His father was at war... His mother had died... His little brother had died... This child only has his grandmother now...

Witness C20: We started crawling along the road... [grandson – ed.], had a broken leg. Someone had already bandaged it. We saw blood dripping from his leg... One side of my head was bruised, all cut up with shrapnel. I was bleeding... I crawled and wiped it with a scarf, with a piece that survived. Someone helped me pull him [grandson – ed.]. One hand was broken and mangled with shrapnel, and the other was burned.

Witness C19: The shelling didn't stop... We kept crawling forward... There was a moment when the woman crawling next to me said, "Where are we crawling to? We don't know what awaits us, right?" I replied, "There's no point in going back. We know one hundred percent that there are Russian soldiers there."

Witness C12: Tears. Tears, screams, panic... I wasn't panicking. I only said one thing, "We have to crawl, because they'll come to finish us off. They'll come to kill us."

Fig. 28.
A residential building
destroyed by Russian
occupying forces,
Bucha Rayon,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

9. Ukrainian military first aid for the injured civilians in the village of Korolivka

According to the accounts of eyewitnesses gathered by the Raphael Lemkin Center for Documenting Russian Crimes in Ukraine, the Ukrainian military learned about the wounded in the field from the passengers of the first cars that managed to reach their checkpoint.

To facilitate the evacuation of civilians who were trying to reach Korolivka through the field, the Ukrainian army set fire to the dry grass along the road, creating a smoke screen to protect the civilians from enemy fire.

Witness C13: It's good that our soldiers set fire to those reeds. Smoke... I told my daughter, "Cover your nose with a scarf and let's crawl, and then we'll stand up over there." I don't know how she crawled, poor thing, but she made it... Her son was pulling her... That was the hardest part.

Witness C1: Later, we realized that our soldiers were shooting into the grass to set it on fire, to cover us with smoke... When we were covered with smoke, we stood up and ran towards Korolivka. Our soldiers were running towards us.

Witness C18: It turned out that our people [Ukrainian soldiers – ed.] set the grass on fire and black smoke started rising, everything got blurry, nothing was visible. I got up... We all ran...

Witness C11: Some started running towards Korolivka, and we were still lying down... They started shooting at us, shelling the field, shells were falling. The grass caught fire, so we were putting it out, lying down... We were lying down and putting it out. Others ran away.

The Ukrainian military checkpoint was about 1,500 meters from the burning cars. People who crawled to Korolivka and were evacuated by the military received first aid and were then taken by ambulance to the hospital in the town of Brusyliv in the Zhytomyr Oblast.

Witness C19: We were crawling. One boy said, "I have a lot of strength, I'll be the first to make it. If you hear gunfire, you'll know you shouldn't crawl in that direction. If everything goes well, I'll wave..."

Witness C12: I was panicking when I crawled to our soldiers. They were talking to me, but I couldn't understand them... I saw them, but I couldn't hear what they were saying... My ears were ringing, they were saying to me, "Calm down, calm down." They brought me some water to drink.

The man who first reached the checkpoint reported the wounded still in the field. Soldiers set out to rescue them.

Witness C20: I was dragging him [grandson – ed.], we sat down in the field, I hugged him. He said to me, "Grandma, the blood, the smell of blood is so terrible..." He couldn't stand the smell. Blood was just pouring out of me. I started feeling sick... I thought I mustn't faint. Because who would find this child in the middle of the field? I don't know how much time passed. I sat with him in the field. I hugged him.

Witness C14: Leaning on my elbow, I lifted my head and saw soldiers approaching. I thought they were "Orcs" [Russians – ed.]. I didn't know who they were... I said to him [the C20 witness' grandson – ed.]: "When you hear shots, when they start shooting, close your eyes and don't open them." He said, "Okay." I crawled with him a bit more, and then I thought, "Where am I going with this child? Closer to them, to be shot?" I said to him, "Come on, let's lie down and close our eyes." I just leaned my hand on the ground. He closed his eyes, and I put my hand on his head. I thought that if they were going to shoot me, at least I wouldn't let the child look them in the eyes... Then I heard people starting to get up and shout, "Glory to Ukraine!" I realized it was our army.

Witness C18: We looked, and some soldiers were coming towards us. We didn't know if they were ours [Ukrainian soldiers – ed.]. Someone shouted, "Ours!" You can't imagine how much joy there was. God, we hugged and kissed them. They pulled us out of there. They helped the wounded... They helped carry the wounded, they carried my grandson. Everything was mined, everything was mined right in front of the village. They led us safely... They showed us where to go...

Witness C13: When we saw our soldiers, I just said, "Thank you." Emotions overwhelmed me. I was trembling all over...

Some with minor shrapnel wounds stayed overnight with the residents of Korolivka.

Almost immediately after the events described above, Russian occupying forces began an attack on Korolivka. At dusk, a minibuss was sent to evacuate the heavily wounded from the shooting site.

- Witness C14:** Our army immediately provided us with first aid. I met V. from the village of Lypivka. He's a veterinarian, but he helped us – he bandaged the wounded who were there. The seriously wounded were immediately taken to the hospital, to the nearest hospital...
- Witness C19:** As it turned out later, there were many wounded. There were shrapnel wounds, penetrating wounds, head injuries, and limb injuries.
- Witness C15:** My wife was the last one. She was wounded in the leg, so she could barely walk; they pulled her out last. We reached the checkpoint, we passed it, and they [Russian soldiers – ed.] started shooting with machine guns... A Ukrainian soldier said, "Go to the minibus, it's over there!" Most of us got in. Something got mixed up in my wife's head and she went towards where they were shooting from... She fell, and then they picked her up.
- Witness C1:** They repelled the attack and told us we had to leave immediately. A minibus arrived.
- Witness C18:** Then a car came and they sent us to another village.
- Witness C12:** Those from the Ukrainian Territorial Defense gave us something to eat at the checkpoint. Thank you! We had no food, cigarettes, money, nothing.

10.

Russian occupation forces attack on the Ukrainian-controlled village of Korolivka

While Ukrainian soldiers were providing first aid, rescuing survivors, and evacuating the wounded from the field, the Russian army began an attack on Korolivka. Some witnesses suggest that the aggressor's army used civilians as human shields.

Witness C17: We met them in Korolivka, then... We went to a house to get some water, and suddenly someone started yelling that there was an attack – they [Russian soldiers – ed.] were coming to Korolivka.

Witness C1: We went to Korolivka. We were told, "Go to the basement." Then soldiers started shouting, "Take cover! Take cover, because the Russians are coming with tanks!" We hid in the basement. Our soldiers said, "Run now, they might storm us." We stayed in the basement for about 15 minutes because the Russians started shooting again.

Witness C13: We arrived at the scene, and the shelling started again... Probably they were advancing. We had to flee to the basement. Later, the military arrived by car, one of those with a tarpaulin at the back... Two men were sitting in the front, and there was a trailer at the back. "We need to evacuate the children!" We got in with the children, they took us to Zabuyan-
nia. In the car, something in the engine, or whatever it was, was rattling and squeaking. My daughter asked, "Who's shooting?" The driver replied, "It's OK. It's just the car."

Witness C15: We got there. They were shooting... They kept shooting...

Witness C1: They told us that evening when they brought us, "Prepare yourselves, we may have to take you away at night or you'll have to go on foot if they continue to attack." They took us to the house of an old man, gave us some potatoes because we had been chased back and forth all day... The kid was hungry, really wanted to eat. It was strange because he used to be a picky eater...



Witness C1: The soldiers first took us to Zabuyannia – we spent the night there. I asked a soldier for a phone, I tried to call my brother, to tell him we’re alive... I couldn’t get through, there was no communication... In the morning, the soldiers came and said we couldn’t stay, we had to leave immediately.

Witness C18: Our soldiers asked us where we would go. We were devastated... One of the soldiers said, “Go to my family.”

Witness C19: After all these events, in the morning, when we woke up and had breakfast, the soldiers asked us, “Where will you go now?” At that time, we had no idea where we were going. One of them suggested that we go to his parents’ home in Rivne, and that’s how we ended up in Rivne Oblast... People there helped us as much as they could.

Witness C8: They took us to the Ukrainian checkpoint on the Kyiv-Zhytomyr highway, then an ambulance was called, first aid was provided, and we were transported to the hospital in Brusyliv.

Witness C9: We arrived, reached the Kyiv-Zhytomyr highway, near Brusyliv, and received first aid.

Witness C8: We were in three hospitals. It added up to a month in total. I had three operations.

Fig. 29.
Remnants of Russian
missiles found near
civilian houses,
Buzhansky Rayon,
April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)

11.

The need to punish Russian criminals for their crimes

Almost all witnesses emphasized the need to punish not only those Russians who committed war crimes but also those who ordered them.

Witness C8: Of course, it was a crime. I believe both the perpetrators and the villains who incited them should be punished.

Witness C21: Every crime must be punished... War crimes, yes, especially when they're against civilians.

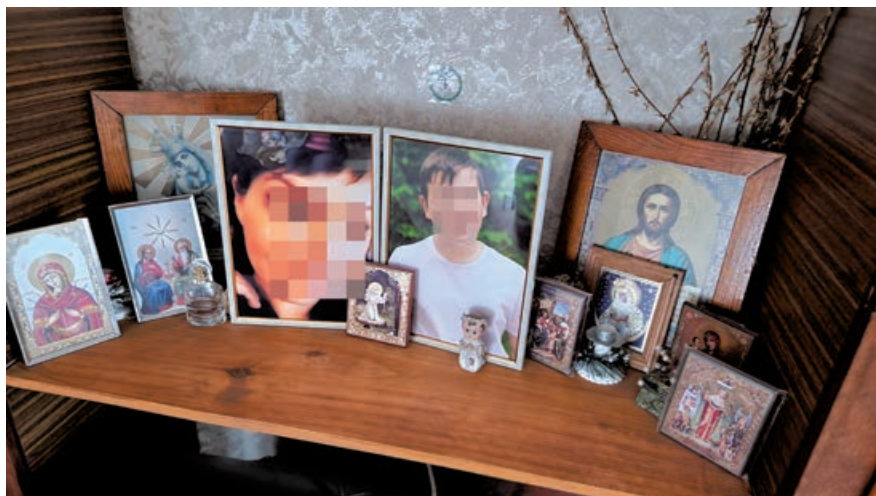
Witness C21: I think [information] was relayed via shortwave radios. It seems to me that from post to post, they were informing that 14 vehicles had left and would be there in two minutes.

Witness C21: It wasn't a coincidence. How could it be accidental? It happened many times. They would say, "We're letting you go – we know nothing..." You don't reach your destination because they shoot you up. That's it. It means it wasn't a coincidence.

Witness C12: Now, during demining, you hear explosions – it's a nightmare for me! I don't know what to do, what to think, where to go... This experience will, as they say, last a lifetime! I'll pull myself together, but what about the children who went through this? You think it didn't affect their psyche? Maybe you think they can be healed from this memory? It can't be erased from memory. That's why I say they need to be punished. If one goes to prison, and someone pays taxes to feed them – that's not punishment!

Witness C21: We agreed we'd be let go... Some now say, "Maybe they didn't know you were civilians?" How could they not know? They had communication among themselves. I believe our column was deliberately sent there to be shot up.

Witness C9: They tried to kill us because all the cars were hit... Listen, I got shot in the arm because I have a tall vehicle. I got shot in the arm because I was



sitting high up. My neighbor, driving behind me, got shot in the head. They weren't trying to stop us, they were trying to kill us! They were shooting at people, not at tires.

Witness C5: Crime isn't the right word! All crimes must be punished! What they did is beyond belief!!!

Witness C14: [...] one hundred percent they should be punished. Because they allowed themselves to do something that can't be justified!

Witness C12: They need to be punished. All of them! They must answer for this! What kind of punishment do I want? I want them to go through what I went through. What those who died there, who burned there, went through... I want them to experience that. I don't want their parents to suffer because parents don't choose their children. I want their wives to experience it too. Because a woman consciously chooses her husband... I want them to be there, to crawl like us... to stay there...

Witness C12: I want them to go through the same thing I did. What we all went through...

One witness believes that the Russian occupying forces intended to use the crime for propaganda purposes – to gather as many civilians as possible, kill as many people as possible, and accuse the Ukrainian army of crimes against civilians.

Witness C7: I believe that firing on vehicles with civilians is a crime against humanity. It looked like deliberate shooting, like entertainment for Russian soldiers. I felt like they were letting us go only so they could accuse our army of

Fig. 30.
Photos of victims of
the shelling of the
civilian evacuation
column, Lypivka
village, 2022

(Photo: Roman Taybov)



Fig. 31.
The death certificate
of an 11-year-old child
who died as a result
of the shelling of the
evacuation column by
Russian occupying forces,
Lypivka village, 2022

(Photo: witness' private archive)

shooting at that column, to show that when we were under Russian occupation, everything was fine, but it turned bad when we tried to leave.

Witness C7: I believe we were deliberately shot at... I believe they deliberately gathered as many vehicles as possible to cause a massive bloodshed. Two or three cars are a small crime. The bigger the number, the more suggestive. To say, "See? We let them go, and the Ukrainians shot them up."

Witness C18: When we were leaving, he [a Russian soldier – ed.] said, "You'll go out this way. Have a safe trip!" And waved to me... Can you imagine he already knew where he was sending us and what would happen? And he waved... But how? What is wrong with you? Oh God! You must have children and a mother yourself! What are you doing? You see, I'm 63 years old, my daughter is driving, and there's a child in the back! There were lots of children! What are you... What are you doing? You're waving at me, knowing we'll be shot. Who raised you?! Who raised you and how?! We were driving peacefully! We were all scared, all terrified and nervous! With children! What are you doing? You're waving at me, and at the same time, you're giving the order to shoot us!

Witness C21: A soldier who causes even the slightest harm to a civilian is already a criminal. And one who kills demonstratively, easily, in an open field, by shooting at an evacuation column, must answer for his crimes!

Witness C21: Women and children. Did they pose any threat to them?

12.

Physio- and psychological damage suffered by survivors of the evacuation column

- Witness C7:** Now I'm safe. Tears come to my eyes when I remember the evacuation column. I remember the faces of those children, those people... Only five cars broke through. And the others? Gone! They're gone!
- Witness C12:** I have nightmares about it constantly, every week... Constantly... I mean, that moment, the shooting, the panic, all those people, those crowded people... I keep having nightmares about it, every week.
- Witness C21:** They hurt me so much that... I'm telling you the truth, I couldn't sleep for five days... One cigarette after another, cigarette after cigarette... When I came home, my wife asked, "How are you feeling?" And I couldn't answer her... Everything stays before your eyes, do you understand? Everyone is crying, everyone... We hug those children, do you understand?
- Witness C3:** I heard little, saw nothing, and remember little. Later, my daughter told me... It was deliberate, of course... The cars were already on fire, and they kept shooting... Finishing all of us off in the field.
- Witness C3:** They took us to the hospital in Brusyliv. In the morning, they said they couldn't save my husband... I went to the morgue to see him.
- Witness C5:** I saw our burnt cars. Later, when I passed by there. I didn't look too closely. My heart was in my throat, I drove past quickly, and that's it.
- Witness C5:** They brought the remains. I called [witness C20 – ed.], who survived. I told her, "We brought the remains, the bits that could be collected..." It was just a handful... There was almost nothing. Later, she buried those remains.
- Witness C14:** I don't think we'll ever forget this! Never! As long as we live, we'll never forget!



Fig. 32.
A child wounded during
the Russian shelling of
a civilian evacuation column,
Lypivka village, 2022

(Photo: Roman Taybov)

Нижні кінцівки:
Травматичних змін зі сторони кісток тазу та кульшових суглобів не виявлено.
В м'яких тканинах правого стегна відмічено сторонні тіла металевої щільності: 2 по передній поверхні в с/3 (один в жировій клітковині (глибина 1,5 см), другий в м'язовій тканині (глибина 3,2 см та на 1 см нижче попереднього)), на 5 см нижче останнього по задній поверхні в м'язовій тканині на глибині 4 см, на 2,5 см нижче останнього по зовнішній поверхні парасально, на 1,5 см нижче останнього розміром до 2 мм по зовнішній поверхні на глибині 1,5 см в жировій клітковині. В н/3 стегна, дозовні від дистального метафіза, осколок розміром 2 мм, на глибині 6 мм.
Інтраартикулярно осколок розміром 3 мм в медіальній частині колінного суглоба, нижче медіального виростка кістки, на глибині 2,5 см. По медіальній поверхні колінного суглоба, дрібні сторонні тіла до 2 мм, можливо пісчинки (7-8 шт.) з інтраартикулярним розташуванням на глибині до 1,5 см.
В нижній третині лівої гомілки по передньозовнішній частині в м'язовому шарі на глибині до 2 см (найбільший), дрібні на

Fig. 33.

An extract from the medical
documentation of a child injured during
the Russian shelling of the civilian
evacuation column: "Foreign metal bodies
were discovered in the soft tissues of the
lower limbs", 2022

(Photo: witness' private archive)

13.

Fear of leaving the occupied territories after the shelling of the civilian evacuation column by Russian forces

Employees of the Raphael Lemkin Center for Documenting Russian Crimes in Ukraine also spoke with residents of Lypivka who intended to leave for territories controlled by Ukraine but who decided to stay in the occupied territory after learning about the shelling of the evacuation column on 12 March 2022.

Witness C16: I'm not afraid of being killed, I've lived a long life... But I wanted to take my daughter to a safe place... On 11 March, my neighbors left, and on 12 March, we heard that the evacuation column between Korolivka and Lypivka had been shelled. "We're not going anywhere," I said. "If we're going to die, I'd rather die on our own land, in our own home."

If the goal of the Russian occupying forces was to keep as many people as possible in the occupied territory, then shelling the evacuation column helped them achieve that.

Fig. 34.
Remnants of Russian
army rations, Bucha
Rayon, April 2022

(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)







← Fig. 35.

A ruined civilian car from
the evacuation column,
Lypivka village, April 2022

(Photo: Roman Taybov)

Afterword – conclusions of the Raphael Lemkin Center for Documenting Russian Crimes in Ukraine

According to information from the Ministry of Reintegration of Ukraine, since 9 March 2022, the ministry has made several attempts to organize so-called “green corridors” in the areas of Bucha and Makariv Rayon: Andriivka, Lypivka, Borodyanka, and other towns.

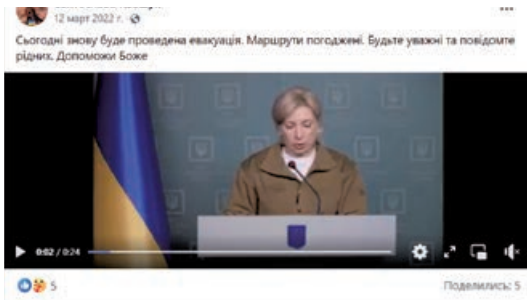


Fig. 36.

A speech by Iryna Vereshchuk, Minister of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine, published on an online Facebook group for the community of Lypivka village, 12 March 2022

(screenshot, source: https://www.facebook.com/groups/471713269920112/?multi_permaLinks=1391343567957073&ref=share [accessed: 21.04.2024])

Iryna Vereshchuk, Minister of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine:

Evacuation routes have been established. From the town of Andriivka in the Kyiv Oblast to Zhytomyr. Makariv – Lypivka – Nebelytsya – Stavyshe – Kocheriv – Korostyshiv – Hlyboka – Zhytomyr. Buses will be sent from Bila Tserkva for the evacuation of the civilian population.

Post by a user from the Lypivka community group: There will be an evacuation again today. Be cautious and inform your loved ones. God bless.

One of the corridors was planned for 11–12 March 2022.



Fig. 37.

A post from the Telegram group "Where in Kyiv" dated 11 March 2022, containing a description of evacuation corridors for the civilian population from the areas of the Kyiv Oblast under Russian occupation

(screenshot, source: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/471713269920112/permalink/1390792314678865> [accessed: 21.04.2024])

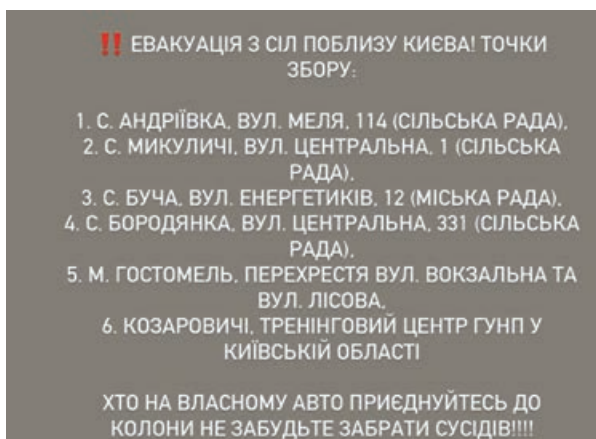


Fig. 38.

A post in the Lypivka village community group, 11 March 2022

(screenshot, source: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/471713269920112/permalink/1390774978013932> [accessed: 21.04.2024])

Efforts were made to negotiate with Russian occupying forces regarding the evacuation of civilians by buses, but there were also hopes that residents would be able to evacuate from the occupied territories using their own vehicles through the so-called green corridors.

Based on the testimonies of eyewitnesses provided to the Raphael Lemkin Center for Documenting Russian Crimes in Ukraine, it can be concluded that the Russians attempted to keep the civilian population in the occupied territory for as long as possible, to prevent attempts by the Ukrainian army to recapture occupied settlements.

To achieve this, representatives of the occupying Russian forces employed the following methods noted in this report:

- Intimidation by spreading information about the mining of surrounding roads: “The road is mined, no one will let you out.”
- Spreading information about alleged executions carried out by the Ukrainian army: “You can’t go to Makariv because your Banderites [alluding to Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), anti-Soviet partisans in the Second World War. – ed.] are shooting at cars, you can’t go there.”
- Convincing: “We do not attack civilians! All this is done by your people!”
- Violation of the right to freedom of movement, prohibition on going out into streets and yards: “We couldn’t even leave the yard as a sniper was sitting on the roof of the house next door.”
- Hindering attempts to leave the occupied territories: “We went towards Korolivka. They told us, ‘No, you can’t go this way.’ They didn’t let us out, so we went towards Makariv. We tried to pass – they didn’t let us. We turned back”; “The Buryats let us through, although later we found out that they themselves had cut down that poplar and knocked it over onto the road [to block passage].”

The goal of detaining civilians on-site was partially achieved. This is evidenced by further events described in the report.

According to the interviewees, for two days, 11–12 March 2022, it seemed that the

Russians were preparing for some planned event. They were counting down the time, giving assurances of safety, and keeping the passengers of the civilian evacuation column ready to depart: “We were given permission: ‘Go to Makariv!’ We reached the checkpoint, they stopped us all there, told us to turn back. When we were going back, the APCs arrived. And again, we were sent back to the old farm, to the basement.”

Each vehicle was specially marked to emphasize that it was a civilian column: white ribbons on the outside of the cars, clearly visible to both sides of the armed conflict; signs reading “CHILDREN” on individual cars transporting minors under the care of adults. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, during the movement of the civilian column, representatives of the occupying Russian forces opened fire on it with small and large-caliber weapons. “At first, there were just shells, that’s what it looked like, tracer ammunition”; “Everything happened very quickly. When we stopped and I turned my head, the shell was flying... Flying... I saw it flying, like an oval fire towards the car...” After the shelling, the Russians tried to finish off unarmed civilians who were fleeing into the open fields. According to the survivors, they seemed to be trying to eliminate witnesses to the crime: “To be honest, we just didn’t know where to go... Shells were falling nearby, three meters away, and it was burning. You couldn’t crawl into the field, they’d shoot you.”

Additionally, according to the testimonies of witnesses who arrived in Korolivka several hours after the shelling, the Russian occupying forces almost immediately launched an assault on the positions of the Ukrainian army. This may indicate that civilians in the evacuation column were used to divert the attention of the Ukrainian army: “Then the soldiers started shouting, ‘Take cover! Take cover, because the Russians are coming with tanks!’ We hid in the basement.”

Despite the Russian attack, the village of Korolivka remained under the control of the Ukrainian army. Depending on the injuries, the rescued civilians were sent to regional or specialized hospitals in the Zhytomyr Oblast on the same day or the next day. The testimonies were collected in the witnesses' places of residence after their treatment and rehabilitation were completed.

After the liberation of the entire Kyiv Oblast, the burnt vehicles were transported to the village of Korolivka for further examination, identification of the remains of victims, and other law enforcement activities.

As evidenced in the testimonies, the activities undertaken by the Russian occupying forces in Lypivka – not only those connected with the evacuation column – bear the hallmarks of various criminal behaviors. The Russian occupying forces resorted, among others, to:

- threats: "If a Russian soldier didn't like something, he immediately snatched up his rifle, reloaded it, threatened that he would shoot us all on the spot. It was terrible"; "Drunk, unpredictable people [Russian soldiers – ed.] came and fired";
- rape: "There were military men there [in the yard – ed.]. One of them advised me not to go outside when the military were there, because the first cases of rape had already

been reported..."; "They raped and killed a woman over there [nearby – ed.]";

- pillage and destruction of private property: "They took my car"; "They broke into all the houses whose owners had left";
- deprivation of medical assistance: "Neither a pharmacy nor a doctor was available there"; "And they could not take him anywhere because the Russian military had already blocked the road out of the village";
- attacking private houses: "The Russian military broke the windows and fired machine guns directly into the houses to set them on fire. They shot at the cars until they started to burn"; "They would drive up to a house with a high fence like this one... made of corrugated metal, with no view of the yard. They would come and shell it with an APC, knock it down, shell the houses from APCs...";
- intimidating civilians: "There were these people [Russian soldiers – ed.] who made us kneel, stripped us to our underwear under the barrels of their machine guns. Imagine, there are ten of them, and they point a machine gun at you, and you kneel down and strip down to your underwear"; "They said, 'If you have a gun, you will be shot, if you have a phone, you will be shot.' Execution for everything."

We are convinced that the crimes described in this report will become the subject of pre-trial investigation by competent investigative bodies and will subsequently be tried in fair proceedings, while the perpetrators will not escape punishment and will be obligated to redress the damage they caused.

Annex

Legal opinion

All parties to the armed conflict in Ukraine are obligated to abide by international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the First Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions, and customary international law. Belligerent armed forces that exercise effective control over a given territory are subject to the international law of occupation. International human rights law also applies, as it is in effect at all times.

Cited below are some key provisions of international law concerning the contents of testimonies presented in the report:

- prohibition of attacking and killing civilians;
- prohibition of intimidation;
- prohibition of pillage and destruction of property;
- rules for organizing humanitarian corridors and evacuation routes;
- obligations of the occupying power towards civilians (including the provision of food and medical care).

1. International law

1.1. Geneva Conventions (Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949)

Geneva law generally condemns the killing of, and particularly the mass use of weapons against, persons not taking part in armed conflict.

Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War

Part 1 General provisions

Article 4

Persons protected by the Convention are those who, at a given moment and in any manner whatsoever, find themselves, in case of a conflict

or occupation, in the hands of a Party to the conflict or Occupying Power of which they are not nationals.

This means that all individuals who provided testimonies, as well as those mentioned as killed and injured in them, were fully covered by the provisions of this convention, particularly regarding violations of the following articles:

Part II General protection of populations against certain consequences of war

Article 16

The wounded and sick, as well as the infirm, and expectant mothers, shall be the object of particular protection and respect.

As far as military considerations allow, each Party to the conflict shall facilitate the steps taken to search for the killed and wounded, to assist the shipwrecked and other persons exposed to grave danger, and to protect them against pillage and ill-treatment.

Article 17

The Parties to the conflict shall endeavour to conclude local agreements for the removal from besieged or encircled areas, of wounded, sick, infirm, and aged persons, children and maternity cases, and for the passage of ministers of all religions, medical personnel and medical equipment on their way to such areas.

[...]

Article 21

Convoys of vehicles or hospital trains on land or specially provided vessels on sea, conveying wounded and sick civilians, the infirm and maternity cases, shall be respected and protected in the same manner as the hospitals provided for in Article 18, and shall be marked, with the consent of the State, by the display of the distinctive emblem provided for in Article 38 of the Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field of August 12, 1949.

[...]

Article 26

Each Party to the conflict shall facilitate enquiries made by members of families dispersed owing to the war, with the object of renewing contact with one another and of meeting, if possible. It shall encourage, in particular, the work of organizations engaged on this task provided they are acceptable to it and conform to its security regulations.

Part III

Status and treatment of protected persons

Section I

Provisions common to the territories of the Parties to the conflict and to occupied territories

Article 29

The Party to the conflict in whose hands protected persons may be is responsible for the treatment accorded to them by its agents, irrespective of any individual responsibility which may be incurred.

[...]

Article 32

The High Contracting Parties specifically agree that each of them is prohibited from taking any measure of such a character as to cause the physical suffering or extermination of protected persons in their hands. This prohibition applies not only to murder, torture, corporal punishment, mutilation and medical or scientific experiments not necessitated by the medical treatment of a protected person but also to any other measures of brutality whether applied by civilian or military agents.

[...]

Section III

Occupied territories

Article 53

Any destruction by the Occupying Power of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons, or to the State, or to other public authorities, or to social or cooperative organizations, is prohibited, except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations.

As cited in <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/geneva-convention-relative-protection-civilian-persons-time-war> [accessed: 21.04.2024]

1.2. Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol 1) of 8 June 1977

In addition to the Convention, relevant provisions are contained in the Protocol Additional of 8 June 1977.

Part II. Wounded, sick and shipwrecked

[...]

Section I. General protection

Article 10. Protection and care

1. All the wounded, sick and shipwrecked, to whichever Party they belong, shall be respected and protected.

2. In all circumstances they shall be treated humanely and shall receive, to the fullest extent practicable and with the least possible delay, the medical care and attention required by their condition. There shall be no distinction among them founded on any grounds other than medical ones.

Article 11. Protection of persons

1. The physical or mental health and integrity of persons who are in the power of the adverse Party or who are interned, detained or otherwise deprived of liberty as a result of a situation referred to in Article 1 shall not be endangered by any unjustified act or omission.

[...]

4. Any willful act or omission which seriously endangers the physical or mental health or integrity of any person who is in the power of a Party other than the one on which he depends and which either violates any of the prohibitions in paragraphs 1 and 2 or fails to comply with the requirements of paragraph 3 shall be a grave breach of this Protocol.

[...]

Article 20. Prohibition of reprisals

Reprisals against the persons and objects protected by this Part are prohibited.

Part III. Methods and means of warfare combatant and prisoner-of-war status

Section I. Methods and means of warfare

Article 35. Basic rules

1. In any armed conflict, the right of the Parties to the conflict to choose methods or means of warfare is not unlimited.

2. It is prohibited to employ weapons, projectiles and material and methods of warfare of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering.

[...]

Part IV. Civilian population

Section I. General protection against effects of hostilities

Chapter I. Basic rule and field of application

Article 48. Basic rule

In order to ensure respect for and protection of the civilian population and civilian objects, the Parties to the conflict shall at all times distinguish between the civilian population and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives and accordingly shall direct their operations only against military objectives.

[...]

Chapter II. Civilians and civilian population

Article 51. Protection of the civilian population

1. The civilian population and individual civilians shall enjoy general protection against dangers arising from

military operations. To give effect to this protection, the following rules, which are additional to other applicable rules of international law, shall be observed in all circumstances.

2. The civilian population as such, as well as individual civilians, shall not be the object of attack. Acts or threats of violence the primary purpose of which is to spread terror among the civilian population are prohibited.

3. Civilians shall enjoy the protection afforded by this Section, unless and for such time as they take a direct part in hostilities.

4. Indiscriminate attacks are prohibited. Indiscriminate attacks are:

a) those which are not directed at a specific military objective;

b) those which employ a method or means of combat which cannot be directed at a specific military objective; or

c) those which employ a method or means of combat the effects of which cannot be limited as required by this Protocol;

and consequently, in each such case, are of a nature to strike military objectives and civilians or civilian objects without distinction.

5. Among others, the following types of attacks are to be considered as indiscriminate:

a) an attack by bombardment by any methods or means which treats as a single military objective a number of clearly separated and distinct military objectives located in a city, town, village or other area containing a similar concentration of civilians or civilian objects; and

b) an attack which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated.

6. Attacks against the civilian population or civilians by way of reprisals are prohibited.

7. The presence or movements of the civilian population or individual civilians shall not be used to render certain points or areas immune from military operations, in particular in attempts to shield military objectives from attacks or to shield, favour or impede military operations. The Parties to the conflict shall not direct the movement of the civilian population or individual civilians in order to attempt to shield military objectives from attacks or to shield military operations.

8. Any violation of these prohibitions shall not release the Parties to the conflict from their legal obligations with respect to the civilian population and civilians, including the obligation to take the precautionary measures provided for in Article 57.

[...]

Section III. Treatment of persons in the power of a Party to the conflict

Chapter I. Field of application and protection of persons and objects

Article 75. Fundamental guarantees

[...]

2. The following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever, whether committed by civilian or by military agents:

a) violence to the life, health, or physical or mental well-being of persons, in particular:

- i. murder;
- ii. torture of all kinds, whether physical or mental;
- iii. corporal punishment; and
- iv. mutilation;

b) outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault;

c) the taking of hostages;

d) collective punishments;

e) threats to commit any of the foregoing acts.

[...]

Part V. Execution of the Conventions and of this Protocol

Section II. Repression of breaches of the Conventions and of this Protocol

Article 85. Repression of breaches of this Protocol

1. The provisions of the Conventions relating to the repression of breaches and grave breaches, supplemented by this Section, shall apply to the repression of breaches and grave breaches of this Protocol.

2. Acts described as grave breaches in the Conventions are grave breaches of this Protocol if committed against persons in the power of an adverse Party protected by Articles 44 , 45 and 73 of this Protocol, or against the wounded, sick and

shipwrecked of the adverse Party who are protected by this Protocol, or against those medical or religious personnel, medical units or medical transports which are under the control of the adverse Party and are protected by this Protocol.

3. In addition to the grave breaches defined in Article 11 , the following acts shall be regarded as grave breaches of this Protocol, when committed willfully, in violation of the relevant provisions of this Protocol, and causing death or serious injury to body or health:

- a) making the civilian population or individual civilians the object of attack;
- b) launching an indiscriminate attack affecting the civilian population or civilian objects in the knowledge that such attack will cause excessive loss of life, injury to civilians or damage to civilian objects, as defined in Article 57, paragraph 2 (a) (iii) [...].

2. Legislation of the Republic of Ukraine

The Criminal Code of the Republic of Ukraine contains separate articles regarding crimes committed during wartime against the civilian population.

Criminal Code of the Republic of Ukraine

Article 438. Violation of rules of the warfare

1. Cruel treatment of prisoners of war or civilians, deportation of civilian population for forced labor, pillage of national treasures on occupied territories, use of methods of the warfare prohibited by international instruments, or any other violations of rules of the warfare recognized

by international instruments consented to by binding by the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine, and also giving an order to commit any such actions:

– shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of eight to twelve years.

2. The same acts accompanied with a murder:

– shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of ten to fifteen years, or life imprisonment.

As cited in https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/uploads/res/document/ukr/2001/criminal-code-of-the-republic-of-ukraine-en_html/Ukraine_Criminal_Code_as_of_2010_EN.pdf
[accessed: 21.04.2024]

Therefore, the prosecution of military perpetrators from the aggressor country and their leaders is also possible under the national criminal law of Ukraine.

3.

Legislation of the Russian Federation (the aggressor country)

On the other hand, the Russian armed forces, by planning and conducting attacks on civilians during their evacuation from the territory of their military operations, have also committed a crime under their own legislation.

Criminal Code of the Russian Federation

Article 356. Use of Banned Means and Methods of Warfare

1. Cruel treatment of prisoners of war or civilians, deportation of civilian populations, plunder of national property in occupied territories, and use in a military conflict of means and methods of warfare, banned by an international treaty of the Russian Federation:

– shall be punishable by deprivation of liberty for a term of up to 20 years.

2. Use of weapons of mass destruction, banned by an international treaty of the Russian Federation:
– shall be punishable by deprivation of liberty for a term of 10 to 20 years.

As cited in <https://www.legal-tools.org/doc/8eed35/pdf>
[accessed: 21.04.2024]



Fig. 39.
A stretch of mined roadside,
Bucha Rayon, 2022
(Photo: Monika Andruszewska)



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Remains of civilian vehicles from the evacuation column, Lypivka village, April 2022,

Photo: *Monika Andruszewska*

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