

Analytical Report

21 April – 4 May 2022

Evidence of war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law committed by the Russian Federation during its campaign of military aggression against Ukraine

During the reporting period, occupying Russian forces destroyed a number of grain stockpiles and began the mass theft of grain in the occupied parts of the oblasts of Kherson, Donetsk, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia, depriving local populations of essential food supplies and impeding the sowing of the next year's crops. There are credible reports of large mass graves and filtration camps organised by Russian troops near the besieged city of Mariupol. In Mariupol, Russian forces blocked the evacuation of around 1,000 civilians and dozens of wounded *hors de combat* Ukrainian soldiers. There were new recorded instances of sexual violence, torture, and mass executions of civilians in occupied territories; in de-occupied Kyiv Oblast alone, the number of killed civilians has reached 1,235. Russian forces continued to bombard eastern and southern regions of Ukraine, pillage both private and public property, and deport civilians or take them hostage.

During the reporting period, we documented the following war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law that were committed by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation: (1) torture and wilful killings; (2) sexual violence; (3) attacks on civilian objects; (4) attacks on specially protected objects; (5) impeding humanitarian relief and evacuation of civilians; (6) forcible transfer of civilian population; (7) pillage and appropriation of property; (8) taking of hostages; (9) false flag operations; (10) filtration camps and other cases of unlawful confinement.¹

1) Torture and wilful killings

¹ The number of war crimes committed by Russian forces during the reporting period is not limited to those analysed in this report. The total number is much higher. The cases that were included in this report were analysed as exemplary cases of war crimes and breaches of international humanitarian law committed by Russia.

International criminal law (ICL) and international humanitarian law (IHL) forbid torture and inhumane treatment of any persons regardless of whether they are military or civilian.² ICL and IHL also forbid making civilians the objects of attack and killing them.³ These two types of war crimes and IHL violations are analysed here in a single section since in all cases of torture analysed the victims were found dead. Violations of the prohibition on the killing of civilians, as well as torture and inhumane treatment are grave breaches of IHL.⁴ Both torture and killings also constitute war crimes and/or crimes against humanity.⁵

During the reporting period, there were new reports of mass executions of civilians by occupying Russian forces in Kyiv Oblast. The local authorities have so far discovered 1,235 dead civilians.⁶ Fifty to seventy-five per cent of those killed appear to have gunshot wounds.⁷ There is evidence of at least three mass graves organised by Russian troops near the besieged Mariupol.⁸ There are initial reports of torture and killings of civilians in towns in Kharkiv Oblast that were liberated from Russian occupation,⁹ and further reports of torture in the liberated Sumy Oblast.¹⁰

² Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, Article 7.1(f); Article 8.2(a)(ii); Geneva Convention (I) of 1949, Article 12(2); Geneva Convention (II) of 1949, Article 12(2); Geneva Convention (III) of 1949, Article 17, Article 87, Article 89; Geneva Convention (IV) of 1949, Article 32; Rule 90 of the customary IHL.

³ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, Article 7.1(d); Article 8.2(a)(i); Geneva Convention (IV) of 1949, Article 32; Additional Protocol (I) to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, Article 85 3(a).

⁴ Geneva Convention (I) of 1949, Article 50; Geneva Convention (II) of 1949, Article 51; Geneva Convention (IV) of 1949, Article 147.

⁵ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, Article 7.1(f); Article 8.2(a)(ii); Article 7.1(d); Article 8.2(a)(i).

⁶ Telegram channel of Oleksandr Pavliuk / Kyiv Regional Military Administration, 'In the territory of Kyiv region mass burials of peaceful civilians murdered by Russian occupants are being continuously discovered', 04 May 2022, available at: <https://t.me/kyivoda/3611>.

⁷ RFE/RL, 'Police: In Kyiv region the bodies of 1084 civilians found, the majority of them were killed with basic weapons', 22 April 2022, available at: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-zahybli-v-kyivskiy-oblasti-politsiya/31816167.html>.

⁸ RFE/RL, 'Satellite registered the third place of mass burial near Mariupol – "Skhemy" (photo)', 25 April 2022, available at: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-skhemy-bratska-mohyla-staryy-krym/31820268.html?fbclid=IwAR2aao-dWPQmpc3RQgwr2C-JmahPKWNh8LnugeufQWKXOp8I8fC4yGHP3ws>.

⁹ Ukrainska Pravda, 'In Kharkiv region Russians were torturing and killed a medical worker from ATO', 29 April 2022, available at: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/04/29/7342988/>.

¹⁰ RFE/RL, 'State Bureau for Investigations documented approximately 20 facts of torture of residents of Trostianets by Russian military men', 27 April 2022, available at: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-dbr-fakty-katuvannia-trostianets/31823560.html>.

21/04/2022 – 25/04/2022: Journalist-investigators for the *Skhemy* (‘Schemes’) project reported on three mass graves in Mariupol District, Donetsk Oblast. The first mass burial site is more than 300 m long and was found in the village of Mangush, 20 km from Mariupol.¹¹ The second mass burial site is approximately 45 m long, found near the village of Vinohradne (5 km from Mariupol), occupied by Russian troops.¹² The third mass burial site is more than 200 m long and is located near the occupied village of Staryi Krym (5 km from Mariupol).¹³ Local authorities in Mariupol confirmed that occupying Russian troops arranged the mass burial of civilians in these villages, referring to information provided by local residents.

21/04/2022: Police in Kyiv Oblast reported that in Borodianka two burial sites were discovered, containing the bodies of nine people murdered by Russian servicemen.¹⁴

27/04/2022: The State Bureau of Investigation informed that in the liberated Trostianets, Sumy Oblast, sites where least 20 local residents had been tortured by occupying Russian forces had been discovered. At the crime scenes were found batons, handcuffs, pliers, and the bloodied clothes of victims.¹⁵

29/04/2022: President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy reported that in Kyiv Oblast a mass burial had been found contained the bodies of 900 people killed by Russian troops.¹⁶

¹¹ RFE/RL, ‘Satellite captured 300-meters unmarked grave of citizens of Mariupol in Mangush – “Skhemy”’, 21 April 2022, available at: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-skhemy-bratska-mohyla-manhush/31814746.html>.

¹² RFE/RL, ‘Satellite captured 300-meters unmarked grave of citizens of Mariupol in Mangush – “Skhemy”’, 22 April 2022, available at: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-skhemy-vynohradne-bratska-mohyla/31816645.html>.

¹³ RFE/RL, ‘Satellite captured the third place of mass burial near Mariupol – “Skhemy” (photo)’, 25 April 2022, available at: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-skhemy-bratska-mohyla-staryy-krym/31820268.html?fbclid=IwAR2aao-dWPQmpc3RQgwr2C-JmahPKWNh8LnugeufQWKXOp8I8fC4yGHP3ws>.

¹⁴ Facebook page of Kyiv Regional Police, ‘ANDRIY NEBYTOV: Nine deceased with 15-year old girl among them, found at the place of mass burial, civilians of Borodianka who were killed by occupants’, 20 April 2022, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/pol.kyivregion/posts/pfbid02C9TsNWjWnJbNGsGiWnSCgHvmCTrXcfgesfaswjYLpnxEVfwJDXwt4WFFRUTzpfm5l>.

¹⁵ Facebook page of the State Bureau of Investigations, 27 April 2022, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/dbr.gov.ua/posts/pfbid028ZRGZfbx5ceVYmukoLLoTVxNY1cZYEFmCr4j7kQ9wfyEKYupPjYLPPhfJf7NYnSl>.

¹⁶ YouTube channel of the Office of the President of Ukraine, ‘Volodymyr Zelenskyy communicated with the representatives of Polish mass-media’, 29 April 2022, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eN15bRQI6W8>.

In de-occupied Husarivka, Balakliia District, Kharkiv Oblast, the body of a 27-year-old medical professional was found with multiple wounds, shot through the knees and feet, with a craniocerebral injury and a bullet in his chest. On the road between Husarivka and Shevelivka, a car was found with a family shot dead - a man, a woman, and their three-year-old son. Earlier, law enforcement officials found the burnt corpses of Ukrainians who had been tortured by the Russian military and then thrown into cellars along with wood and/or car tyres and set alight in an apparent attempt to cover up the crime.¹⁷

30/04/2022: Police in Kyiv Oblast reported that in a forest near the village of Myrotske, Buchanskyi District, Kyiv Oblast, there was a pit found containing the bodies of three men killed by Russian troops. Indications of torture were found on the bodies, as were gunshot wounds in different parts of the bodies.¹⁸

02/05/2022: The General Prosecutor's Office reported that in Kalynivka, Bucha District, Kyiv Oblast, the burial site of two men bearing traces of torture had been found. Nails had been torn off from their fingers, their arms were tied behind their backs, and there were indications of gunshots on their bodies.¹⁹

03/05/2022: The General Prosecutor's Office reported that in Irpin, Kyiv Oblast, the bodies of seven civilians shot dead by Russian forces were found. A Russian soldier from the 234th Air Assault Regiment of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation was identified, who – together with other Russian servicemen – had captured and tortured 10 men. The captives were held in a cellar and struck on their ribs and legs with the butts of rifles, threatened with murder and simulated execution, and were given neither food nor water. The responsible servicemen also shot in the direction of a local woman's legs.²⁰

¹⁷ Ukrainska Pravda, 'Russians were torturing and then shot a medical professional from ATO in Kharkiv region', 29 April 2022, available at: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/04/29/7342988/>.

¹⁸ Facebook page of Kyiv Regional Police, 'Tortured and shot down: In Kyiv region a mass burial of citizens, murdered by occupants was found', 30 April 2022, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/pol.kyivregion/posts/359287162902273>.

¹⁹ Telegram channel of the General Prosecutor's Office, 'Tortures and murders of non-combatants – crimes of RF military men during occupation are being documented in Kyiv region', 02 May 2022, available at: https://t.me/pgov_ua/3941.

²⁰ Telegram channel of the General Prosecutor's Office, 'Iryna Venediktova: Impunity makes Russian occupants defiant, but we are working to find and punish every war criminal', 03 May 2022, available at: https://t.me/pgov_ua/3959.

04/05/2022: Kyiv Regional Police reported that the bodies of 20 more civilians killed by the Russian military were found in Kyiv Oblast.²¹ Later, police also reported that, in the village of Shybyne, Borodianka District, Kyiv Oblast, the body of a 58-year-old man who was shot by occupying Russian troops near his home had been found.²²

2) Sexual violence

Rape and other forms of sexual violence constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, and a breach of IHL.²³ Sexual violence can also amount to torture and/or inhuman and degrading treatment – another war crime and a grave breach of IHL.²⁴

The Ombudsman of Ukraine said that in the first half of April her office received about 400 complaints from citizens of the occupied or liberated territories of Ukraine about cases of sexual violence committed by the Russian servicemen.²⁵

3) Attacks on civilian objects

ICL and IHL establish provisions for the general protection of civilian objects and entire towns, villages, dwellings, and buildings which are undefended and which are not military objects.²⁶ Attacks, reprisals, or other acts of violence against such objects in international conflicts are forbidden and considered war crimes and breaches of IHL.

²¹ Telegram channel of the General Prosecutor's Office, 'For the last day in Kyiv region 20 more bodies of civilians were found, who were killed by rf occupants', 04 May 2022, available at: https://t.me/mvs_ukraine/12345.

²² Facebook page of Kyiv Regional Police, '10-year old girl and three adults were killed by occupants: The police found the bodies of deceased in Bucha district', 04 May 2022, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/pol.kyivregion/posts/362148002616189>.

²³ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, Article 7(1)(g); Article 8.2(b)(iv); Additional Protocol (I) to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, Article 75(2)(b); Article 76(1); Article 77(1); Common Article 3(1)(c) of the 1949 Geneva Conventions; Geneva Convention (IV) of 1949, Article 27; Rule 93 of customary IHL.

²⁴ For more information, see Amnesty International, *Rape And Sexual Violence Human Rights Law And Standards In The International Criminal Court*, Section 6, 'Acts Of Rape And Sexual Violence Causing Severe Pain And Suffering Must Be Charged As Torture', available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ior530012011en.pdf>.

²⁵ Facebook page of Liudmyla Denisova, 26 April 2022, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/denisovaombudsman/videos/1198051550998505/>.

²⁶ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, Article 8.2(b)(ii),(v); Additional Protocol (I) to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, Article 52.

International law prohibits both intentional and indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian objects. The prohibition includes attacks that are not directed at a specific military objective; attacks that employ a method or means of combat which cannot be directed at a specific military objective or whose effects cannot be limited and, thus, strike military objectives and civilians or civilian objects without distinction; bombardment 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 attacks 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.²⁷

During the reporting period, Russia continued relentless shelling and bombardment of eastern and southern regions of Ukraine, including the oblasts of Kharkiv, Donetsk, Luhansk, as well as launching targeted strikes in other regions.²⁸ In this section, we described only the most notorious cases of attacks, which resulted in 48 civilian deaths. Additionally, updated information on the Russian forces' bombardment of the Mariupol Regional Drama Theatre revealed 300 more deaths than initially estimated.

23/04/2022: In Odesa, Russian troops fired at a residential building. Eight people, including a three-month-old baby, died. Another 18 people were wounded.²⁹

24/04/2022: In Krasnohorivka, Novoselivka, and Novomikhailivka, Donetsk Oblast, as a result of shelling of residential areas by Russian troops, eight people were killed. Eight civilians were earlier killed in Hirske, Zolote, and Popasna, Luhansk Oblast as a consequence of Russian shelling – two people were wounded.³⁰

²⁷ Additional Protocol (I) to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, Article 51.

²⁸ For more information, see Bellingcat Interactive TimeMap of Incidents of Civilian Harm in Ukraine: <https://ukraine.bellingcat.com/>.

²⁹ Ukrainska Pravda, 'Zelenskyi about homicide of 8 people in Odessa by russians: Smelly jerkoffs', 23 April 2022, available at: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/04/23/7341647/>.

³⁰ Telegram channel of Serhii Haidai/ Luhansk Regional State Administration (Regional Military Administration), 'Luhansk under russians' fire: eight people perished, two persons wounded, at least seven houses ruined and the police department', 24 April 2022, available at: <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/1931>.

29/04/2022: In Kharkiv, Kotliary, and Pokotylyvka, Kharkiv Oblast, five people died as a result of Russian shelling of residential districts. Eleven civilians were wounded.³¹

03/05/2022: In Avdiivka, Vugledar and Liman, Donetsk Oblast, Russian fire in residential districts killed nine civilians.³² Later the same day in Avdiivka, Russian troops fired at bus stop at a coking plant killing at least 10 civilians and severely wounding 20.³³

30/05/2022: In Mariupol, Donetsk Oblast, Ukrainian servicemen posted a video showing a Russian tank firing directly at a residential building.³⁴

04/05/2022: The Associated Press published an investigation showing that, due to the Russian airstrike on the Mariupol Regional Drama Theatre, approximately 600 of 1,000 civilians sheltering there perished,³⁵ much higher than the 300 that had earlier been reported.³⁶

4) Attacks on specially protected objects

According to ICL and IHL, certain civilian objects are afforded special protection due to their humanitarian importance. Such objects include, inter alia, hospitals,³⁷ medical vehicles,³⁸ and foodstuffs.³⁹

³¹ Telegram channel of Oleh Synehubov, Head Kharkiv Regional State Administration, ‘Today is another day of almost non-stop shelling by russian invaders. Peaceful people continue dying under occupants’ fire’, 28 April 2022, available at: <https://t.me/synehubov/3013>.

³² Telegram channel of Pavlo Kyrylenko/ Regional State Administration (Regional Military Administration), ‘At least 9 people were killed today by russians in Donetsk region’, 03 May 2022, available at: https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko_donoda/3248.

³³ Ukrainska Pravda, ‘In Avdiivka as a result of rf attack non-combatants perished, there are wounded people’, 03 May 2022, available at: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/05/3/7343771/>.

³⁴ Ukrainska Pravda, ‘“Azov” shared a video, where russians are firing dwelling houses of Mariupol with tanks’, 30 April 2022, available at: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/04/30/7343159/>.

³⁵ AP News, ‘AP evidence points to 600 dead in Mariupol theater airstrike’, 04 May 2022, available at: https://apnews.com/article/Russia-ukraine-war-mariupol-theater-c321a196fbd568899841b506afcac7a1?utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=AP&utm_campaign=SocialFlow.

³⁶ Telegram channel of Mariupol City Council, 25 March 2022, available at: <https://t.me/mariupolrada/8999>.

³⁷ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, Article 8.2(b) (ix); Geneva Convention (I) of 1949, Article 19; Geneva Convention (IV) of 1949, Article 18; Additional Protocol (I) to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, Article 12; Rule 29 of customary IHL.

³⁸ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, Article 8.2(b) (ix); Geneva Convention (I) of 1949, Article 35; Geneva Convention (IV) of 1949, Article 21; Additional Protocol (I) to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, Article 21; Rule 29 of customary IHL.

³⁹ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, Article 8.2(b) (xxv); Additional Protocol (I) to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, Article 54; Rule 54 of customary IHL.

During the reporting period, it became known that the Russian military attacked at least 12 specially protected objects – 9 hospitals and 3 grain elevators – and stole 400 tonnes of stockpiled grain.

22/04/2022: It became known that, in Luhansk Oblast, Russian troops fired at five emergency medical care stations, two of them being completely destroyed.⁴⁰ In addition, according to the Ombudsman of Ukraine, Russian shelling has destroyed almost all hospitals. Russian troops are also targeting ambulances.⁴¹

26/04/2022: In Atynske, Sumy Oblast, Russian soldiers fired upon a psycho-neurological boarding school. Patients and staff were uninjured.⁴²

28/04/2022: In Severodonetsk, as a result of Russian shelling, three upper floors of a hospital were damaged and the supply of electricity and water to the hospital was interrupted. The hospital staff continued providing medical aid to people.⁴³

30/04/2022: In Kharkiv, Russian troops fired on a local hospital. As a result of shelling, concrete constructions and windows frames on the technical floor of the hospital were partially ruined and there was a fire on one floor. There were no victims injured or killed.⁴⁴

01/05/2022 – 02/05/2022: In Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, Russian soldiers fired missiles at three grain storage sites, two of which contained grain at the time. All the warehouses were destroyed.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Telegram channel of Serhii Haidai / Luhansk Regional State Administration (Regional Military Administration), 22 April 2022, available at: <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/1886>.

⁴¹ Suspilne, 'Russian occupants ruined practically all hospitals in Luhansk region – Denisova', 25 April 2022, available at: <https://suspilne.media/232314-rosijski-okupanti-zrujnuvali-na-lugansini-prakticno-vsi-likarni-denisova/>.

⁴² Suspilne, 'RF military men fired psycho-neurological boarding school in Sumy region', 26 April 2022, available at: <https://suspilne.media/232643-vijskovi-rf-obstrilali-psihonevrologicnij-internat-na-sumsini/>.

⁴³ RFE/RL, 'Situation in Luhansk region: Four people perished, 29 russian shells, the hospital in Severodonetsk is damaged', 28 April 2022, available at: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-sytutsiya-na-luhanshchyni/31824733.html>.

⁴⁴ Facebook page of Chief Directorate of State Service for Emergency Situations of Ukraine in Kharkiv Oblast, 'In Kharkiv the enemy fired the local hospital and dwelling houses', 30 April 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/MNSKHARKIV/posts/364297702406396>.

⁴⁵ Ukrainska Pravda, 'Russians hit with missiles in storages in the Dnepropetrovsk region', 01 May 2022, available at: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/05/1/7343293/>; Telegram channel of Valentin Reznichenko / Regional

03/05/2022: The Ministry of Agrarian Policy of Ukraine reported that in the parts of the oblasts of Kherson, Donetsk, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia currently under Russian occupation, Russian troops moved out about one third of all grain stocks (400 tonnes) needed for sowing fields and feeding for population.⁴⁶ In Luhansk Oblast, due to the fact that occupying Russian forces stole the three years' worth of grain stocks (100 tonnes), local authorities weren't able to conduct seeding.⁴⁷ Earlier, the Ministry reported that Russian servicemen were stealing grain from local farmers *en masse* in the occupied territories.⁴⁸

In Rubizhne, Luhansk Oblast, Russian forces launched an airstrike on a grain elevator complex, leaving it in ruins.⁴⁹

28/04/2022: In Mariupol, Russian forces dropped an aerial bomb on the hospital at the Azovstal metallurgical plant where approximately 1,000 civilians were hiding from shelling and where Ukraine's Azov Regiment were holding the line. We know of 600 wounded due to the strike and at least one dead. People who had earlier been wounded received fresh injuries and concussions, doctors were wounded, and the surgical theatre where all surgical instruments were kept was also ruined.⁵⁰

State Administration (Regional Military Administration), 02 May 2022, available at: <https://t.me/dnipropetrovskaODA/819>.

⁴⁶ Youtube channel of the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, 'The occupants had already taken away about 400 thousand tons of grain from farmers', 03 May 2022, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nXu3fhANUk>.

⁴⁷ Ukrainska Pravda, 'In Luhansk region russians destroyed or moved out a stock of grain for three years', 04 May 2022, available at: <https://www.epravda.com.ua/news/2022/05/4/686635/>.

⁴⁸ Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, 'Mykola Solskyi: Stealing grain from Ukrainians is the way that will end badly for occupants', 30 April 2022, available at: <https://minagro.gov.ua/news/mikola-solskij-krasti-v-ukrayinciv-zerno-ce-shlyah-yakij-zavershitysya-pogano-dlya-okupantiv>.

⁴⁹ Telegram channel of Serhii Haidai/ Luhansk Regional State Administration (Regional Military Administration), 'Purpose is Holodomor (man-made famine). Occupants' aircrafts bombed down the elevator in Rubizhne', 03 May 2022, available at: <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/2254>.

⁵⁰ Suspilne, 'In Mariupol russian army dropped bombs on the military field hospital: wounded soldiers were killed', 28 April 2022, available at: <https://suspilne.media/233712-u-mariupoli-na-vijskovij-polovij-spital-armia-rf-skidala-aviabombi-zaginuli-poraneni-vijskovi/>; Suspilne, 'The surgery theater where the surgical instrument was kept, was buried. What are the conditions where people at 'Azovstal' are staying', 29 April 2022, available at: <https://suspilne.media/234231-zasipalo-operacijnu-de-zberigavsya-hirurgicnij-instrument-v-akih-umovah-perebuvaut-ludi-na-azovstali/>; Youtube channel of Media Center Ukraine, Ukraine Media Center, '29.04.2022 (UA)', 29 April 2022, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6ZE08BIs_I&feature=youtu.be.

5) Impeding humanitarian relief and evacuation of civilians

IHL and ICL have specific provisions to ensure that the civilian population is provided with necessary humanitarian relief during wartime, including food, water, and medicine. The parties to the international armed conflict are obligated to allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of relief consignments.⁵¹ Personnel that transport and distribute relief consignments are also under the protection of IHL.⁵² Actions that impede humanitarian relief constitute a breach of IHL and can amount to the war crime of starvation of civilians.⁵³

In addition, IHL obligates the parties to a conflict to remove civilian populations, individual civilians, and civilian objects under their control from the vicinity of military objectives.⁵⁴ In besieged or encircled areas, the parties are obligated to ensure the removal of wounded, sick, infirm, and aged persons, as well as children and maternity cases, and ensure the passage of ministers of all religions, medical personnel, and medical equipment on their way to such areas.⁵⁵

During the reporting period, Russia repeatedly blocked the evacuation of civilians and wounded Ukrainian soldiers from the Azovstal metallurgical complex. Russian forces blocked the evacuation of civilians from all towns in Zaporizhzhia Oblast and attacked four evacuation vehicles in Luhansk Oblast.

25/04/2022 – 04/05/2022: In Mariupol, Donetsk Oblast, Russian forces continuously shelled and tried to seize⁵⁶ the Azovstal complex, killing at least two civilians⁵⁷ and sabotaging the evacuation of around 1,000 civilians.⁵⁸ Around 600 people, including civilians and military

⁵¹ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, Article 8.2(b) (xxv); Geneva Convention (IV) of 1949, Article 23, 59; Additional Protocol (I) to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, Article 70; Rule 55 of customary IHL.

⁵² Additional Protocol (I) to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, Article 71.

⁵³ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, Article 8.2(b) (xxv).

⁵⁴ Additional Protocol (I) to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, Article 58; Rule 24 of customary IHL.

⁵⁵ Geneva Convention (IV) of 1949, Article 17.

⁵⁶ Suspilne, 'Russia attacks 'Azovstal' in Mariupol non-stop — Podoliak', 24 April 2022, available at: <https://suspilne.media/232091-rosia-bez-upinu-atakue-azovstal-u-mariupoli-podolak/>; 'Plant 'Azovstal' where Mariupol defenders are, where civilians are hiding from shelling, is continued to be covered with the enemy fire', 26 April 2022, available at: <https://t.me/polkazov/4442>; Ukrainska Pravda, 'Russians battled through to "Azovstal" plant in Mariupol', 04 May 2022, available at: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/05/4/7343969/>.

⁵⁷ Ukrainska Pravda, 'Russian airbombs killed two women at "Azovstal", powerful assault on the plant is ongoing', 03 May 2022, available at: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/05/3/7343726/>.

⁵⁸ Suspilne, 'Russians don't allow the corridor for 1000 civilians in "Azovstal" to make pressure on Armed Forces of Ukraine — Vereshchuk', 22 April 2022, available at: <https://suspilne.media/231447-rosiani-ne-daut-koridoru->

personnel, were wounded during the bombardments and were in grave danger due to medicine, food, and water shortages.⁵⁹

Ukrainian authorities report that between 24 and 30 April 2022, the Russian side blocked the evacuation of civilians from the Russian-surrounded Azovstal complex.⁶⁰ The first 100 civilians were successfully evacuated only on 1 May,⁶¹ after which Russian troops resumed shelling of facility where the remaining civilians were hiding.⁶²

22/04/2022: in Luhansk Oblast, Russian troops fired on an evacuation bus that was transporting people from Popasna to Rubizhne. Two people were wounded.⁶³ Local authorities report that Russian forces disrupted evacuation activities through constant shelling.⁶⁴

25/04/2022: In Luhansk Oblast, Russian troops fired on an evacuation bus that was on its way to Rubizhne.⁶⁵

[dla-1000-civilnih-na-azovstali-abi-ciniti-tisk-na-zsu-veresuk/](#); Suspilne, "No agreements" — Vereshchuk controverted the statement of Russian Federation on the corridor for withdrawal of civilians from "Azovstal", 25 April 2022, available at: <https://suspilne.media/232412-domovlenostej-nemae-veresuk-sprostuvala-zaavu-rf-pro-koridor-dla-vihodu-civilnih-z-azovstali/>.

⁵⁹ Hromadske, 'Over 600 wounded military men are at "Azovstal". There are not enough medications and medical workers — a defender of Mariupol', 27 April 2022, available at: <https://hromadske.ua/posts/na-azovstali-perebuyayut-ponad-600-poranenih-vijskovih-likiv-ta-medikiv-ne-vistachaye-zahisnik-mariupolya>.

⁶⁰ RFE/RL, 'Evacuation from Mariupol did not take place today – Vereshchuk', 21 April 2022, available at: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-evakuatsiya-mariupol-vereshchuk/31815171.html>; RFE/RL, 'On April 22 there will be no humanitarian corridors due danger on the routes – Vereshchuk', 22 April 2022, available at: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-humanitarni-korydory-vereshchuk/31815830.html>; Ukrainska Pravda, 'Mariupol: The occupants sabotaged the scheduled evacuation of women and children', 23 April 2022, available at: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/04/23/7341615/>; Ukrainska Pravda, 'Russians didn't allow to open the corridor from Mariupol: Vereshchuk appealed to United Nations', 24 April 2022, available at: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/04/24/7341793/>.

⁶¹ Twitter account of President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy, 01 May 2022, available at: <https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1520774270103822336>.

⁶² Suspilne, 'Russian military fired on "Azovstal" – commander of the 12th brigade of special operational target force of National Guard of Ukraine', 01 May 2022, available at: <https://suspilne.media/234745-rosijski-vijskovi-obstrilali-azovstal-komandir-12-oi-brigadi-operativnogo-priznacenna-ngu/>.

⁶³ Telegram channel of Serhii Haidai / Luhansk Regional State Administration (Regional Military Administration), '70 people were rescued today from Luhansk region, a teacher of the local school was driving the bus from Popasna', 22 April 2022, available at: <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/1874>.

⁶⁴ Telegram channel of Serhii Haidai / Luhansk Regional State Administration (Regional Military Administration), 'Russians sabotage evacuation - Rubizhne is being shelled, the bus can't get through', 22 April 2022, available at: <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/1871>.

⁶⁵ Telegram channel of Serhii Haidai / Luhansk Regional State Administration (Regional Military Administration), 'Evacuation. 12 citizens of Severodonetsk are heading to safe places. A bus failed to get to Rubizhne due to shelling', 25 April 2022, available at: <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/1985>.

30/04/2022: in Luhansk Oblast, Russian troops fired on two humanitarian buses with a grenade launcher. One bus delivering volunteers to evacuate people from Popasna was found empty and with traces of blood. Another bus transporting humanitarian aid disappeared along with its driver.⁶⁶ Later it became known that the driver was being held under Russian captivity.⁶⁷

03/05/2022: Zaporizhzhia Regional Military Administration reported that Russia had been blocking evacuations throughout the region for the preceding seven days.⁶⁸

6) Forcible transfer of civilian population

*ICL and IHL prohibit forced displacement, deportation, or transfer of the civilian population of an occupied territory. The violation of these norms is a grave breach of IHL, as well as a war crime and/or a crime against humanity.*⁶⁹

21/04/2022: It became known that Russia deported 308 civilians from the besieged Mariupol to Vladivostok in the far east of the Russian Federation.⁷⁰

25/04/2022: Occupying Russian troops deported 149 people from Mariupol to Russia.⁷¹

7) Pillage and appropriation of property

ICL and IHL protect the property of civilians from pillage by the warring parties.⁷² They also prohibit extensive destruction and appropriation of any property (including property belonging

⁶⁶ Telegram channel of Serhii Haidai / Luhansk Regional State Administration (Regional Military Administration), ‘Details on firing on evacuation buses in Popasna from Serhii Haidai’, 30 April 2022, available at: <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/2146>.

⁶⁷ UNIAN, ‘Occupants seized the driver of evacuation bus in captivity that was fired on in Popasna – Haidai’, 01 May 2022, available at: <https://www.unian.ua/war/okupanti-vzyali-u-polon-vodiya-evakuaciynogo-avtobusa-obstrilyanogo-v-popasniy-gayday-novini-vtorgnennya-rosiji-v-ukrajinu-11808948.html>.

⁶⁸ Telegram channel of Zaporizhzhia Regional Military administration, ‘Regional authorities continue facilitating evacuation of Mariupol residents’, available at: https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/7319.

⁶⁹ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, Article 7.1(d); Article 8.2(a)(vii); Geneva Convention (IV) of 1949, Article 49, 147; Rule 129 of customary IHL.

⁷⁰ Ukrainska Pravda, ‘Children from Mariupol were taken to Vladivostok – Mayor’s Office’, 23 April 2022, available at: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/04/23/7341577/>.

⁷¹ Suspilne, ‘Russian army continues forced deportation of Mariupol citizens to russia even during special days’, 25 April 2022, available at: <https://suspilne.media/232430-rosijska-armia-prodovzue-primusovu-deportaciu-mariupolciv-do-rosii-navit-na-svata/>.

⁷² Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, Article 8.2(b) (xvi); Geneva Convention (IV) of 1949, Article 33; Rule 52 of customary IHL.

*individually or collectively to private persons or to the state) that is not justified by military necessity.*⁷³

26/04/2022: In Mariupol, Donetsk Oblast, occupying Russian troops looted museums. According to local authorities, the exhibits will be transported to occupied Donetsk and the most valuable objects exported to Russia.⁷⁴ In addition, Russian servicemen burglarised homes that remained standing.⁷⁵

8) Taking of hostages

*Taking hostages constitutes a war crime and a grave breach of IHL.*⁷⁶

In this section, we documented several exemplary cases of hostagetaking. It should be noted that hundreds of people, including activists and representatives of local authorities, have been taken hostage or subjected to enforced disappearances since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.⁷⁷

26/04/2022: The Mass Media Initiative for Human Rights reported that during the occupation of certain areas of Kyiv Oblast, Russian troops captured around 200 people, including ATO/JFO participants, volunteers, and other civilians, in order to later exchange them for their captured servicemen.⁷⁸

In Hola Prystan, Kherson Oblast, occupying Russian forces kept the mayor and a few community members in captivity.⁷⁹

⁷³ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, Article 8.2(b) (xiii); Geneva Convention (I) of 1949, Article 50; Geneva Convention (II) of 1949, Article 51; Geneva Convention (IV) of 1949, Article 53, Article 147; Rule 50 of customary IHL.

⁷⁴ Suspilne, 'In Mariupol, russian invaders rob museums', 26 April 2022, available at: <https://suspilne.media/232791-u-mariupoli-rosijski-okupanti-grabuut-muzei/>.

⁷⁵ Suspilne, 'In Mariupol, russian invaders break into houses survived', 26 April 2022, available at: <https://suspilne.media/232732-u-mariupoli-okupanti-zlamuut-vcilili-budinki/>.

⁷⁶ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, Article 8(2)(a)(viii); Geneva Conventions, common Article 3; Geneva Convention (IV) of 1949, Article 34, 147; Rule 96 of customary IHL.

⁷⁷ RFE/RL, 'Vereshchuk: 1700 military men civilians in captivity, out of them 500 are women', 12 April 2022, available at: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-vereshchuk-1700-polonenyh/31798232.html>.

⁷⁸ <https://mipl.org.ua/pislya-katuvan-u-nevoli-u-rosijske-sizo-yak-i-navishho-soldati-rf-vivozili-meshkanciv-ki%d1%97vshhini/>.

⁷⁹ Suspilne, 'In Kherson rf region military men continue keeping Hola Prystan mayor in captivity', 26 April 2022, available at: <https://suspilne.media/232750-na-hersonsini-vijskovi-rf-prodovzuut-trimati-u-poloni-golopristanskogo-miskogo-golovu/>.

9) False flag operations

It is prohibited to make use of the flags or military emblems, insignia, or uniforms of adverse parties while engaging in attacks or in order to shield, favour, protect, or impede military operations. So-called false flag operations constitute a war crime and a breach of IHL.⁸⁰

We documented two instances of false flag operations during the reporting period.

24/04/2022: In Hrozove, Kherson Oblast, Russian forces attached Ukrainian flags to their tanks and moved towards Molodetske. The Armed Forces of Ukraine reported that Russian tanks bearing Ukrainian flags are shelling settlements occupied by Russia.⁸¹

04/05/2022: In Tokmak, Zaporizhzhia Oblast, Russian servicemen arranged mass sewing of Ukrainian Armed Forces military uniforms and disguises.⁸²

10) Filtration camps and other cases of unlawful confinement

According to the Fourth Geneva Convention, civilians may only be interned or placed in assigned residence if ‘the security of the detaining power makes it absolutely necessary’⁸³ or, in occupied territory, for ‘imperative reasons of security’,⁸⁴ for instance, if the interned persons may seriously prejudice the security of the detaining power by means such as sabotage or espionage.⁸⁵ Any persons arrested, detained, or interned for actions related to the armed conflict shall be informed promptly, in a language they understand, of the reasons why these measures have been taken.⁸⁶ Any person interned or placed in assigned residence has a right to appeal this decision and – if the decision is maintained – to have it periodically reviewed.⁸⁷ Detention that is not in conformity with the above rules constitutes an ‘unlawful confinement’, which is a war crime and a grave breach of IHL.⁸⁸

During the reporting period, there were reports of at least four Russian filtration camps and a detention centre for Ukrainian activists and veterans.

⁸⁰ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, Article 8(2)(b)(vii); Additional Protocol (I) to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, Article 39(2); Rule 62 of customary IHL.

⁸¹ Facebook page of Operational Command ‘South’, ‘Current operational situation in the South of Ukraine: morning 24.04.2022’, 24 April 2022, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/okPivden/posts/2040296039474972>.

⁸² Facebook page of Operational Command ‘South’, ‘Current operational situation in the South of Ukraine: In the evening 03.05.2022’, 03 May 2022, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/okPivden/videos/517591600041611/>.

⁸³ Geneva Convention (IV) of 1949, Article 42.

⁸⁴ Geneva Convention (IV) of 1949, Article 78.

⁸⁵ ICTY, Delalić Case, Judgment, Paragraph 576.

⁸⁶ Additional Protocol (I) to the Geneva Conventions of 1977, Article 75(3).

⁸⁷ Geneva Convention (IV) of 1949, Article 43, 78.

⁸⁸ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, Article 8(2)(b)(vii); Geneva Convention (IV) of 1949, Article 147; Rule 99 of customary IHL.

21/04/2022: The mayor of the besieged Mariupol said that occupying Russian troops had set up four filtration camps around Mariupol for men staying in the city and almost all of them had already been detained and interrogated there. Following their delivery to the camp, state officials and municipal workers after delivery to the camp are removed to an unknown third location.⁸⁹

25/04/2022: In Mariupol, 474 people were moved to a filtration camp where people are detained before being deported to Russia.⁹⁰

27/04/2022: The Chief Directorate of Intelligence of Ukraine reported that in Kherson over 300 pro-Ukrainian activists and veterans of ATO/JFO are being kept at temporary detention facilities. In addition, in the village of Velyka Lepetykha, Kherson Oblast, occupying troops set up a filtration camp where they send men of fighting age, with the detained then being transported to occupied Crimea.⁹¹

28/04/2022: The US Ambassador to the OSCE stated that there is credible reporting that Russia's forces are rounding up local civilian populations and detaining them in filtration camps, where they are brutally interrogated for any supposed links to the Ukrainian Government or to independent media. Those suspected of having any connections of this sort are being beaten or tortured and transferred to the so-called 'Donetsk People's Republic', where many are reportedly disappeared or murdered. Civilians, who 'pass' the interrogation are then transferred to Russia or Russian-controlled Donbas.⁹²

⁸⁹ RFE/RL, 'Almost all the men of Mariupol were imprisoned and interrogated in filtration camps, Boichenko', 21 April 2022, available at: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-mariupol-choloviky-filtracijni-tabory/31814337.html>.

⁹⁰ Suspilne, 'For the day almost half a thousand people were deported from Mariupol – advisor to the mayor', 26 April 2022, available at: <https://suspilne.media/232883-za-dobu-z-mariupola-bulo-deportovano-majze-pivtisaciludej-radnik-mera/>.

⁹¹ Facebook page of the Chief Directorate of Intelligence of Ukraine, 27 April 2022, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/DefenceIntelligenceofUkraine/posts/300052648972829>.

⁹² US Department of State, 'Online Press Briefing with U.S. Ambassador to OSCE Michael Carpenter', 28 April 2022, available at: <https://www.state.gov/online-press-briefing-with-u-s-ambassador-to-osce-michael-carpenter-2/>.