

OLESHKY: A TOWN STARVED UNDER OCCUPATION

A town of 24,000 on the left bank of the Dnipro, eight kilometres from Kherson. Occupied since the first day of the invasion, flooded when the Kakhovka dam was destroyed in 2023, and since May 2026 cut off: no food by road, no organised evacuation, no electricity. About 1,700–2,000 people remain, among them dozens of children.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
OCT 2026

~1,700

people still in the town, 47 of them children A

UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission, D. Bell to Reuters, 8 Oct 2026

0

food deliveries by road since 26 May A

HRMMU, 25 Jun 2026 (as of 24 Jun); Oleshky city military administration

29 · 54

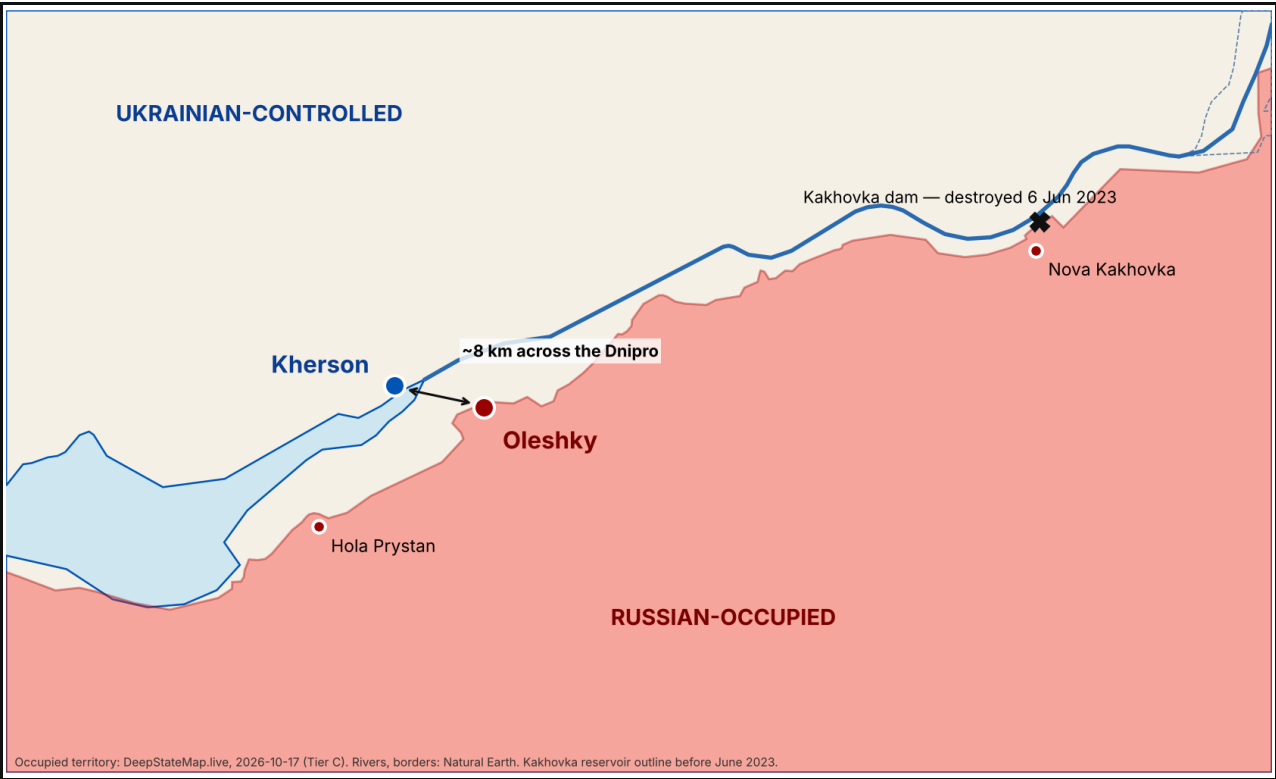
civilians killed · injured in Oleshky and Hola Prystan in 2026 A

HRMMU, 25 Jun 2026 — responsibility for individual attacks not established

358

residents verified for urgent evacuation — Russia has not agreed B

Ombudsman of Ukraine, 16 Sep 2026; ICRC ready to facilitate



BOTTOM LINE

Russia controls Oleshky and every road into it. Under the Fourth Geneva Convention the occupying power must ensure that the population has food and medical care, and must allow relief schemes. Neither is happening: the UN recorded no food deliveries after 26 May.

The only way out is on foot, 20–25 km along mined roads under drones, or through Russian checkpoints, Russia and Belarus with Russian documents. Ukraine has an evacuation list, the ICRC is ready; Russia has given no security guarantees.

Ukraine drops food by drone — about 8–10 tonnes in two operations on 26–27 September and 3–4 October. Ukrainian officials report that Russian soldiers took food from residents and shot at the drones; this has not been independently verified.

Moscow now calls the situation "critical" and blames Kyiv for a blockade of a town Russia itself holds (page 5).

LEGAL QUALIFICATION IN THREE LAYERS

OCCUPIER'S DUTY TO FEED — ESTABLISHED (GC IV ART. 55, 59; HRMMU)

BLOCKING RELIEF AND EVACUATION — PATTERN

STARVATION AS A METHOD OF WARFARE — POSITION

The UN monitoring mission reminds Russia, as occupying power, of its obligation to ensure food and medical supplies. No UN body has yet qualified the blockade of Oleshky as a crime; responsibility for individual drone attacks in the area has not been established. Ukraine and independent legal experts argue that the elements of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare (Rome Statute art. 8(2)(b)(xxv)) are met — a position, not a finding.

WHAT WE ASK

A local ceasefire and an ICRC-facilitated evacuation of the 358 verified residents now · unimpeded relief under art. 59 of the Fourth Geneva Convention · access for the UN monitoring mission and the ICRC · name Oleshky in Security Council and General Assembly statements and reject the "Russian city" framing (A/RES/ES-11/4).

Sources: UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, press release 25 Jun 2026; D. Bell to Reuters, 8 Oct 2026 · Human Rights Watch, 9 Jul 2026 and 14 Jun 2023 · OSCE/ODIHR, 15 Jul 2026 · EU statement at the OSCE PC.1579, 2 Oct 2026 · UNOSAT, 7 Jun 2023 · AP, 28 Dec 2023 · Ombudsman of Ukraine (Lubynets), 16 Sep, 3 and 8 Oct 2026 · Kherson regional military administration (Prokudin), 27 Sep 2026 · Oleshky city military administration (Hasanenko) · Minister Bezhin, kmu.gov.ua, 13 Oct 2026 · Foreign Minister Sybiha, 4 Oct 2026 (via Reuters) · ISW, Jul and Sep 2026 · Novynarnia, Novaya Gazeta Europe, Al Jazeera, TSN, Meduza, RFE/RL · Kremlin (Peskov 21 Sep; readout 16 Oct 2026), MFA (Zakharova 30 Sep; Miroshnik 6, 14, 15 Oct), V. Saldo 7 Oct, Russian Mission to the UN 14 Oct 2026 · Holy See, 16 Oct 2026 · A/RES/ES-11/4 · A/80/497 · Natural Earth; DeepStateMap.live. · Interior Minister Vyhivskiy, 4 Oct 2026; Ukrinform (Hasanenko), 30 Sep 2026; LIGA (Tolokonnikov), 15 Oct 2026; Kyiv Post, 7 Oct 2026; ISW, 27 Sep 2026.



FROM OCCUPATION TO BLOCKADE, 2022-2026

Four years of occupation, one flood and five months of blockade. Dates and figures as reported by the source named; where sources disagree, both are given.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
OCT 2026

24 Feb 2022	Russian forces occupy Oleshky on the first day of the full-scale invasion. — Kyiv Post; Wikipedia
Nov 2022	Ukraine liberates the right bank and Kherson city; the Antonivskiy bridge is destroyed and the Dnipro becomes the front line. Oleshky is 8 km from Kherson across the river. C — Al Jazeera, 5 Oct 2026
6 Jun 2023	The Kakhovka dam is destroyed. About 90% of Oleshky floods. Occupation authorities close the town; checkpoints turn back cars; organised evacuation only from 13 June. C — HRW, 14 Jun 2023; UNOSAT, 7 Jun 2023
Jan 2026	The last grocery store stops regular operation. A — HRMMU, 25 Jun 2026
5 Mar 2026	A drone strike on a queue for bread kills civilians (HRMMU: 2 killed; city administration: 4 killed, 15 injured). Ukraine first asks the ICRC for a humanitarian corridor. A — HRMMU; Oleshky city military administration; Ombudsman
9-11 May 2026	A three-day easing of hostilities lets 32 people leave — the largest single evacuation. About 180 left through ad hoc arrangements in total. A — HRMMU, 25 Jun 2026
26 May 2026	Last food delivery and last organised evacuation. A — HRMMU (no deliveries since 26 May, as of 24 Jun); city military administration
25 Jun 2026	UN monitoring mission: "People can't get out, food can't get in." Calls for a local ceasefire. A — HRMMU press release
9-15 Jul 2026	Human Rights Watch and OSCE/ODIHR document the trap; ODIHR receives accounts of Russian forces preventing departures. C — HRW, 9 Jul; ODIHR, 15 Jul 2026
16 Sep 2026	Ukraine's Ombudsman: evacuation plan, list of 358 verified people and ICRC readiness in place — Russia has not approved. B — Ombudsman D. Lubinets
21 Sep 2026	Kremlin calls the situation "critical" and blames Kyiv. RUSSIA SAYS — Kremlin spokesman Peskov
27 Sep · 4 Oct	First and second Ukrainian drone deliveries of food and medicine (page 4). B — Kherson regional military administration; Ukraine's Foreign Minister
1-2 Oct 2026	Emergency OSCE Permanent Council meeting; EU statement: "particularly alarming". A — EU statement at the OSCE, PC.1579
14 Oct 2026	At an informal Security Council meeting convened by Russia, Ambassador Nebenzia calls Oleshky "a tragedy" — without naming a cause or proposing an evacuation. RUSSIA SAYS — Russian Mission to the UN
16 Oct 2026	Pope Leo XIV asks Putin for a local ceasefire, aid and a voluntary safe evacuation. The Kremlin readout supports "supplies" but does not mention evacuation or a ceasefire. — Holy See; kremlin.ru
18-19 Oct 2026	Ukraine's Ombudsman: talks with Russia on a ceasefire regime and the evacuation of civilians from Oleshky and six nearby villages directly to Ukrainian-controlled territory have reached "the final details"; "difficult issues" remain. Up to 6,000 people, up to 200 of them children, may still be in the area. No agreement has been announced. B — Ombudsman D. Lubinets on Espresso TV (via Interfax-Ukraine, 19 Oct)

THE 2023 FLOOD — THE FIRST TRAP

When the dam was destroyed on 6 June 2023, about 90% of Oleshky went under water (HRW). UNOSAT mapped about 10 of 16 km² of the town flooded on 7 June (preliminary).

Residents told Human Rights Watch that occupation authorities closed the town and turned cars back: "*Go back and wait some more.*" Organised evacuation began only on 13 June.

An AP investigation concluded that deaths in Oleshky were "at least in the hundreds", against Russia's figure of 59 for the whole occupied area; Russian authorities took control of death certificates and removed bodies. **No UN finding on the death toll exists.**



6 June 2023: settlements on the left bank of the Dnipro under water after the dam was destroyed. Photo: ArmiyaInform, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 4.0.

WHO REMAINS — THE NUMBERS DO NOT AGREE

ESTIMATE	WHO	WHEN
~1,700 incl. 47 children	HRMMU (D. Bell, via Reuters) — A	8 Oct
~2,000 incl. 35 children	City military administration; Minister Bezhin — B	13 Oct
~2,000 incl. ~50 children	Kherson regional administration; MFA — B	late Sep
~1,000	Russian MFA (Miroshnik) — Russian claim	14 Oct
6,000+ incl. ~200 children	Ombudsman — Oleshky with Hola Prystan and neighbouring villages — B	Sep–Oct

The estimates count different areas at different dates. We do not merge them; the Hub uses the UN figure first. Before the full-scale invasion about 24,000 people lived in Oleshky.

Sources: UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, press release 25 Jun 2026; D. Bell to Reuters, 8 Oct 2026 · Human Rights Watch, 9 Jul 2026 and 14 Jun 2023 · OSCE/ODIHR, 15 Jul 2026 · EU statement at the OSCE PC.1579, 2 Oct 2026 · UNOSAT, 7 Jun 2023 · AP, 28 Dec 2023 · Ombudsman of Ukraine (Lubinets), 16 Sep, 3 and 8 Oct 2026 · Kherson regional military administration (Prokudin), 27 Sep 2026 · Oleshky city military administration (Hasanenko) · Minister Bezhin, kmu.gov.ua, 13 Oct 2026 · Foreign Minister Sybiha, 4 Oct 2026 (via Reuters) · ISW, Jul and Sep 2026 · Novynarnia, Novaya Gazeta Europe, Al Jazeera, TSN, Meduza, RFE/RL · Kremlin (Peskov 21 Sep; readout 16 Oct 2026), MFA (Zakharova 30 Sep; Miroshnik 6, 14, 15 Oct), V. Saldo 7 Oct, Russian Mission to the UN 14 Oct 2026 · Holy See, 16 Oct 2026 · A/RES/ES-11/4 · A/80/497 · Natural Earth; DeepStateMap.live. · Interior Minister Vyhyvskiy, 4 Oct 2026; Ukrinform (Hasanenko), 30 Sep 2026; LIGA (Tolokonnikov), 15 Oct 2026; Kyiv Post, 7 Oct 2026; ISW, 27 Sep 2026.



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"WE WOULD NOT SURVIVE ANOTHER WINTER"

People who left Oleshky in 2026 describe the same things: hunger, drones over every road, mines, checkpoints, and no way out but on foot. Names are withheld or changed as by the outlet that published them. Testimonies are as reported by the outlet named (Tier C) and have not been independently verified by the Hub.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB

VERIFIED RECORD

OCT 2026

WOMAN, 63 · LEFT 27 APR 2026

"We quickly realized we would not survive another winter."

Left by ambulance with her husband and her 84-year-old mother: four days of filtration through occupied territory, Russia and Belarus, the last 1.5 km on foot. On the road to Skadovsk a passenger walked ahead of the car to look for mines. "I lost ten kilos and my husband lost fourteen."

Novynarnia, 28 May 2026 (name changed) C

MAN OF RETIREMENT AGE, WITH HIS WIFE · LEFT SEP 2026

"We ate it all before leaving the house so we'd have the strength to make it."

A many-hour walk to a volunteer pick-up point. What they had left: 300 g of buckwheat, 200 g of spaghetti and two cans of stewed meat. A hospital barely working, an overflowing morgue, no electricity or petrol since early summer.

Novaya Gazeta Europe, 29 Sep 2026 (name changed) C

WOMAN, 64, RETIRED TEACHER · LEFT MAR 2026

"People ate all of the food they'd stashed. People are starving."

Her husband was wounded in a drone strike on a bread queue in March; the first ambulance sent for him hit a mine, and he died in hospital in Skadovsk. "I almost never left the house."

Al Jazeera, 5 Oct 2026 (the Hub withholds her name) C

RESIDENT WHO FLED IN MARCH 2026

"Everything is at your own risk, you just take your life in your hands."

One of six residents interviewed by Human Rights Watch who escaped between October 2025 and May 2026 through Russian checkpoints at Hola Prystan and Hladkivka, then Russia and Belarus, hiding their Ukrainian passports. Another: applying for a Russian passport means "they immediately send you to the military enlistment office."

Human Rights Watch, 9 Jul 2026 C

WOMAN, 67 · WALKED OUT SEP 2026

"She chose life and took the risk."

Walked more than 20 km on mined roads under drone attack, then a week on different routes to Kyiv. A drone destroyed the house she was staying in ten days before she left. Account given by her daughter.

TSN, 29 Sep 2026 (second-hand) C

WOMAN EVACUATED WITHOUT HER HUSBAND

"Vehicles were being targeted, so evacuees walked — about 10 km in her case."

Her husband stayed behind with his 84-year-old father, who could not walk that far. As of 24 June four injured patients could not be transferred to Skadovsk; one died waiting.

UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission, 25 Jun 2026 (paraphrase) A



Oleshky before the full-scale invasion: the central square, 2007. Photo: Gottinight, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0.



7 June 2023: the destroyed Antonivskyi bridge — the road from Kherson to Oleshky — over the flood after the Kakhovka dam was blown. Photo: Dmytro Zavtonov / ArmiyaInform, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 4.0.

Accounts of torture and looting by newly arrived Russian personnel (Euromaidan Press, July 2026) and of about 100 bodies in the hospital basement (city military administration) are not included above: each rests on a single source the Hub could not verify. They are listed under "What we do not know" on page 6.

Sources: UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, press release 25 Jun 2026; D. Bell to Reuters, 8 Oct 2026 · Human Rights Watch, 9 Jul 2026 and 14 Jun 2023 · OSCE/ODIHR, 15 Jul 2026 · EU statement at the OSCE PC.1579, 2 Oct 2026 · UNOSAT, 7 Jun 2023 · AP, 28 Dec 2023 · Ombudsman of Ukraine (Lubinets), 16 Sep, 3 and 8 Oct 2026 · Kherson regional military administration (Prokudin), 27 Sep 2026 · Oleshky city military administration (Hasanenکو), 13 Oct 2026 · Foreign Minister Sybiha, 4 Oct 2026 (via Reuters) · ISW, Jul and Sep 2026 · Novynarnia, Novaya Gazeta Europe, Al Jazeera, TSN, Meduza, RFE/RL · Kremlin (Peskov 21 Sep; readout 16 Oct 2026), MFA (Zakharova 30 Sep; Miroshnik 6, 14, 15 Oct), V. Saldo 7 Oct, Russian Mission to the UN 14 Oct 2026 · Holy See, 16 Oct 2026 · A/RES/ES-11/4 · A/80/497 · Natural Earth; DeepStateMap.live. · Interior Minister Vyhivskiy, 4 Oct 2026; Ukrinform (Hasanenکو), 30 Sep 2026; LIGA (Tolokonnikov), 15 Oct 2026; Kyiv Post, 7 Oct 2026; ISW, 27 Sep 2026.

CASE FILE 14 · 3 OF 6

V2 · 19 OCT 2026 · LIVE VERSION AND

CORRECTIONS LOG ON THE UKRAINE

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FOOD BY DRONE — AND WHO TOOK IT

Since March 2026 Ukrainian forces have dropped food into the occupied town by drone; at the end of September the drops became large, publicised operations. With no road open and no evacuation agreed, they are the only regular supply the town has had since May. Ukrainian officials say Russian soldiers have shot at the drones and taken food from residents.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
OCT 2026

since Mar

regular drone and air drops of food B
Kherson regional military administration (O. Prokudin)

~4 t

26–27 Sep: food to ~100 distribution points B
Prokudin, Telegram; Kyiv Independent, Reuters

~4-6 t

night of 3–4 Oct: ~400 packages — food, medicine, children's kits B
Interior Ministry: "nearly 4 t"; Kherson RMA: 6 t — sources differ

HOW THE DELIVERIES WORK

Heavy-lift drones drop packages at many points at once. The National Guard, the Marine Corps and the Border Guard took part; the Kherson administration published the operations, with the military's approval, to answer Russian disinformation.

"In every package that reaches Oleshky there is a message: Ukraine does not forget its people." — Foreign Minister Sybiha, 5 Oct.

It is a last resort: the UN recorded no food delivery by road after 26 May, and the evacuation Ukraine agreed with the ICRC has not been approved by Russia.

This page names no routes, launch sites or drop points.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FOOD

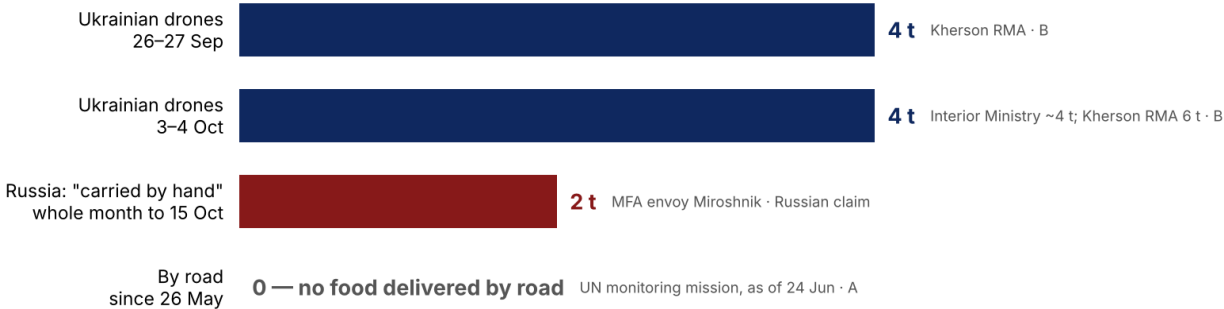
Before the publicised drops. The head of the Oleshky city military administration: "As for the Russians taking these products from people — yes." Soldiers questioned residents about where the food came from and treated it as collaboration: "if the Armed Forces drop you food, it means you are working with them" (Ukrinform, 30 Sep). Prokudin (27 Sep): residents were detained for receiving parcels and drones were shot down. Ukrainian officials · Tier B · not independently verified

During the return flights of 5–6 Oct a National Guard commander said Russian troops tried to shoot the drones down "with small arms, interceptors". Tier B

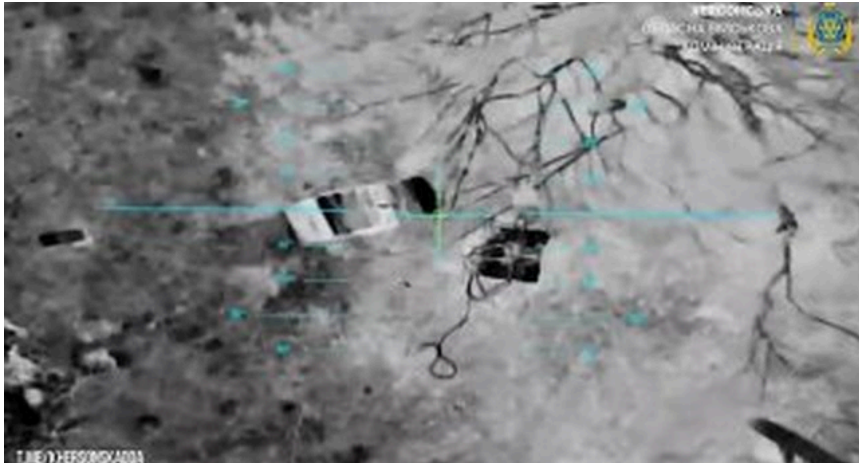
After the two publicised drops the deputy head of the Kherson administration said there were no reports of repression and that "the vast majority" of the food and medicine reached residents (LIGA, 15 Oct) — while noting that the administration cannot verify this independently. Tier B

Assessment. ISW (27 Sep): "Russian forces appear to be actively interfering with Ukrainian efforts to provide food to residents" — relying on the Kherson administration's report. Tier C

Food reaching Oleshky, as reported (tonnes)



Figures as reported by each source; not independently verified.



Night of 3–4 October: packages on the ground in Oleshky, seen through a drone's thermal camera. Video still: Kherson Regional Military Administration, t.me/khersonskaODA/68953 (4 Oct 2026). Low resolution: the only version available to the Hub.

WHAT IS INDEPENDENTLY CONFIRMED — AND WHAT IS NOT

Confirmed by several sources: the two large drops took place (Kherson administration, Interior and Foreign Ministers, Reuters, Kyiv Independent); no food arrived by road after 26 May (UN).

Ukrainian claim only: food taken from residents, recipients questioned or detained, drones shot at. No independent body — UN, ICRC, HRW — or international newspaper has confirmed it; Reuters, the NYT and Al Jazeera attribute it to Ukrainian officials.

Not claimed by us: that Russia took the food from the two publicised drops. Ukrainian officials themselves say most of it reached residents.

THE CONTRAST

Russia's own figure: about 2 t of aid "carried by hand" in a month for the whole town (MFA envoy Miroshnik, 15 Oct). Ukrainian drones delivered 8–10 t in two nights.

An occupation official said ballots for the Duma election were delivered to the town by drone in September (unverified). Russia has not said it delivered food the same way.

Russia has made no official statement about the Ukrainian food drops.

Sources: UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, press release 25 Jun 2026; D. Bell to Reuters, 8 Oct 2026 · Human Rights Watch, 9 Jul 2026 and 14 Jun 2023 · OSCE/ODIHR, 15 Jul 2026 · EU statement at the OSCE PC.1579, 2 Oct 2026 · UNOSAT, 7 Jun 2023 · AP, 28 Dec 2023 · Ombudsman of Ukraine (Lubinet), 16 Sep, 3 and 8 Oct 2026 · Kherson regional military administration (Prokudin), 27 Sep 2026 · Oleshky city military administration (Hasanenkov) · Minister Bezgin, kmu.gov.ua, 13 Oct 2026 · Foreign Minister Sybiha, 4 Oct 2026 (via Reuters) · ISW, Jul and Sep 2026 · Novynarnia, Novaya Gazeta Europe, Al Jazeera, TSN, Meduza, RFE/RL · Kremlin (Peskov 21 Sep; readout 16 Oct 2026), MFA (Zakharova 30 Sep; Miroshnik 6, 14, 15 Oct), V. Saldo 7 Oct, Russian Mission to the UN 14 Oct 2026 · Holy See, 16 Oct 2026 · A/RES/ES-11/4 · A/80/497 · Natural Earth; DeepStateMap.live · Interior Minister Vyshivskiy, 4 Oct 2026; Ukrinform (Hasanenkov), 30 Sep 2026; LIGA (Tolokonnikov), 15 Oct 2026; Kyiv Post, 7 Oct 2026; ISW, 27 Sep 2026.



A BLOCKADE WITH NO AUTHOR

Since September Russia has stopped denying the crisis. Its officials now call it "critical", "a tragedy", "a humanitarian catastrophe" — and blame Ukraine for blockading a town that Russia has occupied since February 2022. Each claim below, with the record and what it concedes. The full analysis is Fact-check 04.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB

VERIFIED RECORD

OCT 2026

DMITRY PESKOV · KREMLIN SPOKESMAN · 21 SEP 2026

“The Kyiv regime is literally doing everything to obstruct these deliveries... The situation is indeed critical.”

Press call; gazeta.press, eadaily.com (translated)

MARIA ZAKHAROVA · MFA SPOKESWOMAN · 30 SEP 2026

“They are trying to make a new Bucha out of this story — "Bucha 2.0".”

MFA briefing; Izvestia, Vzglyad (translated)

RODION MIROSHNIK · MFA AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE · 15 OCT 2026

“In reality Russian troops are protecting and clearing the way out for civilians... what volunteers can bring, they bring by hand.”

NEWS.ru interview (translated)

VLADIMIR SALDO · RUSSIAN-INSTALLED HEAD OF KHERSON REGION · 7 OCT 2026

“The humanitarian cargo was destroyed. Thank God, the drivers were saved.”

Briefing; Izvestia (iz.ru/en)

KREMLIN READOUT · PUTIN-POPE LEO XIV CALL · 16 OCT 2026

“Exhaustive explanations were given of the Kyiv regime's responsibility for the difficult humanitarian situation in the Russian city of Alyoshki.”

kremlin.ru (translated)

VASSILY NEBENZIA · PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE · 14 OCT 2026

“Indeed, Alyoshki is just one example... the tragedy in Alyoshki.”

Arria-formula meeting convened by Russia; russiaun.ru (no UN record — informal meeting)

THE TOWN IS RUSSIAN-HELD

Russia controls Oleshky and every road into it. The UN recorded no food delivery after 26 May and reminded Russia, as occupying power, of its duty to supply food and medicine.

What the claim concedes: A "critical" humanitarian situation in a town Russia controls.

PRE-EMPTING THE RECORD

In May Russia's installed governor called talk of a catastrophe "the height of hypocrisy". By September Moscow calls it a catastrophe and attributes it in advance. The Bucha denial of 2022 was abandoned by Russia in 2026.

What the claim concedes: That a humanitarian catastrophe exists.

CONTRADICTED BY THE EVACUATION RECORD

Ukraine agreed an evacuation list of 358 people with the ICRC; Russia has given no security guarantees (Ombudsman, 16 Sep and 8 Oct). People leave on foot over 20 km of mined road.

What the claim concedes: No road deliveries reach the town; supplies are "carried by hand".

UNVERIFIED

No independent verification of the 7 Oct convoy strike; Russia's Ministry of Defence did not comment. Human Rights Watch found credible indications that Ukrainian drones and mines are also used on roads around the town — responsibility for individual strikes is open.

What the claim concedes: Russia cannot get aid into a town it controls by road.

WHAT THE READOUT LEAVES OUT

The Holy See: the Pope asked for a ceasefire to allow food, medical aid and a voluntary safe evacuation. The Kremlin text mentions "supplies" and "security" — not evacuation, not a ceasefire. "Russian city": the General Assembly rejected the annexation (ES-11/4).

What the claim concedes: A "difficult humanitarian situation"; that outside help is needed.

A TRAGEDY WITH NO CAUSE NAMED

The statement names no party responsible and proposes no evacuation, corridor or ceasefire — the three things the UN, the ICRC and the Holy See have asked for.

What the claim concedes: That Oleshky is a "tragedy".

FAIR TO SAY

Ukrainian drones operate over the roads around Oleshky. The UN could not establish responsibility for individual attacks; Human Rights Watch found credible indications that Ukrainian forces may also have used drones and mines on roads near the town, and called on both sides to stop using antipersonnel mines.

None of this changes who must feed the town. Under the Fourth Geneva Convention that duty falls on the power that occupies it — and Russia has not accepted the ceasefire, corridor or evacuation that would let people out.

Sources: UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, press release 25 Jun 2026; D. Bell to Reuters, 8 Oct 2026 · Human Rights Watch, 9 Jul 2026 and 14 Jun 2023 · OSCE/ODIHR, 15 Jul 2026 · EU statement at the OSCE PC.1579, 2 Oct 2026 · UNOSAT, 7 Jun 2023 · AP, 28 Dec 2023 · Ombudsman of Ukraine (Lubinets), 16 Sep, 3 and 8 Oct 2026 · Kherson regional military administration (Prokudin), 27 Sep 2026 · Oleshky city military administration (Hasanenko) · Minister Bezhin, kmu.gov.ua, 13 Oct 2026 · Foreign Minister Sybiha, 4 Oct 2026 (via Reuters) · ISW, Jul and Sep 2026 · Novynarnia, Novaya Gazeta Europe, Al Jazeera, TSN, Meduza, RFE/RL · Kremlin (Peskov 21 Sep; readout 16 Oct 2026), MFA (Zakharova 30 Sep; Miroshnik 6, 14, 15 Oct), V. Saldo 7 Oct, Russian Mission to the UN 14 Oct 2026 · Holy See, 16 Oct 2026 · A/RES/ES-11/4 · A/80/497 · Natural Earth; DeepStateMap.live. · Interior Minister Vyhivskyi, 4 Oct 2026; Ukrinform (Hasanenko), 30 Sep 2026; LIGA (Tolokonnikov), 15 Oct 2026; Kyiv Post, 7 Oct 2026; ISW, 27 Sep 2026.



AN OCCUPIER MUST FEED THE PEOPLE IT HOLDS

Starving civilians is prohibited in every armed conflict. In occupied territory the law goes further: the occupier must bring in food and medicine itself, and must accept relief from others when it cannot.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB

VERIFIED RECORD

OCT 2026

ESTABLISHED — BY BODIES WITH A MANDATE

Occupier's duty. The UN monitoring mission (25 Jun 2026) and Human Rights Watch (9 Jul 2026) state that Russia, as occupying power, must ensure food and medical supplies for Oleshky.

Attacks on civilians in Kherson region. The Commission of Inquiry found Russian drone attacks on civilians on the right bank to be the crime against humanity of murder (May 2025; A/80/497). This finding concerns the right bank, not Oleshky.

Annexation. The General Assembly declared the "attempted illegal annexation" of Kherson region without validity (A/RES/ES-11/4, 2022).

PATTERN — WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS

No food by road since 26 May; drone drops the only regular supply.

An evacuation agreed by Ukraine and the ICRC, not approved by Russia, for five months.

Exit only through Russian checkpoints with Russian documents — which exposes men to conscription, itself a war crime (HRW).

Each month Russia's description moves: "hypocrisy" (May) → "critical" (Sep) → "tragedy" (Oct).

POSITION — UKRAINE'S QUALIFICATION

Ukraine says Russia is deliberately starving the town and blocking evacuation (Foreign Minister, Ombudsman).

Legal experts writing in the Kyiv Independent (Global Rights Compliance, 1 Oct 2026) argue that the elements of starvation as a method of warfare are met. These are positions, not findings of a court or UN body.

The Hub has not found a public criminal case number for the Oleshky blockade.

THE RULES THAT APPLY

Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 55 — the occupier must ensure food and medical supplies "to the fullest extent of the means available".

Art. 56 — medical and hospital services and public health.

Art. 59 — if the population is inadequately supplied, the occupier "shall agree to relief schemes" and facilitate them.

Additional Protocol I, art. 54; customary IHL rules 53 and 55 — starvation of civilians prohibited; rapid and unimpeded passage of relief.

Rome Statute, art. 8(2)(b)(xxv) — war crime of starving civilians as a method of warfare, "including wilfully impeding relief supplies".

Wording to be checked against the ICRC and ICC texts before publication.

WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW

How many people have died of hunger or lack of care: reports exist, no verified count.

Who carried out each drone attack on the roads.

About 100 bodies reported in the hospital basement (city military administration) — single source.

Torture and looting by newly arrived Russian personnel — single source, unverified.

How much drone-dropped food reached residents.

WHAT WE ASK

A local ceasefire and evacuation now. Support the ICRC-facilitated evacuation of the 358 verified residents and anyone who wishes to leave — voluntary, safe, in a direction of their choice.

Relief under article 59. Press Russia to accept and facilitate relief by road, with the UN and the ICRC.

Access. Unimpeded access to Oleshky for the UN monitoring mission and the ICRC.

Name it. Raise Oleshky in Security Council and General Assembly statements; reject "Russian city" with ES-11/4.

Keep the record. Help verify casualties and deaths from hunger so that Ukrainian figures can become UN-verified ones.

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