

OLENIVKA: 193 PRISONERS IN ONE BARRACK

On 27 July 2022, 193 Ukrainian prisoners of war from Azovstal were moved into a converted industrial shed at Correctional Colony No. 120. The next night the shed exploded and burned. At least 50 died; the wounded waited hours for care. Russia said Ukraine had hit its own men with HIMARS. The UN excluded HIMARS, found the ordnance came from the east, and recorded that Russia blocked every attempt to investigate — including the Secretary-General's own mission.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
OCT 2026

DRAFT — not published. Draft for the editor. Figures checked against OHCHR (24 Mar 2023, 4 Oct 2023, 25 Jul 2024) and the SBU/Prosecutor General (2024–25). No UN body has publicly attributed the explosion; the draft keeps that line strictly. Photo slots to be filled from official sources (Coordination HQ, Ministry of Reintegration, CC BY) — no images of the dead.

193

prisoners of war moved into the barrack the day before — all from the Azov regiment [A](#)

OHCHR, report on treatment of POWs, 24 Mar 2023, paras. 72, 74

51+

killed, at least 139 injured — all men; 9 died for lack of emergency care (Ukrainian investigation) [A](#)

OHCHR 36th periodic report, 4 Oct 2023, para. 82; SBU 29 Jul 2024

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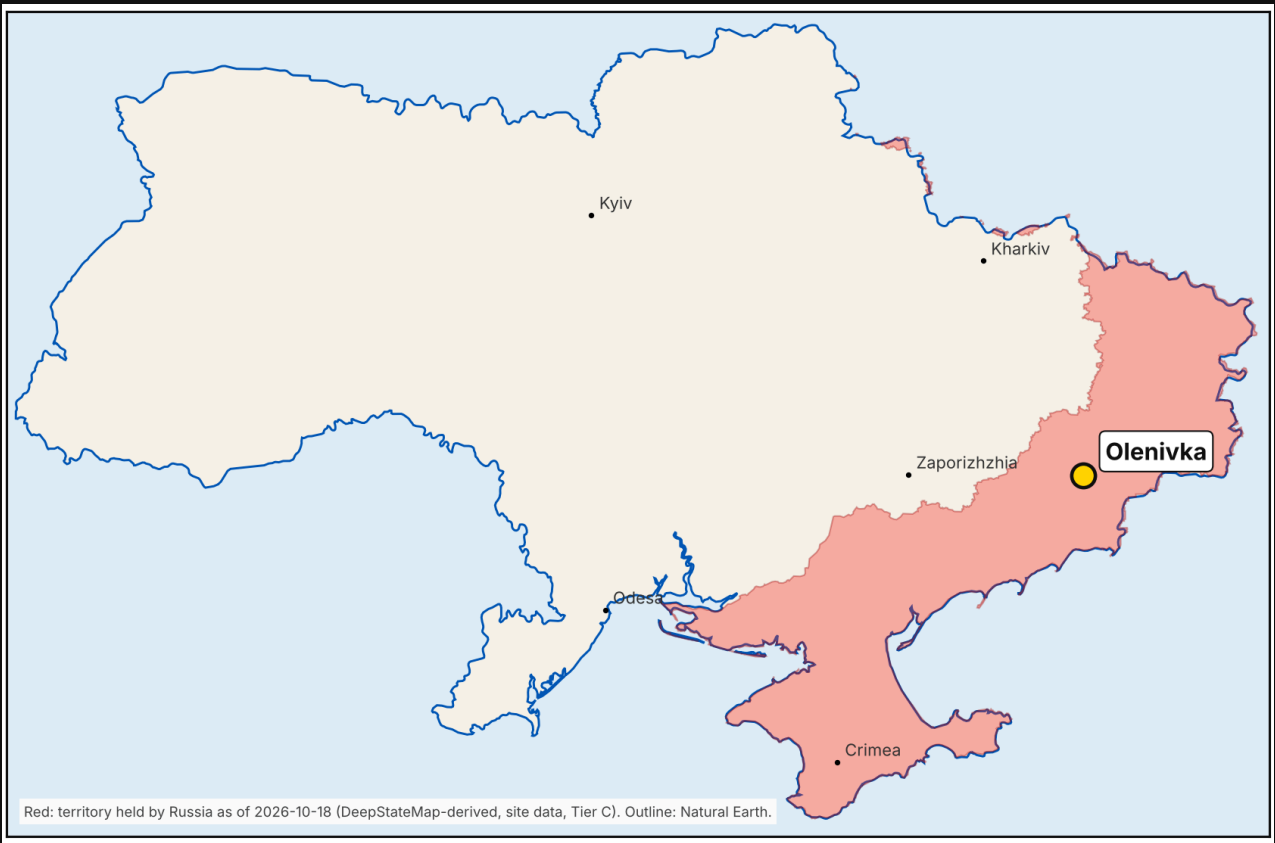
days of access for the UN fact-finding mission: created 3 Aug 2022, disbanded 5 Jan 2023 without reaching the site [A](#)

UN Secretary-General; OHCHR, 4 Oct 2023, para. 90

7

colony officials under EU sanctions since 13 Jul 2026; two charged in Ukraine with the deaths [B](#)

EU Council Decision (CFSP) 2026/1723; SBU 29 Jul 2024



BOTTOM LINE

Not HIMARS. OHCHR interviewed more than 50 witnesses and survivors and examined over 70 images: the explosions were not caused by HIMARS rockets; the damage is consistent with a projected ordnance on an east-to-west trajectory — from the Russian side (4 Oct 2023, paras. 83–84).

Prepared. The 193 were moved the day before; the guard post was moved and a trench dug for the guards; on the 28th the guards wore body armour; a Grad launcher by the fence fired westward and covered the sound of the explosions (OHCHR, 24 Mar 2023, para. 74).

Obstructed. Russia preserved no scene, displayed fragments out of place, opened a case against Ukraine before any autopsy, gave the Secretary-General's mission no secure access and let no UN monitor in. As Detaining Power, it owed the prisoners protection and an inquiry; OHCHR has no information that it held one (paras. 85–90).

LEGAL QUALIFICATION IN THREE LAYERS

NOT HIMARS; RUSSIA FAILED TO PROTECT, TREAT AND INVESTIGATE — ESTABLISHED (OHCHR)

DENIAL OF MEDICAL CARE TO POWS — PATTERN

PLANNED MASS KILLING OF PRISONERS OF WAR — POSITION (ART. 438 CCU)

Established. OHCHR: the explosions were not caused by HIMARS; the ordnance came from the east; Russia, as Detaining Power, failed to protect the prisoners, to give the wounded prompt care and to conduct the inquiry Geneva Convention III requires (4 Oct 2023, paras. 82–90). **Pattern.** Denial of medical care and unmarked, exposed detention of POWs near the front; obstruction of international access. **Position.** Ukraine qualifies the event as a planned killing of prisoners of war (Art. 438(2) CCU) and has charged the colony's head and first deputy with the deaths of the wounded; the perpetrating unit and weapon remain under investigation.

WHAT WE ASK

Cite OHCHR's findings of 4 Oct 2023 whenever the HIMARS version is repeated. Demand access for UN monitors to every place of detention in Russia and occupied territory — the remedy Russia has refused since 2022. Align national sanctions with the EU's July 2026 listings of the colony's staff. Press the ICC on the material Ukraine submitted in 2022. Keep the ~120 survivors of the barrack still unaccounted for on the exchange agenda.

Sources: A — OHCHR, *Treatment of prisoners of war and persons hors de combat* (24 Mar 2023), paras. 72–76; OHCHR 36th periodic report on Ukraine (4 Oct 2023), paras. 82–90; High Commissioner Türk, press release 25 Jul 2023; OHCHR / UN in Ukraine, 25 Jul 2024; UN Secretary-General, 3 and 22 Aug 2022 (SG/T/3324); UN Spokesperson, 5 Jan 2023; OHCHR 29 Jun 2026 (POWs, access); Council Decision (CFSP) 2026/1723 and EEAS statement, 13–14 Jul 2026. B — General Staff 29 Jul 2022; HUR 3 and 7 Aug 2022; Ministry of Reintegration 11 Oct 2022, 12 Jan 2023; Office of the Prosecutor General 1 Aug 2022, 28 Jul 2023, 25 Feb 2025, 28 Jul 2025; SBU 28 Jul 2023, 29 Jul 2024; MFA 28 Jul 2026. C — Reuters and Al Jazeera 29 Jul 2022; Novaya Gazeta Europe 29–30 Jul 2022, 6 Jan 2023; CNN 11 Aug 2022; ISW 29–30 Jul 2022; KHPG 10 Jan 2023; Human Rights Watch 28 Jul 2023; Media Initiative for Human Rights, Nov 2022 and 28 Jul 2024; AP 25 Jul 2024; Kyiv Independent 9 Dec 2024; LB.ua 10 Dec 2024; Ukrainska Pravda 10 Jul 2025, 28 Jul 2025; Euromaidan Press 11 Jul 2025, 14 Jul 2026; ArmyInform 15 Jul 2026; United24 28 Jul 2026. All accessed 20 Oct 2026.

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THE DAY BEFORE, THE NIGHT, THE MORNING AFTER

What the UN could establish without access is a sequence: preparations on the 27th and 28th that applied to one barrack only, explosions covered by outgoing fire, and a morning in which the prisoners themselves were made to clear the scene.

May 2022	Azovstal defenders surrender under an ICRC-registered arrangement and are taken to Olenivka and other sites in occupied Donetsk region. A — OHCHR; ICRC
27 Jul 2022	193 POWs are moved into a converted industrial shed; the guard post is moved further away and a fortified trench dug for the guards — not done for other barracks. A — OHCHR, 24 Mar 2023, para. 74
28 Jul 2022	The barrack's guards wear body armour and helmets, which staff rarely did. In the evening a Grad launcher near the fence fires westward. A — OHCHR, 24 Mar 2023, para. 74
Night 28-29 Jul 2022	Two explosions in the barrack, then fire. Survivors reach Donetsk hospitals 5–7 hours later in overcrowded trucks; staff give no medical aid on site. A — OHCHR, paras. 74, 76; survivors
29 Jul 2022	Russian MoD: a HIMARS strike by Ukraine, 40 killed, 75 wounded. 'DPR' officials: 53 killed. From 09:00 POWs are ordered to clear debris and bodies and to keep silent; purported HIMARS fragments are shown to Russian journalists, not in situ. RUSSIA SAYS — Russian MoD; OHCHR, 4 Oct 2023, para. 88
29 Jul 2022	Ukraine's General Staff denies any strike on Olenivka; the Prosecutor General opens proceedings; Ukraine appeals to the ICC. B — General Staff; Prosecutor General; MFA
29-30 Jul 2022	Russia's embassy in London tweets that the Azov prisoners deserve a humiliating death. RUSSIA SAYS — Novaya Gazeta Europe
3 Aug 2022	The Secretary-General announces a fact-finding mission, requested by both Ukraine and Russia; members named 22 Aug (Gen. dos Santos Cruz, I. Gísladóttir, I. Yacouba). A — UN Secretary-General
7 Aug 2022	Ukrainian intelligence calls the HIMARS claim a falsification and attributes the explosion to Wagner — an allegation without published evidence. B — HUR
8 Aug 2022	Russia's Investigative Committee publishes its last information on its own case, opened against Ukraine before any expert analysis or autopsies. A — OHCHR, 4 Oct 2023, para. 89
11 Oct 2022 - Jan 2023	Bodies returned through ICRC mediation: 62 in October 2022 including Olenivka victims; 54 from Olenivka by January 2023; identification by DNA. B — Ministry of Reintegration
5 Jan 2023	The Secretary-General disbands the mission for lack of conditions to deploy; OHCHR: Russia gave no satisfactory assurances of secure access. A — UN Spokesperson; OHCHR, para. 90
24 Mar 2023	OHCHR thematic report on POWs: the preparations of 27–28 July, the Grad, the denial of care; at least 50 killed. A — OHCHR, paras. 72–76
25 Jul 2023	High Commissioner Türk: the incident was not caused by a HIMARS rocket; families have a right to truth, justice and reparations. A — OHCHR press release
4 Oct 2023	OHCHR 36th periodic report: at least 51 killed, 139 injured; not HIMARS; east-to-west trajectory; Russia's duties as Detaining Power unmet. A — OHCHR, paras. 82–90
25 Jul 2024	AP reports an unpublished ~100-page UN field analysis concluding Russia planned and executed the attack; OHCHR's public statement the same day repeats: not HIMARS, from the east, access denied. C — AP; OHCHR
29 Jul 2024	SBU and Prosecutor General charge the colony's head, Serhii Yevsiukov, and first deputy, Dmytro Neyolov, in absentia with the deaths of nine wounded prisoners through deliberate delay of evacuation. B — SBU
9-10 Dec 2024	A car bomb in occupied Donetsk; Russian channels report Yevsiukov killed (unconfirmed). Canada sanctions Yevsiukov and warder Shakurov. C — Kyiv Independent; LB.ua
28 Jul 2025	Prosecutor General: the weapon remains unidentified; the thermobaric version is being checked; at least 41 died at once, about 50 in all. B — Prosecutor General via UNN
13 Jul 2026	EU lists 15 individuals and the Taganrog SIZO-2 under the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime, including Olenivka staff; Neyolov's entry cites the deaths of 28–29 July 2022. A — Council Decision (CFSP) 2026/1723; EEAS
28 Jul 2026	Fourth anniversary: Ukraine's MFA calls on the ICC to pursue perpetrators, order-givers and those who covered up; survivors say about 120 of the 193 are still unaccounted for or in captivity. B — MFA; United24; AP (2024)

WHAT OHCHR ESTABLISHED

Sources: public statements of Russian and 'DPR' officials, more than 70 videos and photographs, satellite imagery, and interviews between September 2022 and January 2023 with 55 POWs who had been at the colony, eight of them survivors of the barrack (24 Mar 2023, para. 73).

The 193 were moved into the shed on 27 July. The guard post was moved and a trench fortified for the guards; on the 28th the guards wore body armour and helmets. A Grad system near the fence fired westward, its noise covering the explosions (para. 74).

The death toll could have been considerably lower with prompt care: staff gave none; survivors reached hospitals in Donetsk only 5–7 hours later; the lightly injured were kept a month in disciplinary isolation (para. 76).



Ukrainian servicemen returned from Russian captivity in a prisoner exchange, 6 May 2023. Photo: National Guard of Ukraine · CC BY 4.0 · via Wikimedia Commons

WHERE THE COLONY STOOD

Correctional Colony No. 120 near Olenivka, south-west of Donetsk, was about 4.6 km from the front line in March 2022 and about 14 km on 28 July 2022 — the prisoners were held within range of hostilities throughout (OHCHR, 4 Oct 2023, para. 85).

The colony was run by the 'DPR' penitentiary structure with Russian penitentiary staff present; Russia is the Detaining Power responsible for the prisoners under Geneva Convention III (para. 85; Prosecutor General, 2025).

The ICRC had registered the Azovstal prisoners at surrender but was refused access to the colony after the explosion (1 Aug 2022). No UN monitor has been allowed into any place of detention in Russia or occupied territory since 2022.

Sources: A — OHCHR, *Treatment of prisoners of war and persons hors de combat* (24 Mar 2023), paras. 72–76; OHCHR 36th periodic report on Ukraine (4 Oct 2023), paras. 82–90; High Commissioner Türk, press release 25 Jul 2023; OHCHR / UN in Ukraine, 25 Jul 2024; UN Secretary-General, 3 and 22 Aug 2022 (SG/T/3324); UN Spokesperson, 5 Jan 2023; OHCHR 29 Jun 2026 (POWs, access); Council Decision (CFSP) 2026/1723 and EEAS statement, 13–14 Jul 2026. B — General Staff 29 Jul 2022; HUR 3 and 7 Aug 2022; Ministry of Reintegration 11 Oct 2022, 12 Jan 2023; Office of the Prosecutor General 1 Aug 2022, 28 Jul 2023, 25 Feb 2025, 28 Jul 2025; SBU 28 Jul 2023, 29 Jul 2024; MFA 28 Jul 2026. C — Reuters and Al Jazeera 29 Jul 2022; Novaya Gazeta Europe 29–30 Jul 2022, 6 Jan 2023; CNN 11 Aug 2022; ISW 29–30 Jul 2022; KHPG 10 Jan 2023; Human Rights Watch 28 Jul 2023; Media Initiative for Human Rights, Nov 2022 and 28 Jul 2024; AP 25 Jul 2024; Kyiv Independent 9 Dec 2024; LB.ua 10 Dec 2024; Ukrainska Pravda 10 Jul 2025, 28 Jul 2025; Euromaidan Press 11 Jul 2025, 14 Jul 2026; ArmyInform 15 Jul 2026; United24 28 Jul 2026. All accessed 20 Oct 2026.



WHAT THE UN COULD PROVE FROM OUTSIDE THE FENCE

Olenivka is a case built without access to the scene: witnesses, images, trajectory analysis and Russia's own statements. The weapon has not been identified by any body. What is established is narrower than Ukraine's position and still fatal to Russia's.

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ESTABLISHED BY BODIES WITH A MANDATE

OHCHR, report on treatment of POWs, 24 Mar 2023, paras. 72–76: at least 50 killed; the barrack held 193 POWs; the preparations of 27–28 July; the Grad; the denial of medical care. A

OHCHR, 36th periodic report, 4 Oct 2023, paras. 82–90: at least 51 killed, 139 injured, all men; not HIMARS; damage consistent with a projected ordnance on an east-to-west trajectory; weapon type and origin undetermined; Russia's duties to protect, treat and investigate unmet; scene not preserved; the fact-finding mission denied conditions to deploy. A

High Commissioner Türk, 25 Jul 2023: not caused by a HIMARS rocket; a right to truth, justice and reparations. OHCHR, 25 Jul 2024: at least 50 killed, 151 injured; Russia impeded independent fact-finding. A

The Commission of Inquiry has published no specific finding on the explosion (its reports mention Olenivka only for treatment on arrival). A

UKRAINIAN INVESTIGATION

General Staff, 29 Jul 2022: no Ukrainian strike on Olenivka. B

Prosecutor General, 1 Aug 2022 – 28 Jul 2025: weapon version moved from thermobaric to artillery, planted explosive or grenade launcher, to 'unidentified'; at least 41 died at once, about 50 in all, at least 145 injured. B

SBU and Prosecutor General, 29 Jul 2024: the colony's head and first deputy charged in absentia (Art. 28(2), 438(2) CCU) with the deaths of nine prisoners through deliberate delay of evacuation; 49 of the dead identified, 48 by DNA. B

HUR, 7 Aug 2022: the HIMARS claim a falsification; Wagner alleged to have mined the shed — not substantiated with published evidence; the Prosecutor General is 'verifying'. B

INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS

CNN, 11 Aug 2022: the Russian version very likely fabricated; most consistent with an incendiary device inside the warehouse. ISW, 29–30 Jul 2022: fire damage not typical of HIMARS; no fragments in situ. C

AP, 25 Jul 2024: an unpublished ~100-page UN field analysis concluded that Russia planned and executed the attack; survivors saw men in camouflage place HIMARS fragments near the site. C

Human Rights Watch, 28 Jul 2023: Russia has not met its Geneva Convention duty to investigate; the inquiry should go to an independent international body. C

Media Initiative for Human Rights, 2022–24: chronology, names of colony staff, the surgeon's testimony; evidence does not fit a thermobaric grenade launcher. C

THE NUMBERS — EVERY SOURCE, AS PUBLISHED		
Figure	What it counts	Source · date · tier
40 · 50 · 53	killed — Russian MoD on 29 Jul 2022; Russian MoD by Jan 2023; 'DPR' officials and the Verkhovna Rada	RU / RU / B
50+ · 51+ · 50+	killed — OHCHR in Mar 2023, Oct 2023 and Jul 2024	A
41+ → ~50	died at once → in all; 9 of them for lack of emergency care	Prosecutor General 2025; SBU 2024 · B
75 · 139 · 145 · 151	injured — Russian MoD; OHCHR Oct 2023; Prosecutor General 2025; OHCHR Jul 2024	RU / A / B / A
54 · 59 · 62	bodies returned — from Olenivka by Jan 2023; by Jul 2023; in the October 2022 return, including other dead	B
33 · 36 · 48 · 49 · 52	dead identified — Prosecutor General and HRW (Jul 2023); MIHR and SBU (Jul 2024); SBU (Jul 2023) — counts differ by date and method	B / C
~120	of the 193 still unaccounted for or in captivity (2024–26)	AP; survivors · C



Returned prisoners of war after an exchange, 6 May 2023. Photo: National Guard of Ukraine · CC BY 4.0 · via Wikimedia Commons

The hub shows the OHCHR figure first (Tier A: at least 50–51 killed), the Ukrainian investigation's figures as 'according to Ukrainian authorities' (Tier B) and Russian figures as claims. The weapon is shown as 'not identified' by every body. The internal UN analysis reported by AP is Tier C: an unpublished document described by a news agency, not a UN finding.

Sources: A — OHCHR, *Treatment of prisoners of war and persons hors de combat* (24 Mar 2023), paras. 72–76; OHCHR 36th periodic report on Ukraine (4 Oct 2023), paras. 82–90; High Commissioner Türk, press release 25 Jul 2023; OHCHR / UN in Ukraine, 25 Jul 2024; UN Secretary-General, 3 and 22 Aug 2022 (SG/T/3324); UN Spokesperson, 5 Jan 2023; OHCHR 29 Jun 2026 (POWs, access); Council Decision (CFSP) 2026/1723 and EEAS statement, 13–14 Jul 2026. B — General Staff 29 Jul 2022; HUR 3 and 7 Aug 2022; Ministry of Reintegration 11 Oct 2022, 12 Jan 2023; Office of the Prosecutor General 1 Aug 2022, 28 Jul 2023, 25 Feb 2025, 28 Jul 2025; SBU 28 Jul 2023, 29 Jul 2024; MFA 28 Jul 2026. C — Reuters and Al Jazeera 29 Jul 2022; Novaya Gazeta Europe 29–30 Jul 2022, 6 Jan 2023; CNN 11 Aug 2022; ISW 29–30 Jul 2022; KHPG 10 Jan 2023; Human Rights Watch 28 Jul 2023; Media Initiative for Human Rights, Nov 2022 and 28 Jul 2024; AP 25 Jul 2024; Kyiv Independent 9 Dec 2024; LB.ua 10 Dec 2024; Ukrainska Pravda 10 Jul 2025, 28 Jul 2025; Euromaidan Press 11 Jul 2025, 14 Jul 2026; ArmyInform 15 Jul 2026; United24 28 Jul 2026. All accessed 20 Oct 2026.

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A DETAINING POWER THAT LET NO ONE IN

No body has identified the unit that fired. What is on the record is the Detaining Power's conduct — before, during and after — and the colony officials now charged in Ukraine and listed by the EU for what happened to the wounded.

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Who	Role in the case	Proceedings	Sanctions · courts
Russian Federation Detaining Power under Geneva Convention III	Held 193 POWs in a shed 14 km from the front; failed to protect, treat and investigate; refused access to the UN mission and ICRC	OHCHR findings, 4 Oct 2023, paras. 85–90; Ukraine's appeal to the ICC, 29 Jul 2022	—
Serhii Yevsiukov head, Correctional Colony No. 120	Deliberately delayed evacuation of the wounded; nine died (SBU). Earlier charged with cruel treatment of over 100 POWs	Suspicion in absentia, Art. 28(2) + 438(2) CCU, 29 Jul 2024; replaced in post Nov 2022	Canada, 10 Dec 2024. Reported killed by a car bomb in Donetsk, 9 Dec 2024 — unconfirmed
Dmytro Neyolov first deputy head	Same conduct (SBU)	Suspicion in absentia, 29 Jul 2024	EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime, 13 Jul 2026 — entry cites the deaths of 28–29 Jul 2022
Kyrylo Shakurov junior inspector	Direct torture of prisoners (MIHR)	Charged in Ukraine	Canada, 10 Dec 2024; EU, 13 Jul 2026
V. Yakurnov, A. Potapchuk, V. Bakalynskyi, Yu. Dmytrenko colony staff	Treatment of prisoners at the colony	Named by Ukrainian investigators	EU, 13 Jul 2026 (per ArmyInform's reading of the list — to verify in OJ L 2026/1723)
The unit that fired / placed the charge	Unknown. Grad crew by the fence unidentified; Wagner alleged by HUR without published evidence	Under investigation (Prosecutor General, 2025)	—

CHAIN OF RESPONSIBILITY

The established chain is institutional, not personal: Russia chose the site within range of the front, moved 193 men into one shed, altered the guard arrangements for that shed alone, fired a Grad beside it that night, denied the wounded care, made the survivors clear the scene, showed fragments out of place, opened a case against Ukraine within hours and then closed the colony to the Secretary-General's mission and to the ICRC.

OHCHR stops at the trajectory — from the east — and at the Detaining Power's duties. Ukraine's position goes further: a planned killing. The gap between the two is the absence of the one thing Russia alone controls — the scene, the bodies and the staff.

The charges in Ukraine concern the aftermath: the deaths of nine wounded men whose evacuation was delayed on the leadership's orders, one of them removed from an ambulance (Prosecutor General, 25 Feb 2025).

THE RUSSIAN STATE'S OWN ACTS

Russia's Investigative Committee opened a case against Ukraine before any expert analysis or autopsy and has published nothing since 8 Aug 2022 (OHCHR, para. 89).

Russia asked for the Secretary-General's mission on 3 Aug 2022, then gave it no secure access; the mission was disbanded on 5 Jan 2023 (OHCHR, para. 90).

The colony's leadership was replaced in November 2022 without any announced proceedings (SBU). Russia's embassy in London had written on 29–30 July 2022 that the Azov prisoners deserved a humiliating death.

Sanctions status: the EU listing of 13 Jul 2026 is confirmed from the EEAS statement; the full list of Olenivka names in the legal act and Canada's December 2024 release are to be verified against the Official Journal and canada.ca before release. No US or UK designation found — absence of evidence, not confirmed absence.

Sources: A — OHCHR, *Treatment of prisoners of war and persons hors de combat* (24 Mar 2023), paras. 72–76; OHCHR 36th periodic report on Ukraine (4 Oct 2023), paras. 82–90; High Commissioner Türk, press release 25 Jul 2023; OHCHR / UN in Ukraine, 25 Jul 2024; UN Secretary-General, 3 and 22 Aug 2022 (SG/T/3324); UN Spokesperson, 5 Jan 2023; OHCHR 29 Jun 2026 (POWs, access); Council Decision (CFSP) 2026/1723 and EEAS statement, 13–14 Jul 2026. B — General Staff 29 Jul 2022; HUR 3 and 7 Aug 2022; Ministry of Reintegration 11 Oct 2022, 12 Jan 2023; Office of the Prosecutor General 1 Aug 2022, 28 Jul 2023, 25 Feb 2025, 28 Jul 2025; SBU 28 Jul 2023, 29 Jul 2024; MFA 28 Jul 2026. C — Reuters and Al Jazeera 29 Jul 2022; Novaya Gazeta Europe 29–30 Jul 2022, 6 Jan 2023; CNN 11 Aug 2022; ISW 29–30 Jul 2022; KHPG 10 Jan 2023; Human Rights Watch 28 Jul 2023; Media Initiative for Human Rights, Nov 2022 and 28 Jul 2024; AP 25 Jul 2024; Kyiv Independent 9 Dec 2024; LB.ua 10 Dec 2024; Ukrainska Pravda 10 Jul 2025, 28 Jul 2025; Euromaidan Press 11 Jul 2025, 14 Jul 2026; ArmyInform 15 Jul 2026; United24 28 Jul 2026. All accessed 20 Oct 2026.

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A WEAPON THE UN EXCLUDED AND A SCENE NO ONE MAY SEE

Russia's account has not changed since the morning of 29 July 2022: a HIMARS strike by Ukraine to silence its own prisoners. It rests on fragments displayed out of place, a case opened before autopsies, and a refusal of access to everyone who could have checked.

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RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE · DAILY BRIEFING · 29 JUL 2022

“A missile strike from the U.S.-made HIMARS multiple launch rocket system.”

Russian MoD; Reuters, Al Jazeera, 29 Jul 2022

RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE · 29 JUL 2022

“This egregious provocation was carried out to intimidate Ukrainian servicemen.”

Russian MoD; Al Jazeera

RUSSIAN FEDERATION · REQUEST TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL · 3 AUG 2022

“Russia joined Ukraine in asking for a UN fact-finding mission.”

UN Secretary-General, 3 and 22 Aug 2022

EMBASSY OF RUSSIA IN THE UNITED KINGDOM · TWITTER · 29-30 JUL 2022

“They deserve a humiliating death.”

Novaya Gazeta Europe, 30 Jul 2022

EXCLUDED BY THE UN

OHCHR, after more than 50 interviews and 70 images: the explosions were not caused by HIMARS rockets; the damage is not characteristic of HIMARS; multiple explosions were heard; the ordnance travelled east to west. The fragments shown to Russian journalists were displayed outside the barrack, not in situ (4 Oct 2023, paras. 83–84, 88).

What the claim concedes: That 193 Ukrainian prisoners were in one barrack and that an explosion killed dozens of them while in Russian custody.

THE PROVOCATION NEEDS A MOTIVE RUSSIA SUPPLIED ITSELF

The claim is that Ukraine killed its own prisoners to silence them. The record shows the Detaining Power moved the prisoners into the shed the day before, changed the guard arrangements for that shed only, fired a Grad beside it that night, and then refused the Secretary-General's mission access (OHCHR, 24 Mar 2023, para. 74; 4 Oct 2023, para. 90).

What the claim concedes: That the barrack was the target of a deliberate act.

ASKED FOR, THEN BLOCKED

The mission was created at the request of both parties, its members were appointed on 22 Aug 2022, and it was disbanded on 5 Jan 2023 because Russia gave no satisfactory assurances of secure access (OHCHR, para. 90; UN Spokesperson). Russia's own Investigative Committee has published nothing since 8 Aug 2022.

What the claim concedes: That the facts needed establishing by an independent body — the thing Russia then prevented.

INTENT, STATED BY THE STATE

Published by an official Russian mission the day after dozens of prisoners of war died in Russian custody. Geneva Convention III obliges the Detaining Power to protect prisoners against violence, intimidation and public curiosity; the statement is the opposite of that obligation, in the state's own voice.

What the claim concedes: The attitude of the Detaining Power to the men it held.

FAIR TO SAY

No UN body has publicly attributed the explosion to Russia. OHCHR excludes HIMARS, finds the ordnance came from the east and finds Russia's duties unmet; the weapon and the unit are undetermined. The internal UN analysis reported by AP is unpublished and should not be cited as a UN finding — nor should the anonymous 'Centre for Human Rights in Armed Conflict' report that Ukraine's Ombudsman presented as one in July 2025 and then withdrew.

Ukraine's own weapon theory has changed — thermobaric grenade launcher (2023), artillery or planted charge (2024), unidentified (2025) — and its identification counts differ between agencies. HUR's Wagner attribution has no published evidence behind it.

Casualty figures differ by source and date, from 40 (Russian MoD, day one) to 53; the hub uses OHCHR's 'at least 50–51'.

Sources: A — OHCHR, *Treatment of prisoners of war and persons hors de combat* (24 Mar 2023), paras. 72–76; OHCHR 36th periodic report on Ukraine (4 Oct 2023), paras. 82–90; High Commissioner Türk, press release 25 Jul 2023; OHCHR / UN in Ukraine, 25 Jul 2024; UN Secretary-General, 3 and 22 Aug 2022 (SG/T/3324); UN Spokesperson, 5 Jan 2023; OHCHR 29 Jun 2026 (POWs, access); Council Decision (CFSP) 2026/1723 and EEAS statement, 13–14 Jul 2026. B — General Staff 29 Jul 2022; HUR 3 and 7 Aug 2022; Ministry of Reintegration 11 Oct 2022, 12 Jan 2023; Office of the Prosecutor General 1 Aug 2022, 28 Jul 2023, 25 Feb 2025, 28 Jul 2025; SBU 28 Jul 2023, 29 Jul 2024; MFA 28 Jul 2026. C — Reuters and Al Jazeera 29 Jul 2022; Novaya Gazeta Europe 29–30 Jul 2022, 6 Jan 2023; CNN 11 Aug 2022; ISW 29–30 Jul 2022; KHPG 10 Jan 2023; Human Rights Watch 28 Jul 2023; Media Initiative for Human Rights, Nov 2022 and 28 Jul 2024; AP 25 Jul 2024; Kyiv Independent 9 Dec 2024; LB.ua 10 Dec 2024; Ukrainska Pravda 10 Jul 2025, 28 Jul 2025; Euromaidan Press 11 Jul 2025, 14 Jul 2026; ArmyInform 15 Jul 2026; United24 28 Jul 2026. All accessed 20 Oct 2026.



THE DETAINING POWER ANSWERS FOR ITS PRISONERS

Geneva Convention III makes the Detaining Power responsible for the life of every prisoner it holds, obliges it to keep them out of the combat zone, to give the wounded care, and to hold an official inquiry into any death. On the public UN record, Russia failed each of these.

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ESTABLISHED — BY BODIES WITH A MANDATE

OHCHR (4 Oct 2023, paras. 82–90): not HIMARS; projected ordnance from the east; prisoners held within range of hostilities; no medical care on site; no scene preservation; no effective, thorough, transparent investigation; access refused to the UN mission.

OHCHR (24 Mar 2023, paras. 74, 76): preparations specific to the barrack on 27–28 July; the death toll could have been considerably lower with prompt care.

EU Council (13 Jul 2026): the colony's first deputy head listed for the deaths of 28–29 July 2022 caused by the deliberate delay of the evacuation of the wounded.

PATTERN — WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS

Denial of medical care to Ukrainian POWs in Russian custody; OHCHR: 124 of 129 released prisoners describe torture or ill-treatment (29 Jun 2026); 48 deaths in custody and 129 executions documented.

No UN access to any place of detention in Russia or occupied territory since 2022, against full access in Ukraine (OHCHR, 29 Jun 2026, para. 14).

Russia's own 'investigations' opened against Ukraine before the facts are in: Olenivka (2022), the Il-76 crash (2024).

POSITION — UKRAINE'S QUALIFICATION

Ukraine qualifies the event as a planned killing of prisoners of war — a war crime and, Ukraine argues, part of a policy (Art. 438(2) CCU); it attributes the act to Russian forces and has charged the colony's leadership with the deaths of the wounded.

Ukraine holds that the obstruction of the UN mission and of the ICRC is itself evidence of responsibility — an inference, not yet a finding.

THE RULES THAT APPLY

Geneva Convention III arts. 12–13: the Detaining Power is responsible for the treatment of prisoners and must protect them against acts of violence; art. 19 and 23: evacuation away from the combat zone, no exposure to fire; art. 15 and 30: maintenance and medical care; art. 121: an official enquiry into every death from unusual causes; art. 126: ICRC access.

Rome Statute art. 8(2)(a)(i)–(iii): wilful killing, inhuman treatment, wilfully causing great suffering — grave breaches; art. 8(2)(b)(xxiii) use of protected persons to shield military operations (if a Grad was deliberately placed beside the barrack).

UN General Assembly resolution ES-11/... and the Secretary-General's good offices: a fact-finding mission requested by both parties is owed secure access by both.

WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW

The weapon: not identified by OHCHR, the Prosecutor General or any independent body.

The unit: no attribution by any mandated body; HUR's Wagner claim is unsupported by published evidence.

The fate of Serhii Yevsiukov (reported killed, Dec 2024) and of the proceedings against him.

The whereabouts of about 120 of the 193 prisoners; the full count of the dead (50–53) and of those identified.

Whether the ICC has acted on Ukraine's 2022 submission; whether the Commission of Inquiry will take up the explosion.

WHAT WE ASK

- Cite the OHCHR findings.** The 36th periodic report (4 Oct 2023, paras. 82–90) is the UN record: not HIMARS, from the east, duties unmet, access refused. Use it every time the HIMARS line is repeated in the Council.
- Demand access.** UN monitors and the ICRC into every place of detention in Russia and occupied territory — the remedy that has been available to Russia since 2022 and that would have settled Olenivka in a week.
- Align sanctions.** Match the EU's July 2026 listings of the colony's staff in national regimes (US, UK, Canada in part); add the colony as an entity.
- Account for the 193.** Keep the roughly 120 unaccounted-for survivors of the barrack on the exchange and repatriation agenda; support identification of the dead.

Sources: A — OHCHR, *Treatment of prisoners of war and persons hors de combat* (24 Mar 2023), paras. 72–76; OHCHR 36th periodic report on Ukraine (4 Oct 2023), paras. 82–90; High Commissioner Türk, press release 25 Jul 2023; OHCHR / UN in Ukraine, 25 Jul 2024; UN Secretary-General, 3 and 22 Aug 2022 (SG/T/3324); UN Spokesperson, 5 Jan 2023; OHCHR 29 Jun 2026 (POWs, access); Council Decision (CFSP) 2026/1723 and EEAS statement, 13–14 Jul 2026. B — General Staff 29 Jul 2022; HUR 3 and 7 Aug 2022; Ministry of Reintegration 11 Oct 2022, 12 Jan 2023; Office of the Prosecutor General 1 Aug 2022, 28 Jul 2023, 25 Feb 2025, 28 Jul 2025; SBU 28 Jul 2023, 29 Jul 2024; MFA 28 Jul 2026. C — Reuters and Al Jazeera 29 Jul 2022; Novaya Gazeta Europe 29–30 Jul 2022, 6 Jan 2023; CNN 11 Aug 2022; ISW 29–30 Jul 2022; KHPG 10 Jan 2023; Human Rights Watch 28 Jul 2023; Media Initiative for Human Rights, Nov 2022 and 28 Jul 2024; AP 25 Jul 2024; Kyiv Independent 9 Dec 2024; LB.ua 10 Dec 2024; Ukrainska Pravda 10 Jul 2025, 28 Jul 2025; Euromaidan Press 11 Jul 2025, 14 Jul 2026; ArmyInform 15 Jul 2026; United24 28 Jul 2026. All accessed 20 Oct 2026.



OLENIVKA: 193 PRISONERS IN ONE BARRACK

5 photographs from official sources, as shown on the live page. Each image is credited and openly licensed; videos are linked to the official post (scan the code). No image shows the dead; graphic aftermath is blurred in print. The downloadable pack on the live page holds the full-size files and their SHA-256.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
OCT 2026



Ukrainian servicemen returned from Russian captivity in a prisoner exchange, 6 May 2023

National Guard of Ukraine · 2023-05-06 · CC BY 4.0
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Exchange_of_captured_soldiers_between_Ukraine_and_Russia,_2023-05-06_\(01\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Exchange_of_captured_soldiers_between_Ukraine_and_Russia,_2023-05-06_(01).jpg)



Returned prisoners of war after an exchange, 6 May 2023

National Guard of Ukraine · 2023-05-06 · CC BY 4.0
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Defenders returned from captivity in the exchange of 8 Feb 2024

Сергій Шведюк / National Guard of Ukraine · 2024-02-08 · CC BY 4.0
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Exchange_of_captured_soldiers_between_Ukraine_and_Russia,_2024-02-08_\(03\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Exchange_of_captured_soldiers_between_Ukraine_and_Russia,_2024-02-08_(03).jpg)



Returned prisoners of war, 8 Feb 2024

Сергій Шведюк / National Guard of Ukraine · 2024-02-08 · CC BY 4.0
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Exchange_of_captured_soldiers_between_Ukraine_and_Russia,_2024-02-08_\(02\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Exchange_of_captured_soldiers_between_Ukraine_and_Russia,_2024-02-08_(02).jpg)



'Free Mariupol Defenders' banner on Lviv Town Hall, 25 Jul 2023

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https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Azovstal_Free_Mariupol_Defenders_Lviv_Town_Hall.jpg

