

TOWERS DOWN: RUSSIA'S STRIKES ON UKRAINE'S BROADCASTING, 2022-2026

On the sixth day of the full-scale invasion Russia's Ministry of Defence announced strikes on Kyiv's broadcasting 'for the purpose of foiling information attacks against Russia'. That afternoon missiles hit the Kyiv TV tower beside the Babyn Yar memorial and killed five passers-by. Two weeks later a missile strike on the TV tower near Rivne killed 21 people. In April 2024 a Kh-59 missile brought down the top of Kharkiv's 245-metre TV mast. Three towers, one stated motive: what Ukraine's broadcasters say, not what they do in war.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
OCT 2026

DRAFT — not published. Draft for the editor. Kyiv figures and Russian statements are taken from the hub's fact-check 'Kyiv TV tower, March 2022' (merged 29 Oct 2026). Rivne: first count 19 killed and 9 injured (Rivne regional administration, V. Koval, 15 Mar 2022), final count 21 killed and 9 injured after the rubble was cleared (V. Koval, 16 Mar 2022, via Espresso and LB.ua). Kharkiv: Kh-59 per the Kharkiv regional prosecutor's preliminary data (State Special Communications Service, 22 Apr 2024); no casualties. No Russian statement on Rivne or Kharkiv located. Photos: State Special Communications Service / DSNS / regional administrations (CC BY 4.0), to be selected; no people.

26

people killed in strikes on two TV towers in March 2022: 5 in Kyiv (1 Mar) and 21 near Rivne (14 Mar) — derived sum B

State Emergency Service, 1 Mar 2022; Rivne regional administration (V. Koval), 16 Mar 2022

40

broadcasting stations in Ukraine affected by the war A

ITU, activities under Council Resolution 1408 (accessed 29 Oct 2026)

US\$1.79 bn

needed to restore Ukraine's telecoms sector to its pre-war state — ITU's first assessment A

ITU, assessment of Dec 2022, via Reuters / Al Jazeera, 6 Jan 2023

20+

facilities of the state broadcasting network (RRT Concern) damaged in the first ten weeks of the invasion B

State Special Communications Service (Y. Shchyhol), Government portal, 4 May 2022

BOTTOM LINE

Russia named the target and the reason. On 1 March 2022 its Ministry of Defence announced strikes on Kyiv's 'retransmitting hubs' to foil 'information attacks against Russia'. That is a reason about content, not about military advantage.

Two towers, 26 dead in two weeks. Five passers-by were killed at the Kyiv TV tower on 1 March 2022; 21 people were killed and 9 injured when missiles hit the TV tower near Rivne on 14 March.

It did not stop in 2022. On 22 April 2024 a Kh-59 missile brought down the top of the Kharkiv TV mast and cut the city's digital TV signal; regional transmitters are still being hit in 2026. ITU counts 40 broadcasting stations affected.

LEGAL QUALIFICATION IN THREE LAYERS

STRIKES ON THE KYIV, RIVNE AND KHARKIV TV TOWERS; 26 KILLED IN KYIV AND RIVNE — TIER B: STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE, REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS, PROSECUTORS

BROADCASTING INFRASTRUCTURE STRUCK ACROSS UKRAINE, 2022-2026; 40 STATIONS AFFECTED (ITU) — PATTERN

ATTACKS ON CIVILIAN OBJECTS; A PROPAGANDA FUNCTION ALONE IS NOT A LAWFUL GROUND — HUB INFERENCE, POSITION

Established. At Tier B, missiles struck the Kyiv TV tower on 1 March 2022 (5 killed, all passers-by; two Russian aviation commanders charged in absentia, Aug 2025), the TV tower near Rivne on 14 March 2022 (21 killed, 9 injured) and the Kharkiv TV tower on 22 April 2024 (Kh-59; no casualties; investigation under art. 438 of Ukraine's Criminal Code). At Tier A, ITU counts 40 broadcasting stations affected by the war. **Pattern.** Russia's own stated rationale in 2022 was the content of broadcasting; strikes on broadcasting infrastructure continued in 2024–2026 without any specific military explanation. **Position.** The hub's inference: TV towers are civilian objects unless they make an effective contribution to military action (AP I art. 52(2)); disrupting propaganda alone does not offer the required definite military advantage (ICTY Committee report on the NATO bombing, 2000, para. 76). Deliberate attacks on civilian objects and civilians (Rome Statute art. 8(2)(b)(i)–(ii)), pending any investigation.

WHAT WE ASK

ITU member states voting in Doha from 12 November: weigh the record on Ukraine's broadcasting when electing the ITU Council. Ask ITU to update its 2022 damage assessment of Ukraine's telecoms and broadcasting. Name broadcasting strikes in statements on the protection of journalists and media.

THREE TOWERS, THREE CITIES

Broadcasting towers are the tallest structures in most Ukrainian cities and carry television, radio and emergency alerts. Russia struck them in the first weeks of the invasion and has kept striking them since.

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1 Mar 2022	Russia's Ministry of Defence announces strikes on 'technological facilities' in Kyiv 'for the purpose of foiling information attacks against Russia' and tells residents near 'retransmitting hubs' to leave their homes. RUSSIA SAYS — Russian MoD statement, via Interfax and TASS, 1 Mar 2022
1 Mar 2022, ~17:10	Missiles hit the Kyiv TV tower beside the Babyn Yar memorial site: 5 killed, all passers-by, among them camera operator Yevhenii Sakun; channels briefly off air. B — State Emergency Service, 1 Mar 2022 (via LB.ua); CPJ, 2 Mar 2022
14 Mar 2022, early morning	A Russian missile strike hits the TV tower and its service building near Rivne (Antopil); regional TV and radio broadcasting goes down. B — Rivne regional administration (V. Koval), via LB.ua, 14 Mar 2022
15-16 Mar 2022	The toll rises as the rubble is cleared: 19 killed and 9 injured on 15 March; final count 21 killed, 9 injured on 16 March. B — Rivne regional administration (V. Koval), via Ukrainska Pravda (15 Mar) and Espresso / LB.ua (16 Mar 2022)
4 May 2022	More than 20 facilities of the state broadcasting network (RRT Concern) damaged since 24 February. B — State Special Communications Service (Y. Shchyhol), Government portal, 4 May 2022
22 Apr 2024, ~16:30	A Kh-59 missile hits the Kharkiv TV tower; the upper part of the 245-metre mast falls; digital TV signal cut; no one killed or injured. Prosecutors open a war-crimes investigation (art. 438). B — Office of the Prosecutor General, via ArmyInform; State Special Communications Service, 22 Apr 2024
Aug 2025	Two Russian commanders — of long-range aviation and of the 121st Heavy Bomber Aviation Regiment — charged in absentia with ordering the Kyiv TV tower strike. B — Office of the Prosecutor General and SSU, Aug 2025
9 Mar 2026	Strikes on Bilopillia, Sumy region, damage the local TV tower among other targets. B — Sumy region police, via Ukrinform, 10 Mar 2026

WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS

Kyiv, 1 March 2022: hours after Russia announced strikes on 'retransmitting hubs', missiles hit the TV tower in Shevchenkivskyi district. The tower stood; five people walking nearby were killed. Prosecutors later charged two Russian aviation commanders in absentia.

Rivne region, 14 March 2022: a missile strike hit the TV tower and its service building in Antopil, outside Rivne. Rescuers worked for two days; 21 people were killed and 9 injured.

Kharkiv, 22 April 2024: a Kh-59 missile struck the TV tower at about 16:30. The top of the 245-metre mast broke off and fell; the city lost its digital TV signal. Staff were in a shelter and no one was hurt.

PHOTO SLOT · DRAFT

The damaged Kharkiv TV tower, 22–23 Apr 2024 — State Special Communications Service or Kharkiv regional administration, CC BY 4.0, with credit and link

Photo slot · official source with licence · no people

WHO WAS HURT

Kyiv: five killed, all passers-by — among them Yevhenii Sakun, a camera operator for the LIVE channel; five injured in the first count, six in the August 2025 charge sheet.

Rivne region: 21 killed and 9 injured, by the regional administration's final count of 16 March 2022. The authorities did not publish the victims' names or say how many were tower staff.

Kharkiv: no casualties — staff were in a shelter. The city lost its over-the-air digital TV signal until broadcasting was restored (State Special Communications Service, 22 Apr 2024).

Sources: A — ITU, activities under Council Resolution 1408 (accessed 29 Oct 2026); ITU assessment, Dec 2022 (via Reuters / Al Jazeera, 6 Jan 2023); Fifth Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, Feb 2026 (via ITU). B — State Emergency Service, 1 Mar 2022 (via LB.ua); Office of the Prosecutor General and SSU, Aug 2025; Rivne regional administration (V. Koval), 14–16 Mar 2022 (via LB.ua, Ukrainska Pravda, Espresso); State Special Communications Service, 4 May 2022 and 22 Apr 2024 (Government portal); Office of the Prosecutor General, 22 Apr 2024 (via ArmyInform); Sumy region police, 10 Mar 2026 (via Ukrinform). C — CPJ, 2 Mar 2022; IMI, Kyiv Independent, RTVI (22 Apr 2024). RU — Russian MoD, 1 Mar 2022 (Interfax, TASS). All accessed 30 Oct 2026.



A CONSISTENT TIER B RECORD AND AN ITU COUNT

Each strike is documented by the emergency service, the regional administration or the prosecutor. ITU, the UN agency for telecommunications, counts the damage to the sector as a whole.

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ESTABLISHED BY BODIES WITH A MANDATE

ITU, activities under Council Resolution 1408: 40 broadcasting stations in Ukraine affected by the war (accessed 29 Oct 2026). ITU's first assessment (Dec 2022): at least US\$1.79 bn needed to restore the telecoms sector (via Reuters / Al Jazeera, 6 Jan 2023). **A**

Fifth Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (World Bank, UN, European Commission, Government of Ukraine), Feb 2026: US\$2.48 bn direct damage to the telecom, digital and media sector (via ITU). **A**

UKRAINIAN INVESTIGATION

State Emergency Service, 1 Mar 2022: 5 killed, 5 injured at the Kyiv TV tower, all passers-by. Office of the Prosecutor General and SSU, Aug 2025: 5 killed, 6 injured; two commanders charged in absentia. **B**

Rivne regional administration (V. Koval), 15–16 Mar 2022: 19, then 21 killed; 9 injured. **B**

Office of the Prosecutor General and State Special Communications Service, 22 Apr 2024: Kh-59 missile on the Kharkiv TV tower (prosecutor's preliminary data); no casualties; investigation under art. 438. **B**

INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS

LB.ua, Ukrainska Pravda, Espresso (Mar 2022); CPJ, 2 Mar 2022 (the camera operator killed in Kyiv); IMI and Kyiv Independent (Apr 2024). **C**

Russian war correspondents celebrated the Kharkiv strike and claimed, without evidence, that air-defence equipment was on the tower (via RTVI, 22 Apr 2024). **C**

THE NUMBERS — EVERY SOURCE, AS PUBLISHED

Figure	What it counts	Source · date · tier
5	killed at the Kyiv TV tower, 1 Mar 2022	State Emergency Service · B
21 · 9	killed · injured near Rivne, 14 Mar 2022	Rivne regional administration, 16 Mar 2022 · B
245 m	Kharkiv TV mast, top brought down, 22 Apr 2024	regional authorities, via IMI · B/C
40	broadcasting stations affected	ITU · A

PHOTO SLOT · DRAFT

The TV tower near Rivne after the strike, Mar 2022 — Rivne regional administration or DSNS Rivne region, CC BY 4.0

Photo slot · official source with licence

Killed and injured are Tier B. The Rivne count rose from 19 to 21 as bodies were recovered; the final regional count is used. The ITU and RDNA figures cover the whole sector, not these three towers.

Sources: A — ITU, activities under Council Resolution 1408 (accessed 29 Oct 2026); ITU assessment, Dec 2022 (via Reuters / Al Jazeera, 6 Jan 2023); Fifth Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, Feb 2026 (via ITU). B — State Emergency Service, 1 Mar 2022 (via LB.ua); Office of the Prosecutor General and SSU, Aug 2025; Rivne regional administration (V. Koval), 14–16 Mar 2022 (via LB.ua, Ukrainska Pravda, Espresso); State Special Communications Service, 4 May 2022 and 22 Apr 2024 (Government portal); Office of the Prosecutor General, 22 Apr 2024 (via ArmyInform); Sumy region police, 10 Mar 2026 (via Ukrinform). C — CPJ, 2 Mar 2022; IMI, Kyiv Independent, RTVI (22 Apr 2024). RU — Russian MoD, 1 Mar 2022 (Interfax, TASS). All accessed 30 Oct 2026.

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MISSILES AND THEIR COMMANDERS

Missiles struck all three towers. For Kyiv, Ukraine's prosecutors have named the commanders; for Rivne and Kharkiv the units have not been identified.

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Who	Role in the case	Proceedings	Sanctions · courts
Commander of Russian long-range aviation	Charged in absentia with ordering the strike on the Kyiv TV tower, 1 Mar 2022	Notice of suspicion, Aug 2025 (Office of the Prosecutor General, SSU)	—
Commander of the 121st Heavy Bomber Aviation Regiment	Charged in absentia over the Kyiv TV tower strike	Notice of suspicion, Aug 2025	—
Units that fired on Rivne (14 Mar 2022) and Kharkiv (22 Apr 2024)	Missile strikes on TV towers	Not identified; Kharkiv investigation under art. 438	—

CHAIN OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Russian Ministry of Defence announced the strikes on Kyiv's broadcasting in advance and gave their purpose: to foil 'information attacks'.

A missile is aimed at coordinates. A TV tower is a single, fixed, well-known structure; it is hit because it was chosen.

The same kind of target was struck in Rivne two weeks later and in Kharkiv two years later — a pattern, not an accident.

THE RUSSIAN STATE'S OWN ACTS

Russian MoD, 1 Mar 2022: strikes on the 'technological facilities' of the Security Service of Ukraine and the 72nd centre of psychological and information operations in Kyiv 'for the purpose of foiling information attacks against Russia' (Interfax, TASS).

No Russian statement on the Rivne (2022) or Kharkiv (2024) strikes has been located; Russian officials routinely say only military infrastructure is targeted.

The two Kyiv suspects are named in the hub's fact-check 'Kyiv TV tower, March 2022', with sources. Unit identification for Rivne and Kharkiv requires an investigation.

Sources: A — ITU, activities under Council Resolution 1408 (accessed 29 Oct 2026); ITU assessment, Dec 2022 (via Reuters / Al Jazeera, 6 Jan 2023); Fifth Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, Feb 2026 (via ITU). B — State Emergency Service, 1 Mar 2022 (via LB.ua); Office of the Prosecutor General and SSU, Aug 2025; Rivne regional administration (V. Koval), 14–16 Mar 2022 (via LB.ua, Ukrainska Pravda, Espresso); State Special Communications Service, 4 May 2022 and 22 Apr 2024 (Government portal); Office of the Prosecutor General, 22 Apr 2024 (via ArmyInform); Sumy region police, 10 Mar 2026 (via Ukrinform). C — CPJ, 2 Mar 2022; IMI, Kyiv Independent, RTVI (22 Apr 2024). RU — Russian MoD, 1 Mar 2022 (Interfax, TASS). All accessed 30 Oct 2026.



'TO FOIL INFORMATION ATTACKS'

Russia gave a reason for the first strike, and the reason is the problem: broadcasting was targeted for what it transmitted. The hub's full fact-check of the 1 March 2022 statement is on the site.

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RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE · 1 MAR 2022

"For the purpose of foiling information attacks against Russia, strikes with high-precision weapons will be carried out against the Security Service of Ukraine's technological facilities and the 72nd main center of psychological and information operations in Kyiv."

Interfax, 1 Mar 2022; TASS, 1 Mar 2022

STANDARD LINE · 'ONLY MILITARY INFRASTRUCTURE' · RUSSIAN OFFICIALS ON STRIKES IN UKRAINE

"(Not stated for Rivne 2022 or Kharkiv 2024. Russia's general claim is that it strikes only military infrastructure.)"

Hub note; see the hub fact-check on 'only military targets'

SELF-INCRIMINATING: THE STATED AIM IS NOT A LAWFUL GROUND FOR ATTACK

Five passers-by were killed at the Kyiv TV tower the same afternoon. The ICTY committee that reviewed NATO's 1999 strike on Serbian state television found that disrupting propaganda is unlikely to offer the 'concrete and direct' military advantage required (Final Report, 2000, para. 76); AP I limits attacks to objects whose destruction offers 'a definite military advantage' (art. 52(2)).

What the claim concedes: That broadcasting was chosen as a target because of what it transmitted.

NO MILITARY USE OF THESE TOWERS HAS BEEN SHOWN

The Kharkiv strike cut the city's digital TV signal and hurt no one; the Rivne strike killed 21 people. Russia has published no evidence of military equipment on either tower.

What the claim concedes: If used, it would concede that the towers were the intended targets.

FAIR TO SAY

Dual use is possible: military radio equipment can be mounted on any tall structure. Russia has offered no evidence of it for these towers; where a claim exists (Kharkiv 2024) it came from war correspondents, not the Ministry of Defence.

The Rivne toll is given at the final count (21); first reports gave lower figures, then 19. The share of tower staff among the dead has not been published.

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A TV TOWER IS A CIVILIAN OBJECT

Broadcasting facilities are civilian objects. They lose protection only if they make an effective contribution to military action and their destruction offers a definite military advantage — not because of what they broadcast.

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ESTABLISHED — BY BODIES WITH A MANDATE

Tier B: missile strikes on the Kyiv TV tower (1 Mar 2022, 5 killed), the TV tower near Rivne (14 Mar 2022, 21 killed, 9 injured) and the Kharkiv TV tower (22 Apr 2024, Kh-59, no casualties).

Tier B: two Russian aviation commanders charged in absentia over the Kyiv strike (Aug 2025). Tier A: 40 broadcasting stations affected (ITU).

PATTERN — WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS

Over 20 facilities of the state broadcasting network damaged by May 2022 (State Special Communications Service); regional transmitters still hit in 2026.

Russia's stated rationale in 2022 was the content of broadcasting; later strikes came without any specific military explanation.

POSITION — UKRAINE'S QUALIFICATION

The hub's inference: attacks directed at civilian objects and, where people were killed, at civilians (Rome Statute art. 8(2)(b)(i)–(ii)); or disproportionate attacks (art. 8(2)(b)(iv)) — pending investigation.

A propaganda function alone does not make a broadcaster a military objective (ICTY Committee report, 2000, para. 76).

THE RULES THAT APPLY

AP I arts. 48, 52(1)–(3) and 57: distinction, the definition of military objectives, the presumption of civilian character, precautions; AP I art. 79 and UN Security Council resolution 2222 (2015) on the protection of journalists and media professionals.

Rome Statute art. 8(2)(b)(i), (ii) and (iv); art. 28 on command responsibility.

WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW

The names of the dead in Rivne and how many were broadcasting staff.

The units and launch platforms for Rivne (2022) and Kharkiv (2024).

A full, current ITU count of broadcasting damage beyond the 2022 assessment.

WHAT WE ASK

Weigh the record in Doha. ITU member states electing the ITU Council at the Plenipotentiary Conference (Doha, from 12 November 2026): weigh the record of strikes on Ukraine's broadcasting.

Update the damage count. Ask ITU to update its 2022 assessment of damage to Ukraine's telecoms and broadcasting under Council Resolution 1408.

Name it with media freedom. In statements on the safety of journalists and media (UNSC res. 2222), name the strikes on broadcasting towers and the people killed beside them.

Support the prosecutions. Support Ukraine's in-absentia cases over the Kyiv TV tower and the investigation into the Kharkiv strike.

Sources: A — ITU, activities under Council Resolution 1408 (accessed 29 Oct 2026); ITU assessment, Dec 2022 (via Reuters / Al Jazeera, 6 Jan 2023); Fifth Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, Feb 2026 (via ITU). B — State Emergency Service, 1 Mar 2022 (via LB.ua); Office of the Prosecutor General and SSU, Aug 2025; Rivne regional administration (V. Koval), 14–16 Mar 2022 (via LB.ua, Ukrainska Pravda, Espresso); State Special Communications Service, 4 May 2022 and 22 Apr 2024 (Government portal); Office of the Prosecutor General, 22 Apr 2024 (via ArmyInform); Sumy region police, 10 Mar 2026 (via Ukrinform). C — CPJ, 2 Mar 2022; IMI, Kyiv Independent, RTVI (22 Apr 2024). RU — Russian MoD, 1 Mar 2022 (Interfax, TASS). All accessed 30 Oct 2026.

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