

THE BUCHA DENIAL, CHECKED LINE BY LINE

Russia's new report no longer says the bodies were fake. It argues about who they were. Here is what it gets wrong — and what it quietly concedes.

BOTTOM LINE

Zero witnesses from Bucha. Zero engagement with UN, satellite or phone-record evidence. Three of the men it calls "combatants" were executed after capture. Its author is sanctioned by the EU as a state propagandist.

0
of the report's 16 "eyewitnesses" are from Bucha

All live in Russian-occupied towns of Donetsk and Luhansk regions; none describes Bucha

0
mentions of OHCHR, the UN Commission of Inquiry, Maxar imagery or the 234th Regiment

The entire evidentiary record is left unaddressed

3
of the names it disputes were shot after capture at 144 Yablunska St, 4 Mar 2022

Verbovyi, Rudenko, Turovskiy — the report's own plaque photos show the date

≈25
of 509 memorial names challenged — about 5%

Mostly local defence volunteers whose service the plaques and city obituaries state openly

SIX CLAIMS, SIX VERDICTS

RUSSIA CLAIMS "The memorial wall of 509 names is the proof of the 'massacre' — and it includes soldiers."	1 · STRAW MAN MISLEADING The Wall of Remembrance (opened 2 Jul 2023) is a civic memorial to residents of the Bucha community killed during the occupation. It is not, and has never been, the evidentiary basis of any finding. OHCHR documented 73 civilian killings in Bucha by name, with status assessed case by case; the UN Commission of Inquiry, the ICC and Ukrainian courts work from case files, not from a memorial.
RUSSIA CLAIMS "They were combatants, so under AP I art. 51(3) they could lawfully be killed."	2 · SELF-INCRIMINATING FALSE IN LAW Three names the report singles out — Andrii Verbovyi, Denys Rudenko, Sviatoslav Turovskiy — were among eight men seized near a checkpoint, searched for tattoos, stripped of jackets and shoes, marched to the 234th Regiment base at 144 Yablunska St and shot on 4 March 2022. One survived (Ivan Skyba). A captured fighter is <i>hors de combat</i> ; killing him is murder under Common Article 3 and Rome Statute art. 8(2)(c)(i). The report's own plaque photographs carry the date: 04-03-2022.
RUSSIA CLAIMS "Some listed people died elsewhere — Vorzel, Moshchun, Irpin, Kopyliv."	3 · CATEGORY ERROR IRRELEVANT The memorial honours residents of the Bucha community (the city, Vorzel, Babyntsi and 11 villages) wherever they fell. The casualty counts used in legal proceedings — OHCHR's and the Prosecutor General's — are geo-specific and kept separate. Nothing in this section touches a single documented execution.
RUSSIA CLAIMS "A 68-year-old woman on the wall died of cancer, not Russian bullets."	4 · ONE CASE, NO SOURCE UNVERIFIED No document, record or witness is cited. Residents who died of untreated illness under a 33-day siege belong on a town's memorial; they do not appear in OHCHR's count, which records killings only. One unsourced case out of 509 cannot carry the weight the report places on it.
RUSSIA CLAIMS "Ukraine kills its own citizens for the cameras — 16 eyewitnesses confirm it."	5 · NOT ABOUT BUCHA NO EVIDENCE All 16 are residents of Toretsk, Vuhledar, Myrnohrad, Lysychansk, Avdiivka and Kurakhove — towns under Russian occupation at the time of interview. No dates, no named journalists, no verifiable incident. Not one mentions Bucha. The report admits its Bucha conclusion is drawn "by analogy". Testimony taken under occupation, with no possibility of cross-examination, is not evidence of anything.
RUSSIA CLAIMS "Like Gleiwitz in 1939 — a staged provocation with pre-placed bodies."	6 · THE RECORD SAYS THE OPPOSITE REFUTED Maxar imagery of 9–21 March 2022 shows the bodies on Yablunska Street weeks before Russian withdrawal. Russian soldiers called home from victims' phones within hours of the killings (NYT, Dec 2022). Victims had bound hands; executions took place in basements. Moscow's own story has changed three times — "fake" (3 Apr 2022), "bodies placed after withdrawal", now "they were combatants" — and each version abandons the one before.

WHO WROTE IT

NOT A TRIBUNAL. A STATE PROPAGANDA UNIT.

The "International Public Tribunal on the Crimes of Ukrainian Neo-Nazis" was created at a conference of Russia's Civic Chamber and hands its material to the Russian Investigative Committee. Chair: **Maxim Grigoriev**, Civic Chamber member and director of the "Foundation for the Study of Democracy".

Sanctioned: EU (2026) as "a key figure of Russian state propaganda" whose mock tribunal is promoted by the Russian MFA to justify the war; Canada (SEMA, Aug 2024); Ukraine. Its "international" members are long-standing promoters of Kremlin positions with no war-crimes investigation experience.

WHAT THE REPORT NEVER MENTIONS

- OHCHR thematic report, 7 Dec 2022 — 73 named civilian victims in Bucha, 57 summary executions in the region
- UN Commission of Inquiry, A/77/533 and A/HRC/52/62
- Maxar satellite passes of 9, 11, 19, 21 March 2022
- 234th Air Assault Regiment and Lt Col Gorodilov; phone records
- Victims with bound hands; 16 women and 3 children among OHCHR's 73
- Nine Russian servicemen convicted for Bucha (Irpin court, 2023); US designation of the 234th and 64th units
- Putin's decree of 18 Apr 2022 honouring the 64th Brigade

WHAT IT QUIETLY CONCEDES

The report accepts that the people on the wall died in and around Bucha in March 2022, under Russian control. That abandons Ambassador Nebenzia's statement to the Security Council of 5 April 2022 that "not a single civilian suffered any violence" — and the MoD line that the images were a "hoax". The argument has moved from *whether* people were killed to *who* they were. That is a concession, not a defence.

A NOTE ON OUR OWN PRECISION

The wall is best described as "residents of the Bucha community killed during the occupation". It openly includes local defence volunteers — their plaques say so. The shorthand "509 civilians", used in some speeches, is the one loose thread this report pulls on. Precision costs nothing; the legal case never depended on it.

WHEN A DELEGATION CITES THIS REPORT

Do not debate the memorial. Redirect to the documented record and ask the one question the report cannot answer: why, in 21 pages about Bucha, is there not a single witness from Bucha?

- 01 **Anchor on UN findings.** OHCHR (7 Dec 2022) and the Commission of Inquiry are the only mandated bodies; both found war crimes.
- 03 **Turn the argument.** If the men were combatants, they were executed after capture — a war crime the report has just documented.

- 02 **Name the source.** The author is EU- and Canada-sanctioned for state propaganda; the "tribunal" reports to Russia's Investigative Committee.
- 04 **Note the shift.** From "hoax" to "they were soldiers" in four years: Moscow now accepts the deaths it once called staged.

THE SOURCE, AND FOUR YEARS OF SHIFTING DENIAL

THE "TRIBUNAL" THAT IS NOT ONE

PUBLISHER

"International Public Tribunal on the Crimes of Ukrainian Neo-Nazis" (Международный общественный трибунал). Established in 2022 at a conference convened by the **Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation** — a state consultative body. Its stated role is to collect material and pass it to the **Russian Investigative Committee**, i.e. to one party to the conflict. The cover of the report carries the logos of the Civic Chamber, the Russian Human Rights Commissioner, the "Centre for the History of the SMO" and the Foundation for the Study of Democracy.

CHAIR: MAXIM GRIGORIEV

Member of the Civic Chamber; director of the "Foundation for the Study of Democracy"; producer of Russian state-media content on Syria and Ukraine since 2014. **EU sanctions (2026)**: listed as "a key figure of Russian state propaganda" whose "mock tribunal" and publications are promoted by the Russian MFA to justify the invasion. **Canada (SEMA, Aug 2024)** and **Ukraine (NSDC)** also list him. The tribunal's "international" members (E. Bartlett, A. Korybko, E. Branson, D. Trifkovic and others) are long-standing promoters of Kremlin positions; none has war-crimes investigation experience.

METHOD, AS VISIBLE IN THE REPORT ITSELF

- **No primary evidence.** Every claim about a named person rests on Ukrainian open sources — obituaries, memorial websites, local news. The report proves only that Ukraine published this information itself.
- **No Bucha witnesses.** All 16 interviewees live in occupied Donbas towns (page 5).
- **No engagement with the record.** OHCHR, the UN Commission of Inquiry, Maxar imagery, the 234th Regiment phone evidence, the Irpin court verdicts: none is mentioned, let alone rebutted.
- **Conclusion by analogy.** The report states that Donbas testimony "allows one to conclude with good reason that this kind of situation also took place in Bucha" — an admission that it has no Bucha evidence.
- **Framing.** Title: "Heirs of Goebbels"; Ukrainian officials called "the Kyiv regime", units called "neo-Nazi terrorist structures". A legal analysis does not read like this.

WHY IT MATTERS AT THE UN

Material from this body is circulated by the Russian Mission as "evidence" in Security Council and Third Committee debates and quoted by friendly delegations. The appropriate response is not to argue with its content point by point in the chamber, but to name the source, its sanctions status and its mandate — and to restate the only findings that carry a UN mandate: OHCHR (7 Dec 2022) and the Commission of Inquiry (A/77/533; A/HRC/52/62).

FIVE VERSIONS IN FOUR YEARS

3 APR 2022 · MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

"A hoax." Bodies were "placed" after all Russian units "withdrew completely" on 30 March; the footage is "another provocation of the Kyiv regime".

5 APR 2022 · SECURITY COUNCIL

"Not a single civilian suffered." Ambassador Nebenzia: while Bucha was under Russian control, no civilian was subjected to any violence. Lavrov: a "fake attack" to derail talks.

APR-MAY 2022 · MFA, STATE TV

"Staged by British specialists." The bodies were "actors", or were brought from morgues; the SBU "cleaned" the town; the name "Bucha" was chosen because it sounds like "butcher".

2023-2024 · RUSSIAN COURTS

Speaking about Bucha becomes a crime. Streamer Anna Bazhutova: 5½ years for reading witness accounts aloud. Journalists Masha Gessen (8 years) and Mikhail Zygar (8½ years), in absentia, for "fakes" about Bucha.

2026 · THIS REPORT

"They were combatants." The report no longer claims the bodies were fake, placed or imported. It accepts that the people on the wall died in and around Bucha in March 2022 and argues about their status. Four years of "hoax" are abandoned without acknowledgement.

THE LOGIC THAT GIVES IT AWAY

A State that believed its own April 2022 account — nobody was killed, the scene was staged — would have no reason to spend 21 pages establishing that the dead were soldiers. The argument about *who* was killed only makes sense once you accept *that* they were killed, during the occupation, by the occupying force. The report is, in effect, Russia's first written acknowledgement of the Bucha deaths.

WHAT STAYED CONSTANT

Through every version: no Russian investigation of its own forces' conduct in Bucha; no access for the UN Commission of Inquiry to Russian records or personnel; no response to the ICC; a state decoration for the 64th Brigade (18 Apr 2022) and a promotion for the 234th Regiment's commander.

THIRTY NAMES. WHAT THE REPORT SAYS, WHAT THE RECORD SAYS.

The report challenges about 30 of the 509 names on Bucha's Wall of Remembrance. Every fact it cites comes from Ukrainian obituaries and memorial sites — information Ukraine published. Below, each name sorted by what the report's own claim actually establishes.

A · 3 Executed after capture Documented war crime. The report confirms their identity.	B · 8 Local defence volunteers, killed in the community Plaques openly state call signs and TDF service.	C · 18 Residents serving in the armed forces, killed in combat Listed on their home-town memorial, as in every country.	D · 1 Died of illness under occupation Unsourced; never in any UN count.
---	---	--	---

CAT.	NAME · PLAQUE DATE	WHAT THE REPORT CLAIMS	WHAT THIS ACTUALLY ESTABLISHES
A	Andrii Verbovyi · †04-03-2022	"A combatant from territorial defence passed off as an ordinary civilian."	One of eight men seized near a checkpoint on 4 March 2022, searched, stripped of jackets and shoes, marched to 144 Yablunska St (base of the 234th Air Assault Regiment) and shot. Survivor: Ivan Skyba. Documented by NYT (19 May 2022), investigated by OHCHR and Ukrainian prosecutors. Killing a captured fighter is murder (Common Art. 3; Rome Statute 8(2)(c)(i)).
A	Denys Rudenko · †04-03-2022	Shown on the report's plaque photo (p. 3) among the "soldiers".	Same group, same courtyard, same day. The plaque the report photographs carries the date of the execution. The report presents as proof of fraud a man whose murder is on video evidence.
A	Sviatoslav Turovskyi	"A major of the State Protection Department — cannot be counted a civilian."	Same group of eight. He was unarmed and in custody when killed. His rank is irrelevant to the crime; it is relevant only to Russia's own admission that it executed a prisoner.
B	Oleksandr Blahodatnyi "Mamont" · †08-03-2022	"A 'volunteer warrior', in fact a TDF unit commander."	The Vorzel plaque the report itself photographs reads "commander of a territorial defence unit, call sign Mamont". Nothing is hidden. A town honouring a resident who died defending it is not falsification.
B	Serhii Smyrnov "Hap" · †05-03-2022	"A TDF volunteer, wounded in Irpin."	The report quotes a Bucha-community news item (24 Apr 2024) describing his service in full. Same point: public, not concealed.
B	Anatolii Korytko	"Went into battle with a TDF 'Azov-Kyiv' group; machine-gunner."	Source: Ukrainian media. Resident of the community, killed defending Kyiv region. Listed as such.
B	Vitalii Fesiuk · †27-02-2022	"A scout-spotter; his wife says he was shot while on a task."	The report quotes his widow on memorial.ua — a public Ukrainian memorial site. Killed on the first day of the assault on Bucha. Resident; defender; listed.
B	Vitalii Kryvenko	"His wife says: 'my husband was a soldier, he defended Bucha and Irpin'."	Quoted from irpinmemory.org, a public Ukrainian site. Killed on Kyievo-Myrotska St in Bucha. Nothing concealed.
B	Mykhailo Boichenko	"241st TDF Brigade; on checkpoint duty near Zabuchchia; killed in a vehicle."	Resident, TDF, killed in the community. Listed.
B	Oleksandr Bondar · †March 2022	"TDF participant; made sorties and passed information; shrapnel wounds on 7 March — from Ukrainian fire."	The claim that the shrapnel was Ukrainian is the report's assertion, unsupported by any document. Resident, TDF, killed during the occupation. Listed.
B	Oleksandr Sharava · †27-02-2022	"A 43-year-old resident who prepared Molotov cocktails and went to meet a column; lost protection under IHL."	A resident of Bucha, 43, killed on day one. Whether he was targetable at the moment of death is a legal question; whether he belongs on his town's memorial is not. The report's own source is a Ukrainian article telling his story openly.
C	Ruslan Bilous · †27-02-2022 Roman Dovhaliuk	"A military pilot of the 7th Tactical Aviation Brigade and his crew member; aircraft shot down near Berezivka."	Two airmen from the community killed in action defending Kyiv on 27 February. Every village memorial in Europe lists its fallen servicemen beside its civilian dead. Listing them is remembrance, not evidence tampering.
C	Oleh Tsymbala · †20-03-2022 Vadym Smetanskyi · Ihor Kokodyniak (†Vorzel)	"80th Air Assault Brigade servicemen; Kokodyniak died in Vorzel, not Bucha."	Vorzel is part of the Bucha community. Three paratroopers from the community killed in the defence of the Kyiv approaches. Listed on their home memorial.
C	Volodymyr Lohvynenko · Oleksandr Yevdokymenko · Oleksandr Parkhomenko (†13-03-2022)	"72nd Mechanised Brigade; killed near Moshchun and Huta-Mezhyhirska, not in Bucha."	Moshchun is 12 km from Bucha, the decisive battle for Kyiv. Residents of the community who fell there are commemorated at home. The report confuses a memorial's catchment with a crime scene.
C	Ihor Rul · Mykola Syvozdrav "Budivelnik" · Tenhiz Lanskyi "Did" (†04-03-2022) · Oleksandr Lytkin	"Defence Intelligence sergeant (†Kopyliv); mortar battery junior sergeant mobilised 25 Feb (†Zdvyzhivka); 30th Brigade grenadier; Irpin checkpoint defender."	Four servicemen from the community, three of them mobilised or volunteers in the first days of the invasion, killed within 20 km of home. Memorial inclusion is normal; the report's "exposure" repeats their Ukrainian obituaries.
C	Yevhen Petrash "Eugene" (†02-03-2022) · Volodymyr Bisaha "Mumu-Khoryv" · Andrii Vaskevych "Strilok" · Illia Khrenov · Bohdan Knyshchuk	"Members of the 'terrorist neo-Nazi structure Azov' — Azov SSO Kyiv, Azov TDF company, "3rd Assault Brigade".	In March 2022 Azov units were part of Ukraine's National Guard and TDF — lawful armed forces. Russia's domestic "terrorist" label (Supreme Court, Aug 2022) has no standing in international law. The "3rd Assault Brigade" did not exist until 2023 — a man killed in March 2022 could not have served in it; the report is careless even with its own labels.
C	Oleksii Telizhenko (SBU colonel) · Serhii Bulaienko (military commissariat guard company commander) · Vladyslav Verhynskyi (senior soldier)	"Not non-combatants."	Bulaienko, by the report's own account, was killed by shelling in Bucha. Officers and servicemen who lived in the community and died in its defence are listed with everyone else. No one claimed otherwise.
D	Halyna Semeniuk, 68	"Died of cancer; her name is on the memorial of 'murdered civilians'."	No source, document or witness is given. A town memorial to residents who died during a 33-day occupation without medical care may well include her. OHCHR's 73 are killings only. This single unsourced case is the report's entire evidence for "passing off the sick as murdered".

WHAT THIRTY NAMES ADD UP TO

Not one of the thirty is a case where Ukraine presented a combat death as an execution. Three are executions Russia now confirms. The rest are residents of a community of 14 settlements who died in its defence and are commemorated at home with their call signs and units on the plaques. The report's evidence that Ukraine "falsified" Bucha is a stack of Ukrainian obituaries — which is to say, the evidence that Ukraine hid nothing. Meanwhile OHCHR's 73 named civilian victims — 54 men, 16 women, 2 boys, 1 girl — are not mentioned once.

THE LAW THE REPORT CITES CONDEMNS THE CONDUCT IT DEFENDS

The report invokes Article 51(3) of Additional Protocol I and an ICRC commentary on direct participation in hostilities. Both are quoted accurately. Neither says what the report needs them to say.

THREE RULES THE REPORT LEAVES OUT

1 · "FOR SUCH TIME AS" — PROTECTION IS SUSPENDED, NOT FORFEITED

AP I art. 51(3) removes civilian protection only "*for such time as*" a person takes a direct part in hostilities. A resident who made Molotov cocktails on 27 February is a lawful target at that moment and a protected civilian the next morning. Past participation does not license later killing. The report treats a one-off act as a permanent loss of protection; the Protocol says the opposite.

2 · A COMBATANT IN CUSTODY IS *HORS DE COMBAT*

Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions protects "members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed hors de combat by ... detention"; it prohibits "murder of all kinds" against them, "at any time and in any place whatsoever". Geneva Convention III art. 13 and AP I art. 41 say the same. Rome Statute art. 8(2)(c)(i) makes it a war crime. **The report's strongest argument — "they were soldiers" — is a confession when applied to men shot after capture.**

3 · STATUS IS DECIDED CASE BY CASE — AND OHCHR DID EXACTLY THAT

In case of doubt a person is presumed civilian (AP I art. 50(1)). OHCHR applied that standard individually: its 73 Bucha victims are those whose civilian status it could establish; cases it could not verify went into a separate "under corroboration" category (105). The report does not challenge a single one of those 73. It challenges a memorial that was never part of the legal record.

THE REPORT'S OWN ICRC QUOTATION

On p. 12 the report quotes the ICRC: a civilian who directly participates "loses immunity and becomes a legitimate target" only *during* that participation — and "nothing prevents the authorities, catching him in the act or arresting him later, from applying repressive or punitive security measures". **That is the rule:** arrest and prosecute. The eight men at 144 Yablunska St were arrested. They were not prosecuted. They were made to kneel and shot.

ON "AZOV" AND "TERRORISTS"

A State's domestic designation of an enemy unit does not alter its status under the Geneva Conventions. Azov formations in 2022 were integrated in Ukraine's National Guard and TDF, under responsible command, wearing distinctive insignia — the AP I art. 43 definition of armed forces. Their members are combatants, entitled to POW status on capture. Russia's August 2022 Supreme Court ruling is not a licence to execute them, and no international body has accepted it as one.

144 YABLUNSKA STREET

THE CASE THE REPORT WALKS INTO

4 March 2022, morning. Russian paratroopers of the 234th Air Assault Regiment retake the Yablunska Street checkpoint. A group of territorial-defence volunteers and residents shelters in a nearby house.

Capture. Soldiers find them, drive them out at gunpoint, search them for tattoos, force them to remove jackets and shoes, and march them to the regiment's base at No. 144.

Execution. In the courtyard the prisoners are forced to kneel, shirts pulled over their heads. Vitalii Karpenko is shot first. Ivan Skyba, a 43-year-old builder, is shot in the side, falls, and survives beneath the bodies.

The dead. Anatolii Prykhodko, Andrii Matviichuk, Andrii Verbovyi, Denys Rudenko, Andrii Dvornikov, Sviatoslav Turovskyi, Valerii Kotenko, Vitalii Karpenko. Their bodies lay in the yard for almost a month; Maxar imagery shows them; seven neighbours held in a separate group witnessed the events.

The unit. Security-camera footage shows BMD-2/3/4 vehicles — used almost exclusively by Russian Airborne Forces — in front of No. 144. Phone records and call signs tie the regiment and its commander, Lt Col Artyom Gorodilov, to the site.

THREE OF THEM ARE IN THE REPORT

Verbovyi (p. 7), Turovskyi (p. 8) and Rudenko (plaque photo, p. 3) are presented as proof that the wall lists "soldiers, not civilians". The report thereby confirms, from Moscow, the identity of three men whose execution after capture is among the best-documented single incidents of the war. Whatever their status at the checkpoint, at No. 144 they were prisoners. The report has no answer to that, because it does not mention it.

WHO THE UN SAYS WAS KILLED

OHCHR, Bucha, 4–30 March 2022: **73 civilians** — 54 men, 16 women, 2 boys, 1 girl — documented individually. Across the three regions: 57 of 100 detailed cases were summary executions, 30 of them of people in detention; 88% of execution victims were men and boys, selected after "security checks". The report's claim that the dead were combatants does not explain 16 women and three children, bound hands, or basement executions.

ONE SENTENCE FOR THE CHAMBER

"The Russian Federation now tells this Council that the men it killed in Bucha were soldiers. The Geneva Conventions have a word for a soldier who has been disarmed, searched and marched to a courtyard: a prisoner. Killing a prisoner is a war crime in every version of Russia's story."

SIXTEEN WITNESSES TO "STAGINGS". NONE OF THEM WAS IN BUCHA.

Nine of the report's 21 pages are interviews meant to prove that Ukraine kills its own people for the cameras — and therefore "did so in Bucha too". Here is who they are, where they were interviewed, and what each account can and cannot establish.

0 / 16

from Bucha, Kyiv region, or anywhere Russian forces held in March 2022 near Kyiv

16 / 16

interviewed in towns under Russian military occupation, with no independent access

0

dated incidents, named journalists or outlets, or documents that could be checked

1

logical step from Donbas hearsay to Bucha: "by analogy" (p. 12)

#	WITNESS (AS NAMED)	TOWN · OCCUPIED SINCE	WHAT THEY SAY	WHAT IT CAN ESTABLISH
1	Yevgeny Ostrikov	Toretsk (Dzerzhinsk) · Aug 2025	A shell hit the House of Culture "obviously from the Ukrainian side"; police "persuaded" a woman to change her account; press "always arrives" before shelling.	Undated; no incident identifiable. Personal inference about shell direction. Nothing about Bucha.
2	Yevgeny Tarasenko	Vuhledar · Oct 2024	Saw a foreign journalist with a Ukrainian soldier; heard "make some noise here" on a radio; then shots.	One anonymous anecdote, 2022, no date or location. Not Bucha.
3	Vasily Protsenko	Myrnohrad (Dymytriv) · 2025–26	A Ukrainian drone struck a church in autumn 2024; press blamed Russian artillery; the pastor had refused to hand the church to the army.	Alleged event of 2024, 700 km from Bucha, two and a half years later. Unverifiable.
4	Nikolai Dudukin	Lysychansk · Jul 2022	A strike on a water queue killed three, then twelve; press arrived in five minutes; "Ukrainians kill to show Europe".	Likely refers to the Lysychansk water-queue strike of spring 2022 — attributed by OHCHR and others to Russian fire. No date given. Not Bucha.
5	Nina Bannykh	Toretsk · Aug 2025	Journalists "stepped aside" and Ukrainian forces shelled people; also an incident "in summer 2021"; a substation shelled by "Ukrainian and Polish soldiers".	Mixes 2021 (pre-invasion) with 2022–25; "Polish soldiers" is a standard propaganda motif. Not Bucha.
6	Polina Zamora	Avdiivka · Feb 2024	Shelling "always" coincides with journalists; "Zelensky was due to visit"; a woman died in a bus.	Belief, not observation; no date. Not Bucha.
7	Svetlana Panova	Vuhledar · Oct 2024	People sent to collect water were shelled "by the Ukrainian army"; a chaplain brought bread and a drone struck.	No date; shell attribution by assumption. Not Bucha.
8	Aleksandr Zamora	Avdiivka · Feb 2024	Saw Grad tail fins "from the Ukrainian side"; a tank fired nine rounds into the town and left; journalists blamed the DNR.	Avdiivka was a front-line town shelled daily by both sides for ten years; attribution by a resident is not forensic evidence. Not Bucha.
9	Yevgeny Lantukh	Avdiivka · Feb 2024	"Before the Russian troops came", a Ukrainian tank fired and "immediately" a return strike came, filmed; journalists appeared within three minutes.	Describes Ukrainian fire and a Russian return strike — i.e. the ordinary dynamic of a front line. Not Bucha.
10	Irina Lydina	Vuhledar · Oct 2024	A strike near the "Vektor" centre; human remains; Ukrainian reporters arrived "in five minutes" and were smiling.	No date; emotional account of a strike whose origin she does not claim to know. Not Bucha.
11	Natalya Zadorozhnaya	Vuhledar · Oct 2024	"Ukraine fired at us"; foreign journalists "aren't interested" in the truth.	Opinion. Not Bucha.
12	Yelena Gritsai	Kurakhove · Dec 2024	Wounded on 3 March 2024 in the "Mandarin" shop; press arrived in two minutes; a Ukrainian soldier once warned staff to hide.	The only dated incident — Kurakhove, March 2024, under daily Russian bombardment. Her account does not say who fired. Not Bucha.
13	Igor Karachentsev	Avdiivka · Feb 2024	Ukrainian units stood near the coke plant; "whenever journalists came, the settlement was shelled, 100%".	Correlation asserted as cause. Not Bucha.
14	Viktor Gritsai	Kurakhove · Dec 2024	"Ukrainians hit us with mortars and drones since 2022"; press filmed the damage afterwards.	Attribution by ear. Not Bucha.
15	Vera Makhova	Vuhledar · Oct 2024	Estonian journalists asked about Russian cruelty; she felt she could not speak freely; online videos were "edited".	Describes feeling constrained under Ukrainian control — while being interviewed under Russian control. Not Bucha.
16	Yuri Burik	Avdiivka · Feb 2024	Saw a Ukrainian tank fire toward Yasynuvata; "phosphorus bombs from the west" in spring 2022; shelling follows journalists.	Yasynuvata was Russian-held; a tank firing at it is a lawful act of war. Not Bucha.

PATTERN 1 · WRONG WAR, WRONG PLACE, WRONG YEARS

Bucha, March 2022, 33 days of occupation, 600+ km away. The testimonies concern Donbas front-line towns between 2021 and 2024. None of these people could have seen anything relevant to Bucha, and none claims to.

PATTERN 2 · TESTIMONY UNDER OCCUPATION

Every interview was recorded in a town held by the Russian army, by a body that reports to the Russian Investigative Committee. Witness 15 complains she could not speak freely under Ukrainian control — the report does not notice the irony. No court, and no UN mechanism, treats such statements as evidence.

PATTERN 3 · "SHELLING FOLLOWS JOURNALISTS"

Twelve of sixteen repeat one template: press arrives, then a strike. Journalists go where shelling is; that is why they are there. Reversing the sequence into intent requires evidence of who fired — which no witness offers and the report does not seek.

WHERE THE REAL BUCHA WITNESSES ARE

OHCHR's monitoring mission interviewed survivors and relatives in Bucha itself after the withdrawal; the UN Commission of Inquiry visited in June 2022 and took testimony; Ukrainian prosecutors have identified over 2,500 Russian servicemen present in the town and questioned hundreds of residents; Ivan Skyba, who survived the courtyard at No. 144, has testified on record. If the "tribunal" wanted Bucha witnesses, they were available — to anyone willing to hear them.

HOW TO ANSWER IT — IN THE CHAMBER, IN THE CORRIDOR, IN WRITING

The report is built to pull the discussion onto a memorial wall and away from the documented record. Every answer below does the reverse.

FIVE LINES, IN ORDER OF USE

1

NAME THE SOURCE BEFORE THE CONTENT

"The document circulated by the Russian delegation is produced by a body created by Russia's Civic Chamber, chaired by a person sanctioned by the European Union as a key figure of Russian state propaganda, and reporting to the Russian Investigative Committee. It is not an investigation. It is a party's brief."

2

RETURN TO THE MANDATED RECORD

"The findings on Bucha that this Organization recognises are those of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (7 December 2022) and of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry (A/77/533). Both found summary executions of civilians by Russian forces. Neither has been challenged by the Russian Federation on the facts — including in this document, which does not mention them."

3

TURN THE COMBATANT ARGUMENT

"The Russian Federation now says that some of those killed in Bucha were soldiers. Three of the men it names were disarmed, searched and marched to the base of the 234th Air Assault Regiment before they were shot. The Geneva Conventions call such a person a prisoner. Russia has just confirmed, in its own publication, the identity of prisoners its forces executed."

4

MARK THE SHIFT

"In April 2022 this Council was told that not a single civilian suffered in Bucha and that the images were a hoax. In 2026 we are told the dead were soldiers. We note that the Russian Federation has moved from denying the deaths to explaining them. We invite it to take the remaining step: to cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry and the International Criminal Court."

5

ASK THE ONE QUESTION

"The document presents sixteen witnesses to what it calls Ukrainian stagings. All sixteen were interviewed in towns under Russian military occupation. Not one is from Bucha. Not one mentions Bucha. We ask the Russian delegation: in twenty-one pages about Bucha, where are the witnesses from Bucha?"

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Do not argue the status of individual names from the wall in the chamber; it concedes the frame.
- Do not call the report "Nazi propaganda" in reply to its "Goebbels" title; name its sanctions status instead — a fact, not an epithet.
- Do not cite the 509 figure as "civilians". Say "residents of the Bucha community killed during the occupation". The legal figures are OHCHR's and the Prosecutor General's.
- Do not let the Donbas testimonies pass unremarked as "whataboutism" — say plainly that they are not about Bucha and were taken under occupation.

THE DOSSIER IN ONE PARAGRAPH

A sanctioned propagandist's "tribunal" has produced 21 pages that never mention the UN's findings, use Ukrainian obituaries as their only sources, confirm the identity of three prisoners Russian paratroopers executed, rely on sixteen witnesses from occupied Donbas who say nothing about Bucha, and abandon — without saying so — four years of claims that nothing happened. It should be answered once, briefly, by name, and then set aside in favour of the record.