

8

Russian official statements on Oleshky, 21 Sep – 16 Oct 2026 C

Kremlin, MFA, Permanent Mission to the UN, occupation authorities

0

of them propose the evacuation, corridor or ceasefire the UN, the ICRC and the Holy See asked for C

Checked against each text

358

residents on the evacuation list Ukraine agreed with the ICRC — not approved by Russia B

Ombudsman of Ukraine, 16 Sep and 8 Oct 2026

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food deliveries by road after 26 May A

UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission, 25 Jun 2026

BOTTOM LINE

The line has moved. In May Russia's installed governor called talk of a catastrophe "the height of hypocrisy". In September the Kremlin called the situation "critical". In October the Permanent Representative called it "a tragedy". Each step concedes the last.

The blame does not fit the map. Russia holds Oleshky and the roads into it. Under the Fourth Geneva Convention the duty to feed the population, and to accept relief, is the occupier's.

What Russia does not say. No statement proposes an evacuation, a corridor or a local ceasefire — the three things the UN monitoring mission, the ICRC and Pope Leo XIV have asked for.

Fair to say. Ukrainian drones are active over the roads; the UN has not attributed individual attacks, and HRW found indications that both sides use drones and mines there. That does not move the occupier's duty.

THE EIGHT STATEMENTS

Dmitry Peskov · Kremlin · 21 Sep	“The Kyiv regime is literally doing everything to obstruct these deliveries... The situation is indeed critical.”	The town is Russian-held
Rodion Miroshnik · MFA · 27 Sep	“For more than a year the Armed Forces of Ukraine have been trying to create an artificial blockade of civilians.”	Contradicted by monitors
Maria Zakharova · MFA · 30 Sep	“They are trying to make a new Bucha out of this story — "Bucha 2.0".”	Pre-emptive framing
Vladimir Saldo · occupation head · 7 Oct	“The humanitarian cargo was destroyed. Thank God, the drivers were saved.”	Unverified
Yana Lantratova · Russian ombudsman · 10 Oct	“The main cause of the humanitarian crisis is the blockade deliberately imposed by the Ukrainian armed forces.”	Contradicted by the evacuation record
Rodion Miroshnik · MFA · 15 Oct	“In reality Russian troops are protecting and clearing the way out for civilians... what volunteers can bring, they bring by hand.”	Contradicted
Vassily Nebenzia · UN · 14 Oct	“Indeed, Alyoshki is just one example... the tragedy in Alyoshki.”	A tragedy with no cause named
Kremlin readout · Putin–Pope Leo XIV · 16 Oct	“Exhaustive explanations were given of the Kyiv regime's responsibility for the difficult humanitarian situation in the Russian city of Alyoshki.”	What the readout leaves out

WHAT WE ASK

Press Russia to accept a local ceasefire and an ICRC-facilitated evacuation of Oleshky now · relief by road under art. 59 of the Fourth Geneva Convention · access for the UN monitoring mission and the ICRC · when Russia says "Russian city", answer with A/RES/ES-11/4 · put the evacuation question to the Russian delegation on the record.

FROM "HYPOCRISY" TO "TRAGEDY"

Seven speakers in four weeks, from the Kremlin to the Security Council. The line did not hold: each statement concedes more than the one before it. What never appears is a proposal to let people out.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB

VERIFIED RECORD

OCT 2026

THE SPEAKERS		
Dmitry Peskov	Kremlin press secretary	21 Sep · press call
Rodion Miroshnik	MFA ambassador-at-large	27 Sep · 6, 14, 15 Oct
Maria Zakharova	MFA spokeswoman	30 Sep · MFA briefing
Vladimir Saldo	Russian-installed head of Kherson region	7 Oct · briefing
Yana Lantratova	Russian human rights commissioner	10 Oct · via TASS
Vassily Nebenzia	Permanent Representative to the UN	14 Oct · Arria-formula meeting
Kremlin readout	Putin–Pope Leo XIV call	16 Oct · kremlin.ru

NARRATIVE SHIFT

May 2026

DENIAL

"The height of hypocrisy" — Saldo on talk of a catastrophe; Russia supplies the town "daily".

21 Sep

CRISIS ADMITTED, BLAME SHIFTED

"The situation is indeed critical" — Peskov; Kyiv "does everything to obstruct deliveries".

30 Sep

CATASTROPHE ADMITTED, PRE-EMPTIVE FRAMING

"A new Bucha... Bucha 2.0" — Zakharova; a "humanitarian catastrophe" created by Kyiv.

7-15 Oct

SUPPLY FAILURE ADMITTED

Aid "destroyed" (Saldo); "carried by hand" (Miroshnik); Ukraine creating "an artificial famine".

14-16 Oct

TRAGEDY ADMITTED; ANNEXATION ASSERTED

"The tragedy in Alyoshki" (Nebenzia); "difficult humanitarian situation in the Russian city of Alyoshki" (Kremlin).

The Bucha sequence of 2022–2026 ("hoax" → "staged" → "they were combatants") is the template: a line that moves from "it did not happen" to "it happened, but it was them" has conceded the fact.

WHAT NO STATEMENT CONTAINS

No proposal of an evacuation, a humanitarian corridor or a local ceasefire — although the UN monitoring mission (25 Jun), the ICRC (via Ukraine's Ombudsman), the Council of Europe Commissioner (25 Sep) and Pope Leo XIV (16 Oct) have all asked for one.

No figure for food Russia has delivered by road since May. The only Russian figure is about 2 t a month "carried by hand" (Miroshnik, 15 Oct).

No reply to Ukraine's evacuation list of 358 people agreed with the ICRC.

Sources: Kremlin: Peskov, 21 Sep 2026 (gazeta.press; EADaily); readout of the Putin–Pope Leo XIV call, 16 Oct 2026 (kremlin.ru/events/president/news/81008) · MFA: Zakharova, 30 Sep (Izvestia, Vzglyad); Miroshnik, 27 Sep (360.ru), 6 Oct (TASS), 15 Oct (NEWS.ru) · V. Saldo, 7 Oct (Izvestia) · Y. Lantratova, 10 Oct (TASS) · Russian Mission to the UN, 14 Oct 2026 (russiaun.ru/en/news/514102026) · Holy See, 16 Oct 2026 · UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission, 25 Jun 2026 · Human Rights Watch, 9 Jul 2026 · OSCE/ODIHR, 15 Jul 2026 · ISW, 9 Jul and 27 Sep 2026 · Ombudsman of Ukraine, 16 Sep, 3 and 8 Oct 2026 · Kherson regional military administration · Interior Ministry of Ukraine, 4 Oct 2026 · A/RES/ES-11/4 · Fourth Geneva Convention; Rome Statute.



CLAIM, RECORD, CONCESSION (1-4)

Each statement as made, the record it runs into, and what it concedes. Translations from Russian are the Hub's; originals are linked in the sources.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
OCT 2026

CLAIM 1 · DMITRY PESKOV · KREMLIN · 21 SEP

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

Press call; gazeta.press, EADaily (translated)

THE TOWN IS RUSSIAN-HELD

Russia has occupied Oleshky since 24 Feb 2022 and controls every road into it. The UN recorded no food delivery after 26 May and reminded Russia, as occupying power, of its duty to ensure food and medical supplies.

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

CLAIM 2 · RODION MIROSHNIK · MFA · 27 SEP

"For more than a year the Armed Forces of Ukraine have been trying to create an artificial blockade of civilians."

Telegram, via 360.ru (translated)

CONTRADICTED BY MONITORS

ISW assessed in July that Russia is "effectively blockading" the town; OSCE/ODIHR received accounts of Russian forces preventing residents from leaving. Exit is possible only through Russian checkpoints with Russian documents (HRW).

What the claim concedes: That civilians are under blockade.

CLAIM 3 · MARIA ZAKHAROVA · MFA · 30 SEP

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

MFA briefing; Izvestia, Vzglyad (translated)

PRE-EMPTIVE FRAMING

The Bucha denial of 2022 ("not a single civilian suffered") was abandoned by Russia itself in 2026. Calling Oleshky "Bucha 2.0" in advance attributes a catastrophe Moscow had denied four months earlier.

What the claim concedes: That a humanitarian catastrophe exists.

CLAIM 4 · VLADIMIR SALDO · OCCUPATION HEAD · 7 OCT

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

Briefing; Izvestia (iz.ru/en)

UNVERIFIED

No independent verification; Russia's Ministry of Defence did not comment. HRW found credible indications that Ukrainian drones and mines are also used on roads around the town; responsibility for individual strikes is open. Russia has not accepted the corridor or ceasefire that would protect convoys.

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

Sources: Kremlin: Peskov, 21 Sep 2026 (gazeta.press; EADaily); readout of the Putin–Pope Leo XIV call, 16 Oct 2026 (kremlin.ru/events/president/news/81008) · MFA: Zakharova, 30 Sep (Izvestia, Vzglyad); Mirosnik, 27 Sep (360.ru), 6 Oct (TASS), 15 Oct (NEWS.ru) · V. Saldo, 7 Oct (Izvestia) · Y. Lantratova, 10 Oct (TASS) · Russian Mission to the UN, 14 Oct 2026 (russiaun.ru/en/news/514102026) · Holy See, 16 Oct 2026 · UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission, 25 Jun 2026 · Human Rights Watch, 9 Jul 2026 · OSCE/ODIHR, 15 Jul 2026 · ISW, 9 Jul and 27 Sep 2026 · Ombudsman of Ukraine, 16 Sep, 3 and 8 Oct 2026 · Kherson regional military administration · Interior Ministry of Ukraine, 4 Oct 2026 · A/RES/ES-11/4 · Fourth Geneva Convention; Rome Statute.

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CLAIM, RECORD, CONCESSION (5-8)

Each statement as made, the record it runs into, and what it concedes. Translations from Russian are the Hub's; originals are linked in the sources.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
OCT 2026

CLAIM 5 · YANA LANTRATOVA · RUSSIAN OMBUDSMAN · 10 OCT

“The main cause of the humanitarian crisis is the blockade deliberately imposed by the Ukrainian armed forces.”

TASS

CONTRADICTED BY THE EVACUATION RECORD

Ukraine agreed an evacuation list of 358 people and procedures with the ICRC; Russia has given no security guarantees (Ombudsman, 16 Sep, 8 Oct). The ombudsman channel returned 5 people in June, then stalled.

What the claim concedes: That outside negotiation — including a channel to the US — is needed to supply a town Russia holds.

CLAIM 6 · RODION MIROSHNIK · MFA · 15 OCT

“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)

CONTRADICTED

People leave on foot over 20–25 km of mined road under drones, or via Russia and Belarus with Russian documents, which exposes men to conscription (HRW). Ukraine's drones delivered 8–10 t in two nights; Miroshnik puts Russian supplies at about 2 t a month.

What the claim concedes: No road deliveries reach the town.

CLAIM 7 · VASSILY NEBENZIA · UN · 14 OCT

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

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

A TRAGEDY WITH NO CAUSE NAMED

The statement names no party responsible and proposes no evacuation, corridor or ceasefire. Miroshnik, at the same meeting, said there are no troops in the town; HRW, ISW and the Kherson administration report troops there.

What the claim concedes: That Oleshky is “a tragedy”.

CLAIM 8 · KREMLIN READOUT · PUTIN-POPE LEO XIV · 16 OCT

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

kremlin.ru (translated)

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 supports “supplies” and “security” — not evacuation, not a ceasefire. “Russian city”: the General Assembly declared the annexation invalid (A/RES/ES-11/4).

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

FAIR TO SAY

Ukrainian drones operate over the roads around Oleshky. The UN could not establish responsibility for individual attacks; HRW 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.

Russian incident figures (strike counts, the 7 Oct convoy, ambulances destroyed) and Ukrainian claims (drones shot down, residents detained for taking aid) are both unverified. This fact-check relies on neither.

Sources: Kremlin: Peskov, 21 Sep 2026 (gazeta.press; EADaily); readout of the Putin–Pope Leo XIV call, 16 Oct 2026 (kremlin.ru/events/president/news/81008) · MFA: Zakharova, 30 Sep (Izvestia, Vzglyad); Miroshnik, 27 Sep (360.ru), 6 Oct (TASS), 15 Oct (NEWS.ru) · V. Saldo, 7 Oct (Izvestia) · Y. Lantratova, 10 Oct (TASS) · Russian Mission to the UN, 14 Oct 2026 (russiaun.ru/en/news/514102026) · Holy See, 16 Oct 2026 · UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission, 25 Jun 2026 · Human Rights Watch, 9 Jul 2026 · OSCE/ODIHR, 15 Jul 2026 · ISW, 9 Jul and 27 Sep 2026 · Ombudsman of Ukraine, 16 Sep, 3 and 8 Oct 2026 · Kherson regional military administration · Interior Ministry of Ukraine, 4 Oct 2026 · A/RES/ES-11/4 · Fourth Geneva Convention; Rome Statute.



AN OCCUPIER MUST FEED THE PEOPLE IT HOLDS

Four facts no Russian statement disputes, the rules that decide who is responsible, five sentences for the chamber and four answers for the questions partners will ask.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
OCT 2026

THE RECORD

Who controls Oleshky. Russian forces since 24 Feb 2022 (all sources, incl. Russia's own: "Russian city"). The front line runs along the Dnipro; every road into the town is behind Russian lines.

Food. Last delivery by road 26 May (UN monitoring mission; city administration). Since late September, Ukrainian drone drops: ~4 t on 26–27 Sep, ~4–6 t on 3–4 Oct (sources differ).

Evacuation. 32 people left during a three-day easing in May; ~180 in total through ad hoc arrangements (HRMMU). Since then: an ICRC-ready plan and a list of 358 people, no Russian security guarantees.

Casualties. At least 29 killed and 54 injured in Oleshky and Hola Prystan in 2026, mostly by short-range drones (HRMMU, 25 Jun) — responsibility for individual attacks not established.

THE LAW

Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 55: the occupying power must ensure food and medical supplies "to the fullest extent of the means available". **Art. 59:** if the population is inadequately supplied, it "shall agree to relief schemes".

Rome Statute, art. 8(2)(b)(xxv): starving civilians as a method of warfare, "including wilfully impeding relief supplies" — a war crime. No court or UN body has yet applied it to Oleshky; that is a position, not a finding.

Tu quoque is no defence. Whatever Ukrainian drones do on the roads, the occupier's duty to supply and to accept relief stands — and is what Russia's statements leave out.

FIVE LINES

- "Russia has held Oleshky and every road into it since February 2022. A town cannot be blockaded by the army on the other side of the river."
- "Moscow's own words: 'critical' in September, 'a catastrophe' and 'a tragedy' in October. The occupier admits the crisis; the law says it must feed the town."
- "Ukraine and the ICRC have a list of 358 people and a plan. One signature is missing: Russia's security guarantee."
- "Pope Leo asked for a ceasefire and a safe evacuation. The Kremlin readout mentions neither."
- "Ask the Russian delegation one question: will you accept an ICRC-facilitated evacuation of Oleshky this week?"

Q&A

"Ukrainian drones are killing people on the roads — isn't Ukraine to blame?"	The UN has not attributed individual attacks, and we say so. Both sides use drones there. But the duty to supply an occupied town and to accept relief rests on the occupier — and Russia has not accepted the ceasefire that would protect the roads.
"Russia says Ukraine blocks evacuation."	Ukraine has proposed an ICRC-facilitated evacuation since May and agreed a list of 358 people. The Ombudsman says Russia has not given security guarantees. If Russia accepts, it can start tomorrow.
"Russia says it delivers aid."	By Russia's own account about 2 t a month, "carried by hand". The UN recorded no delivery by road after 26 May.
"Why not just let people leave through Crimea?"	That route requires Russian documents and filtration; HRW notes it exposes men to conscription, itself a war crime. Evacuation must be voluntary and in a direction of the person's choice.

WHAT WE ASK

Press Russia to accept a local ceasefire and an ICRC-facilitated evacuation of Oleshky now · relief by road under art. 59 of the Fourth Geneva Convention · access for the UN monitoring mission and the ICRC · when Russia says "Russian city", answer with A/RES/ES-11/4 · put the evacuation question to the Russian delegation on the record. · Full context: Case file 14 — Oleshky.

Sources: Kremlin: Peskov, 21 Sep 2026 (gazeta.press; EADaily); readout of the Putin–Pope Leo XIV call, 16 Oct 2026 (kremlin.ru/events/president/news/81008) · MFA: Zakharova, 30 Sep (Izvestia, Vzglyad); Miroshnik, 27 Sep (360.ru), 6 Oct (TASS), 15 Oct (NEWS.ru) · V. Saldo, 7 Oct (Izvestia) · Y. Lantratova, 10 Oct (TASS) · Russian Mission to the UN, 14 Oct 2026 (russiaun.ru/en/news/514102026) · Holy See, 16 Oct 2026 · UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission, 25 Jun 2026 · Human Rights Watch, 9 Jul 2026 · OSCE/ODIHR, 15 Jul 2026 · ISW, 9 Jul and 27 Sep 2026 · Ombudsman of Ukraine, 16 Sep, 3 and 8 Oct 2026 · Kherson regional military administration · Interior Ministry of Ukraine, 4 Oct 2026 · A/RES/ES-11/4 · Fourth Geneva Convention; Rome Statute.

