

Not HIMARS

OHCHR's conclusion on the cause of the explosions, after more than 50 witness interviews and over 70 images [A](#)

OHCHR 36th periodic report, 4 Oct 2023, para. 83; High Commissioner Türk, 25 Jul 2023

≥ 51 · ≥ 139

Ukrainian prisoners of war killed · injured (at least) in Russian custody, night of 28–29 Jul 2022 — all men [A](#)

OHCHR report of 4 Oct 2023, para. 10

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visits to the site by the UN fact-finding mission Russia had asked for: established 3 Aug 2022, disbanded 5 Jan 2023 [A](#)

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

8 Aug 2022

last published information on Russia's own criminal case — opened against Ukraine before any expert analysis [A](#)

OHCHR, 4 Oct 2023, para. 89

BOTTOM LINE

The weapon Russia named is the one the UN excluded. Russia's Ministry of Defence announced a HIMARS strike on the morning of 29 July 2022, before any inspection. OHCHR, after interviewing more than 50 witnesses and examining over 70 images, concluded that the explosions "were not caused by HIMARS rockets" and that the damage was consistent with ordnance travelling east to west (4 Oct 2023, paras. 83–84).

Russia invited the UN and the ICRC — and let neither in. The invitation of 30–31 July 2022 is Russia's own words. The ICRC's request for access was "not granted" (30 Jul 2022); the Secretary-General's fact-finding mission, established at Russia's request as well as Ukraine's, never reached the site and was disbanded on 5 January 2023 because Russia gave no satisfactory assurances of secure access (OHCHR, para. 90).

Russia preserved no evidence and published no investigation. The scene was "contaminated and the physical evidence disturbed"; purported HIMARS fragments were shown to journalists away from the site; Russia's criminal case against Ukraine has published nothing since 8 August 2022 (paras. 88–89). A Detaining Power that believed its own version would have kept the scene and opened the gate.

What the claim concedes. Every Russian statement admits the one fact that carries legal weight: 193 Ukrainian prisoners of war were in a barrack in Russian custody, within range of hostilities, and at least 51 of them died there. Under Geneva Convention III the Detaining Power answers for that whoever fired.

Fair to say. No UN body has publicly attributed the explosion to Russia. OHCHR could not determine the weapon or its point of origin; the UN spokesperson spoke of guarantees needed "from both sides". The Hub does not claim more than the record.

THE SEVEN CLAIMS

Russian Ministry of Defence · 29 Jul 2022, daily briefing	"A missile strike from the U.S.-made multiple launch rocket system (HIMARS) was carried out on a pre-trial detention center [in Yelenovka] ... Forty Ukrainian prisoners of war were killed and 75 wounded."	Contradicted by monitors
Russian Ministry of Defence · 29 Jul 2022	"This egregious provocation was carried out to intimidate Ukrainian servicemen and prevent them from surrendering."	No evidence presented — motive asserted before any inquiry
Russian Ministry of Defence · 30–31 Jul 2022	"[The Ministry of Defence,] in the interests of conducting an objective investigation, [has officially invited experts of the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to investigate the strike on th..."	Self-incriminating — the invitation was never honoured
Russian Ministry of Defence · 30 Jul 2022	"All political, criminal and moral responsibility for the bloody massacre of Ukrainians lies personally with Zelensky [and his] criminal regime [supported by Washington]. [translated]"	Contradicted by monitors
Maxim Buyakevich, Deputy PR of Russia to the OSCE · 9 Aug 2022, Permanent Council, 1385th (special) meeting	"...the Ukrainian armed forces deliberately carried out a strike on a pretrial detention centre in Olenivka [using] munitions used in US-made HIMARS missile systems ... [where] 193 fighters from Ukrainian armed formations who..."	Contradicted by monitors
Dmitry Polyanskiy · 29 Jul 2022, UN Security Council, 9104th meeting	"The Kyiv regime is trying to exact vengeance even on its own military personnel, who have realized the futility of carrying out their criminal orders and surrendered... This morning a detention centre near Olenivka in the ..."	Contradicted by monitors — same claim, hours after the explosion
Russian Investigative Committee · 29 Jul – 8 Aug 2022	"[Russia's Investigative Committee opened a criminal case and said the strike was carried out with HIMARS — "NATO" weapons —] in order to liquidate the witnesses of crimes committed... these were deliberate and planned acti..."	No findings published

WHAT WE ASK

Answer every repetition of the HIMARS version with OHCHR's findings of 4 Oct 2023, paras. 82–90 · ask Russia at the Council whether it will now give the UN and the ICRC the access it offered on 30 July 2022 · support the families' right to truth, justice and reparations (Türk, 25 Jul 2023) and press for publication of the UN's field analysis · align national sanctions with the EU's 13 Jul 2026 listings of colony staff · keep the survivors of the barrack on the exchange agenda · cross-reference the Hub's Olenivka dossier for the full timeline.

WHO SAID IT, WHERE, AND TO WHOM

Where each claim was made, who made it, how the others in the room answered, and what the statements left out.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB

VERIFIED RECORD

JUL 2022

THE OCCASION AND THE RECORD	
Occasion	Explosion and fire in a converted industrial barrack at Correctional Colony No. 120, Olenivka (Russian usage: "Yelenovka"), occupied Donetsk region, night of 28–29 Jul 2022; 193 Azovstal POWs had been moved into the barrack the day before (OHCHR, 24 Mar 2023, para. 74)
Where the claim was made	Russian MoD daily briefing, Moscow, morning of 29 Jul 2022 (within hours, before any inspection); MoD statements of 30–31 Jul; Russian Mission at the UN Security Council, 9104th meeting, 29 Jul 2022 (S/PV.9104); Russian delegation at the OSCE Permanent Council, 1385th (special) meeting, 9 Aug 2022 (PC.DEL/1176/22)
Record	S/PV.9104 (29 Jul 2022, briefing requested by Albania and the US on the UN Charter and protection of civilians; Russia spoke the morning after the explosion); S/PV.9126 (7 Sep 2022: DiCarlo on the fact-finding mission); PC.DEL/1176/22; OHCHR reports of 24 Mar 2023 (paras. 72–76) and 4 Oct 2023 (paras. 82–90)
What happened next	ICRC access request "not granted" (30 Jul 2022) · Secretary-General establishes a fact-finding mission at the request of both parties (3 Aug 2022), names its members (22 Aug) · mission disbanded for lack of secure-access assurances (5 Jan 2023) · OHCHR: not HIMARS (25 Jul and 4 Oct 2023) · AP reports an unpublished ~100-page UN analysis concluding Russia planned and executed the attack (25 Jul 2024) · EU sanctions on colony staff (13 Jul 2026)
Status of the claim	Never withdrawn. Russia's Investigative Committee case against Ukraine remains open on paper; no findings published since 8 Aug 2022 (OHCHR, para. 89)

THE SPEAKERS		
Russian Ministry of Defence (daily briefing; spokesman Maj.-Gen. Igor Konashenkov)	Author of the HIMARS version	Announced "a missile strike from the US-made HIMARS" within hours of the explosion; published casualty lists on 30 Jul; blamed "Zelensky personally" and the US on 30 Jul; invited UN and ICRC experts on 30–31 Jul
Dmitry Polyanskiy	First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the UN (2022)	Gave the HIMARS version to the Security Council on the morning of 29 Jul 2022 (S/PV.9104); Russia later requested the Secretary-General's fact-finding mission and then gave it no access assurances
Maxim Buyakevich	Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the OSCE	Told the OSCE Permanent Council on 9 Aug 2022 that Ukraine "deliberately carried out a strike" with HIMARS munitions on Olenivka — the Russian version in an OSCE record (PC.DEL/1176/22)
Russian Embassy in London	Official account of the Russian Federation	Tweeted on 29 Jul 2022 that Azov prisoners deserved a humiliating death — a statement about the victims published before any investigation (see Olenivka dossier, timeline)

WHAT OTHERS SAID	
UN Secretary-General	Took the requests "very seriously", established a fact-finding mission at the request of both Russia and Ukraine (3 Aug 2022) and disbanded it on 5 Jan 2023 when it could not deploy.
ICRC	Its request for access to the Olenivka POWs the day after the explosion was "not granted"; access to POWs is "an obligation of parties to conflict under the Geneva Conventions" (30 Jul 2022).
European Union (HR/VP Borrell)	Called the killing of the prisoners a "horrific atrocity" and held Russia responsible for the safety of POWs in its custody (29 Jul 2022).
United States	Said on 2 Aug 2022 that intelligence indicated Russia was working to fabricate evidence about the explosion; at the Council on 7 Sep 2022 pressed for the fact-finding mission to deploy.
United Kingdom	Condemned the killings (30 Jul 2022); in 2026 still cites Olenivka as a site Russia has kept closed to the UN and the ICRC (Arria meeting, 14 Oct 2026).
Norway (Security Council, 7 Sep 2022)	Welcomed the update on the fact-finding mission "pursuant to the incident of 29 July at the detention facility near the village of Olenivka".
Latvia (Security Council, 7 Sep 2022)	Asked for a fact-finding mission for other killings of Ukrainian soldiers "similar to the fact-finding mission regarding the massacre of Ukrainian soldiers in Olenivka".
Human Rights Watch	On the first anniversary (28 Jul 2023) called on Russia to allow an independent investigation and on the UN to publish what it knows.

WHAT THE STATEMENTS LEFT OUT
- The preparations recorded by OHCHR: the 193 prisoners were moved into the barrack on 27 July, the guard post was moved and a trench dug for the guards, on 28 July the guards wore body armour, and a Grad launcher by the fence fired westward and covered the sound of the explosions (OHCHR, 24 Mar 2023, para. 74). - The duty of care: survivors reached Donetsk hospitals five to seven hours later; no medical aid was given on site; OHCHR found the toll could have been considerably lower with prompt care (24 Mar 2023, para. 76). - The scene: not preserved; "contaminated and the physical evidence disturbed"; from 09:00 on 29 July prisoners were ordered to clear debris and bodies (OHCHR, 4 Oct 2023, para. 88). - The ICRC's position: "Granting ICRC access to POWs is an obligation of parties to conflict under the Geneva Conventions" — its request of 29 July was "not granted" (ICRC, 30 Jul 2022). - The UN's internal field analysis (~100 pages) that, according to AP, concluded Russia planned and executed the attack; its public reports stopped at "not HIMARS, from the east" (AP, 25 Jul 2024).

HOW IT TRAVELS
The HIMARS version was carried the same morning by TASS, RIA Novosti and Zvezda, then by Reuters, Al Jazeera and AFP as Russia's claim ("Russia accuses Ukraine of killing POWs with HIMARS system", Al Jazeera, 29 Jul 2022). Zvezda showed a fragment with a purported HIMARS serial number; OHCHR later recorded that fragments were displayed to journalists not in situ (para. 88). Izvestia headlined "Kyiv struck its own prisoners" (29 Jul 2022). The claim re-entered the UN system through the OSCE Permanent Council (9 Aug 2022) and Russia's Investigative Committee ("Kiev bombed Yelenovka POW detention center by NATO weapons", TASS, 2 Aug 2022). Since 2023 Russian statements have stopped citing the weapon and speak only of "the Kiev regime's strike".



CLAIM, RECORD, CONCESSION (1-4)

Each claim as made, with the date, the venue and a link; the record it runs into, with the tier of the evidence; and what it concedes. Words in square brackets are the Hub's.

CLAIM 1 · RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE · 29 JUL 2022, DAILY BRIEFING

“A missile strike from the U.S.-made multiple launch rocket system (HIMARS) was carried out on a pre-trial detention center [in Yelenovka] ... Forty Ukrainian prisoners of war were killed and 75 wounded.”

MoD briefing as carried by Reuters and Al Jazeera, 29 Jul 2022
cyprus-mail.com/2022/07/29/russia-says-ukraine-struck-prison-in-donetsk-region-kill/

CLAIM 2 · RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE · 29 JUL 2022

“This egregious provocation was carried out to intimidate Ukrainian servicemen and prevent them from surrendering.”

MoD briefing, 29 Jul 2022, Russian text carried by Lenta.ru; English as carried by Al Jazeera
www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/29/russia-accuses-ukraine-of-killing-pows-with-himars-system

CLAIM 3 · RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE · 30-31 JUL 2022

“[The Ministry of Defence,] in the interests of conducting an objective investigation, [has officially invited experts of the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to investigate the strike on the detention centre in Yelenovka.]”

MoD statement, 31 Jul 2022, as carried by TASS (“Russia invites UN, ICRC to probe attack on DPR detention center”, tass.com/defense/1486943: an “impartial investigation into an attack on a pre-trial detention center in Yelenovka”) and Press TV/GlobalSecurity, 31 Jul 2022
tass.com/defense/1486943

CLAIM 4 · RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE · 30 JUL 2022

“All political, criminal and moral responsibility for the bloody massacre of Ukrainians lies personally with Zelensky [and his] criminal regime [supported by Washington]. [translated]”

MoD statement, 30 Jul 2022, Russian text carried by OSN ([osnmedia.ru](https://osnmedia.ru/politika/v-minoborony-obvinili-zelenskogo-i-ssha-v-udare-po-sizo-v-elenovke)), translated
www.osnmedia.ru/politika/v-minoborony-obvinili-zelenskogo-i-ssha-v-udare-po-sizo-v-elenovke

CONTRADICTED BY MONITORS

Evidence

A

C

OHCHR: “the explosions were not caused by HIMARS rockets”; the damage to walls, ceiling, roof, windows and bunk beds, the size of the residual crater and the impact radius “are not characteristic” of HIMARS; “Even a single HIMARS rocket would likely have caused damage and destruction to the barracks and surrounding area on a significantly larger and more severe scale” (36th periodic report, 4 Oct 2023, para. 83). The pattern of structural damage “appeared consistent with a projected ordnance having travelled with an east-to-west trajectory” — from the Russian-held side (para. 84). A CNN forensic investigation (Aug 2022) had already concluded that the damage was not consistent with a HIMARS strike; the UN's 2023 finding confirmed it (CNN, 25 Jul 2023 — Tier C). The MoD's own toll rose to 50 dead the next day; OHCHR counts at least 51 killed and at least 139 injured (OHCHR report of 4 Oct 2023, para. 10).

What the claim concedes: That 193 Ukrainian prisoners of war were held in a barrack in Russian custody and that dozens died there — the facts that engage Russia's duties as Detaining Power whoever fired.

NO EVIDENCE PRESENTED — MOTIVE ASSERTED BEFORE ANY INQUIRY

Evidence

A

The motive was announced on the morning of the explosion, before any autopsy or expert examination. OHCHR has not received information that Russia conducted the investigation Geneva Convention III requires (para. 87). The only physical findings on the public record point the other way: the ordnance came from the east (para. 84); the barrack had been prepared the day before — guard post moved, trench dug, body armour issued, a Grad firing westward that evening (OHCHR, 24 Mar 2023, para. 74). A motive attributed to the other side cannot substitute for evidence about the weapon.

What the claim concedes: That the dead were Ukrainian servicemen who had surrendered — prisoners of war protected by Geneva Convention III, not “militants” or “terrorists” as Russian courts later labelled the Azov regiment (2 Aug 2022).

SELF-INCRIMINATING — THE INVITATION WAS NEVER HONOURED

Evidence

A

C

ICRC, 30 Jul 2022: “Our request to access the POWs from Olenivka penal facility yesterday has not been granted.” By 3 Aug the ICRC had received no invitation to the site and no answer to its request; on 14 Oct 2022 it was still asking for immediate, unimpeded access to all POWs. The Secretary-General established a fact-finding mission on 3 Aug 2022 “upon request of both Ukraine and the Russian Federation”; on 5 Jan 2023 it was disbanded: “The Russian Federation provided neither satisfactory assurances about secure access for the United Nations” (OHCHR, para. 90). UN spokesperson Dujarric: “We require clear safety and access guarantees from both sides and we didn't feel we had received them” (5 Jan 2023). AP, 25 Jul 2024: Russia refused to guarantee the mission's safety, which kept it from travelling.

What the claim concedes: That an international investigation on site was the right remedy — the remedy Russia then withheld for the mission it had itself requested.

CONTRADICTED BY MONITORS

Evidence

A

C

Responsibility for prisoners of war lies with the Detaining Power (GC III art. 12). OHCHR's findings run against Russia on each duty: prisoners held within range of hostilities (art. 19 and 23); no medical care on site; no scene preservation; no effective investigation; access refused (4 Oct 2023, paras. 82–90). The one body with an unpublished attribution — the UN's internal ~100-page analysis reported by AP — concluded that Russia planned and executed the attack (AP, 25 Jul 2024; not public, Tier C).

What the claim concedes: That the event was “a bloody massacre” of prisoners — not an accident.



CLAIM, RECORD, CONCESSION (5-7)

Each claim as made, with the date, the venue and a link; the record it runs into, with the tier of the evidence; and what it concedes. Words in square brackets are the Hub's.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
JUL 2022

CLAIM 5 · MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PR OF RUSSIA TO THE OSCE · 9 AUG 2022, PERMANENT COUNCIL, 1385TH (SPECIAL) MEETING

"...the Ukrainian armed forces deliberately carried out a strike on a pretrial detention centre in Olenivka [using] munitions used in US-made HIMARS missile systems ... [where] 193 fighters from Ukrainian armed formations who had surrendered [were held] ... the extrajudicial execution of its own soldiers who had decided to lay down their arms."

PC.DEL/1176/22, osce.org/files/f/documents/6/1/526660.pdf (English as published by the OSCE)

osce.org/files/f/documents/6/1/526660.pdf

CONTRADICTED BY MONITORS

Evidence A

The HIMARS version is excluded by OHCHR (para. 83). "Extrajudicial execution" is the right category for the killing of prisoners — and the only investigative body with site evidence placed the ordnance's origin to the east (para. 84). The OSCE record is the only verbatim Russian text on Olenivka in an international organisation's document archive; Russia has not updated it since OHCHR's findings.

What the claim concedes: That the 193 were soldiers "who had surrendered" and "decided to lay down their arms" — prisoners of war, whose protection was Russia's duty on the night they died.

CLAIM 6 · DMITRY POLYANSKIY · 29 JUL 2022, UN SECURITY COUNCIL, 9104TH MEETING

"The Kyiv regime is trying to exact vengeance even on its own military personnel, who have realized the futility of carrying out their criminal orders and surrendered... This morning a detention centre near Olenivka in the Donbas was struck by missiles from a United States-made High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, killing more than 50 Ukrainian prisoners of war. However, such scare tactics will only encourage Ukrainian servicemen to surrender."

S/PV.9104, 9104th meeting, 29 Jul 2022 (UN verbatim record, via un-project.org/meeting/S-PV-9104)

un-project.org/meeting/S-PV-9104

CONTRADICTED BY MONITORS — SAME CLAIM, HOURS AFTER THE EXPLOSION

Evidence A

Whatever the exact wording, the Council record shows what followed: on 7 Sep 2022 USG DiCarlo told the Council that "the fact-finding mission to Olenivka is set to deploy in the coming days" (S/PV.9126); it never deployed. Norway welcomed the mission; Latvia later asked for a similar mission for other killings of Ukrainian soldiers (same meeting). Russia did not use its Council seat to announce access for the mission it had requested.

What the claim concedes: That the Security Council was the right place to put the Olenivka case — where the UN's findings now stand unanswered.

CLAIM 7 · RUSSIAN INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE · 29 JUL - 8 AUG 2022

"[Russia's Investigative Committee opened a criminal case and said the strike was carried out with HIMARS — "NATO" weapons —] in order to liquidate the witnesses of crimes committed... these were deliberate and planned actions by the Ukrainian side. [English as reported by TASS]"

Investigative Committee, 29 Jul 2022 (Lenta.ru); TASS, 5 Aug 2022 ("Kiev bombarded Yelenovka POW detention center by NATO weapons — Russian investigators", tass.com/politics/1489799: "deliberate and planned actions by the Ukrainian side")

tass.com/politics/1489799

NO FINDINGS PUBLISHED

Evidence A

OHCHR: the case was "opened against Ukraine for carrying out the strike" before expert analysis or autopsies; "Since 8 August 2022, no information has been published on the investigation" (para. 89). The scene "was not preserved in order to allow for a full and proper inspection" (para. 88). GC III art. 121 requires an official enquiry into every death of a prisoner from unusual causes; OHCHR has no information that Russia carried out these obligations (para. 87).

What the claim concedes: That a criminal investigation was owed — and that the only one Russia opened targeted the other side and went silent within ten days.

Sources: Russian MoD briefings 29–31 Jul 2022 (Al Jazeera, Reuters, Lenta.ru, OSN, Press TV) · PC.DEL/1176/22, 9 Aug 2022 · S/PV.9104, S/PV.9126 (SC/15023) · ICRC, 30 Jul 2022 · UN Secretary-General, 3 Aug 2022; Spokesperson, 5 Jan 2023 · OHCHR 24 Mar 2023, 25 Jul 2023, 4 Oct 2023 · CNN 25 Jul 2023 · AP 25 Jul 2024 · Security Council Report, Sep 2022 forecast · Ukraine Evidence Hub, Olenivka dossier · full list on page 6

FACT-CHECK · HISTORICAL
V1 · 21 OCT 2026



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THE RECORD			
QUESTION	WHAT RUSSIA SAYS	WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS	SOURCE
Weapon	US-made HIMARS rocket(s) fired by Ukraine	"Not caused by HIMARS rockets"; weapon and origin undetermined; ordnance travelled east to west	OHCHR, 4 Oct 2023, paras. 83–84
Killed · injured	40 killed, 75 wounded (29 Jul); 50 killed (30 Jul)	At least 51 killed, at least 139 injured (all men)	MoD briefings; OHCHR, 4 Oct 2023, para. 10
Motive	"To intimidate Ukrainian servicemen and prevent them from surrendering"	No evidence presented; barrack prepared the day before — guard post moved, trench dug, body armour, Grad firing westward	MoD 29 Jul 2022; OHCHR 24 Mar 2023, para. 74
International access	"Invited experts of the UN and the ICRC" (30–31 Jul 2022)	ICRC request "not granted" (30 Jul 2022); UN mission disbanded without reaching the site (5 Jan 2023)	ICRC; OHCHR para. 90
Scene and evidence	HIMARS fragments shown to journalists	Scene "contaminated and the physical evidence disturbed"; fragments not shown in situ	OHCHR para. 88
Investigation	Criminal case against Ukraine (art. 356)	Nothing published since 8 Aug 2022; no information that Russia carried out GC III obligations	OHCHR paras. 87, 89

FAIR TO SAY

No UN body has publicly attributed the explosion to Russia or identified the weapon. OHCHR states that "the precise type of weapon that killed Ukrainian POWs and its point of origin could not be determined" (para. 84); the east-to-west trajectory is a physical finding, not an attribution. The UN's internal analysis reported by AP is unpublished and cannot be cited as a finding.

The Secretary-General's mission needed guarantees from both sides; the UN spokesperson said so in those words. OHCHR's report is explicit that it was Russia's assurances that were missing (para. 90), but the Hub should quote both.

Russia did request the UN mission and did publish casualty lists on 30 July — steps Ukraine welcomed at the time. They were not followed by access. Ukrainian intelligence's early attribution to Wagner (7 Aug 2022) remains unsupported by published evidence and is not used here.

Casualty figures differ: the Russian MoD said 40, then 50 dead; 'DPR' officials 53; OHCHR at least 51 killed and 139 injured; Ukraine's investigators about 50. All agree that dozens of prisoners of war died in Russian custody.

ESTABLISHED, PATTERN, POSITION

What mandated bodies have established, what the record shows as a pattern, and what is a position — kept apart. Then the lines to take and the questions to expect.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
JUL 2022

THE LAW

Geneva Convention III, arts. 12–13, 19, 23: the Detaining Power is responsible for the treatment of prisoners of war, must protect them against acts of violence, must evacuate them away from the combat zone and may not hold them where they are exposed to fire. Whoever fired, the prisoners were Russia's to protect — the HIMARS claim does not displace that duty, it describes a breach of it.

Geneva Convention III, arts. 121 and 126: an official enquiry into every death of a prisoner from unusual causes, and ICRC access to all places where prisoners are held. Russia announced a case against the other side and refused the ICRC; OHCHR has no information that an enquiry was held.

Rome Statute art. 8(2)(a)(i)–(iii): wilful killing, inhuman treatment and wilfully causing great suffering to protected persons are grave breaches. Ukraine submitted the case to the ICC in 2022; no mandated body has yet attributed the explosion.

Three layers. *Established:* not HIMARS; ordnance from the east; failure to protect, treat and investigate (OHCHR). *Pattern:* denial of medical care and of international access to Ukrainian POWs in Russian custody (OHCHR, 29 Jun 2026, para. 14). *Position:* Ukraine's qualification of a planned killing of prisoners of war — an investigation, not a finding.

LINES TO TAKE

1. "Russia named the weapon within hours. The UN examined the barrack and excluded it: not HIMARS."
2. "Russia invited the UN and the ICRC to Olenivka. Then it let neither in."
3. "The Secretary-General's mission was Russia's own request. It never reached the site because Russia gave no assurances of secure access."
4. "The ordnance came from the east. East of Olenivka was Russian-held."
5. "Whoever fired, 193 prisoners of war were in Russia's custody. Under Geneva Convention III that is Russia's responsibility."
6. "Four years on, Russia's criminal case has published nothing since 8 August 2022. Ours is open to the ICC."

Q&A

"The UN never said Russia did it."

Correct — and we do not say the UN did. The UN excluded the weapon Russia named, found the ordnance came from the east, and recorded that Russia refused the access that would have settled the rest. An internal UN analysis reported by AP went further; it is unpublished and we do not cite it as a finding.

"Ukraine had HIMARS and fired at Olenivka to silence prisoners who were confessing to crimes."

That motive was announced by the Russian MoD on the morning of the explosion, before any examination. The physical findings point the other way: not HIMARS, east-to-west trajectory, and a barrack prepared the day before. No evidence for the motive has ever been published.

"Russia asked for the UN mission. Why blame Russia for its failure?"

Because the mission needed secure access to a site Russia controls, and OHCHR records that Russia "provided neither satisfactory assurances about secure access" (para. 90). The ICRC's request was "not granted" the day after the explosion. A party confident of its version opens the gate.

"The UN spokesperson said guarantees were needed from both sides."

He did, and we quote him. Ukraine does not control Olenivka; the only side that could grant access to the barrack was Russia. OHCHR, which did the work, names the Russian Federation.

"Fragments with HIMARS serial numbers were shown on Russian television."

OHCHR recorded that the scene was not preserved, that evidence was disturbed and that fragments were displayed to journalists not in situ (para. 88). A fragment shown away from a contaminated scene is not evidence of what exploded inside a barrack whose damage does not match a HIMARS impact.

"Why does Ukraine still raise a 2022 case?"

Because the prisoners who survived the barrack remain largely unaccounted for, the families have a right to truth and reparations (Türk, 25 Jul 2023), and the HIMARS version is still repeated in Russian statements. The remedy Russia refused in 2022 — access for the UN and the ICRC to every place where Ukrainians are held — is still refused in 2026.

WHAT WE ASK

Answer every repetition of the HIMARS version with OHCHR's findings of 4 Oct 2023, paras. 82–90 · ask Russia at the Council whether it will now give the UN and the ICRC the access it offered on 30 July 2022 · support the families' right to truth, justice and reparations (Türk, 25 Jul 2023) and press for publication of the UN's field analysis · align national sanctions with the EU's 13 Jul 2026 listings of colony staff · keep the survivors of the barrack on the exchange agenda · cross-reference the Hub's Olenivka dossier for the full timeline.

Sources: Russian MoD briefings 29–31 Jul 2022 (Al Jazeera, Reuters, Lenta.ru, OSN, Press TV) · PC.DEL/1176/22, 9 Aug 2022 · S/PV.9104, S/PV.9126 (SC/15023) · ICRC, 30 Jul 2022 · UN Secretary-General, 3 Aug 2022; Spokesperson, 5 Jan 2023 · OHCHR 24 Mar 2023, 25 Jul 2023, 4 Oct 2023 · CNN 25 Jul 2023 · AP 25 Jul 2024 · Security Council Report, Sep 2022 forecast · Ukraine Evidence Hub, Olenivka dossier · full list on page 6



WHERE EVERY LINE COMES FROM

All sources were checked on 21 October 2026. Russian statements are listed as the position under review, not as evidence.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB

VERIFIED RECORD

JUL 2022

SOURCES		
Al Jazeera (carrying the Russian MoD briefing)	Russia accuses Ukraine of killing POWs with HIMARS system, 29 Jul 2022 https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/29/russia-accuses-ukraine-of-killing-pows-with-himars-system	RU
Cyprus Mail / Reuters (carrying the Russian MoD briefing)	Russia says Ukraine struck prison in Donetsk region, killing 40, 29 Jul 2022 https://cyprus-mail.com/2022/07/29/russia-says-ukraine-struck-prison-in-donetsk-region-killing-40	RU
Lenta.ru	MoD statement on the Yelenovka SIZO strike ("to intimidate"), 29 Jul 2022 https://lenta.ru/news/2022/07/29/azovsizo/	RU
OSN (osnmedia.ru)	MoD blames Zelensky and the US for the HIMARS strike on the Yelenovka SIZO, 30 Jul 2022 https://www.osnmedia.ru/politika/v-minoborony-obvinili-zelenskogo-i-ssha-v-udare-po-sizo-v-elenovke/	RU
GlobalSecurity.org (Press TV)	Russia invites UN, ICRC experts to probe Olenivka strike, 31 Jul 2022 https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/ukraine/2022/07/ukraine-220731-presstv02.htm	RU
TASS	Russia invites UN, ICRC to probe attack on DPR detention center, 31 Jul 2022 https://tass.com/defense/1486943	RU
TASS	Kiev bombarded Yelenovka POW detention center by NATO weapons — Russian investigators, 5 Aug 2022 https://tass.com/politics/1489799	RU
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METHOD

Claims are taken from the Russian Ministry of Defence's briefings of 29–31 July 2022 as carried in English by Reuters and Al Jazeera and in Russian by Lenta.ru and OSN (translations marked); from the Russian delegation's statement at the OSCE Permanent Council of 9 August 2022 (English text as published by the OSCE); and from the Security Council verbatim record of 29 July 2022 (S/PV.9104). Words in square brackets are the Hub's.

Each claim is checked first against documents of UN-mandated bodies (OHCHR reports of 24 March and 4 October 2023; the Secretary-General's and Spokesperson's statements; Security Council meeting coverage), then against independent investigations (CNN, AP) only where no UN finding exists. Ukrainian official material (SBU, HUR, Prosecutor General) is not used to rebut the Russian claims; it appears only as context in the Hub's Olenivka dossier, marked B.

The facts of the night, the timeline and the sanctions listings are in the Hub's Olenivka dossier and are not repeated here; this fact-check follows the HIMARS claim from its first statement to the UN's answer.

Tiers: **A** — UN-mandated bodies, international courts and organisations (OHCHR/HRMMU, Commission of Inquiry, ICC, ECtHR, IAEA, OSCE, OPCW, Security Council record); **B** — Ukrainian official bodies, marked "according to Ukraine"; **C** — independent investigators and media; **RU** — Russian official statements, the position under review. Tiers are never combined in one figure.

