

TWO CITIES, ONE SCRIPT

Nine days apart in April 2025, two Russian ballistic missiles air-burst over a playground in Kryvyi Rih and a city-centre street in Sumy on Palm Sunday. Each time the Russian Ministry of Defence announced the destruction of a military gathering — "commanders and Western instructors", "the command staff" — with a round number of dead soldiers and no names, photographs or coordinates. The UN verified 20 and at least 31 civilians killed, nine and two of them children. Eight claims, the record, and what each concedes: that the aim-points were in the middle of residential cities.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB

VERIFIED RECORD

APR 2025

20 · 9

civilians killed in Kryvyi Rih on 4 Apr 2025 · of them children — the highest number of children killed in one attack HRMMU has verified since Feb 2022 [A](#)

HRMMU/OHCHR press release, 24 Apr 2025

≥31 · 2

civilians killed in Sumy on 13 Apr 2025 · of them boys aged 11 and 17; many of the dead were passengers on a bus (Ukrainian authorities: 35 killed, 129 injured) [A](#)

HRMMU/OHCHR, 24 Apr 2025 · DiCarlo, S/PV.9908, 29 Apr 2025 ("reportedly 35")

85 · 60+

"servicemen and foreign officers" Russia says it killed in Kryvyi Rih · "servicemen" in Sumy — no name, image or location was put on the record for either figure [RU](#)

Russian MoD, 4 Apr and 14 Apr 2025 (Telegram)

2

Russian versions of Kryvyi Rih in four days: a precision warhead on the commanders (MoD, 4 Apr) — and a Ukrainian interceptor that killed the civilians (Nebenzia, 8 Apr) [RU](#)

Russian MoD Telegram, 4 Apr 2025 · S/PV.9893, 8 Apr 2025

BOTTOM LINE

The same script, twice. A ballistic missile, a city centre, and within 24 hours a Ministry of Defence post naming a military meeting and a round number of soldiers killed — 85, then "more than 60". No evidence was published for either number, then or since.

The UN counted the dead and found civilians. HRMMU verified 20 civilians killed in Kryvyi Rih, nine of them children, most while playing in a park; in Sumy at least 31, many of them bus passengers, after a second missile air-burst over a public street two minutes after the first.

Russia's two Kryvyi Rih versions cancel each other. On 4 April the MoD said a precision warhead hit the restaurant; on 8 April Nebenzia told the Council a Ukrainian interceptor killed the civilians. The UN found a single missile that "detonated over a residential area".

What the claims concede. Both statements place the aim-point in a "densely populated" city centre and admit the launch. Even if the Russian authorities had information that military personnel could be present, OHCHR said, "the mode and circumstances of attack may constitute an indiscriminate attack".

Fair to say. In Sumy a military award ceremony had reportedly been planned that day; Ukraine's government dismissed the regional governor over it. That is on the record below. It does not make an air-burst over a street full of churchgoers and bus passengers a lawful attack.

THE EIGHT CLAIMS

Russian Ministry of Defence · 4 Apr 2025, evening	"At 18:49 Moscow time a strike with a high-explosive missile was carried out on a restaurant in Kryvyi Rih where a meeting of unit commanders with Western instructors was being held... the enemy's losses amounted to up to 8..."	Contradicted by monitors
Vassily Nebenzia · Security Council, 8 Apr 2025	"Unfortunately, owing to the unprofessional actions of the Ukrainian air defence, it was the intercepting Ukrainian missile that caused the deaths of civilians in the area adjacent to the restaurant."	Contradicted by Russia's own MoD
Vassily Nebenzia · Security Council, 8 Apr 2025	"...troop concentrations and Western officers and instructors sent to assist the Kyiv regime are legitimate targets for the Russian army. The very fact that a military meeting was held in a residential building located in a..."	No evidence presented
Vassily Nebenzia · Security Council, 8 Apr 2025	"[The videos] clearly show a large volume of smoke and dust, which indicates that a blast fragmentation warhead was used [and not cluster munitions]."	Beside the point
Russian Ministry of Defence · 14 Apr 2025	"...a strike with two Iskander-M operational-tactical missiles on the venue of a meeting of the command staff of the 'Seversk' operational-tactical group... more than 60 servicemen of the Ukrainian Armed Forces were destroyed..."	No evidence presented · contradicted by monitors
Russian Ministry of Defence · 14 Apr 2025	"The Kyiv regime continues to use the Ukrainian population as a human shield, placing military facilities and holding events with the participation of servicemen in the centre of a densely populated city. [translated]"	Self-incriminating · misstates the law
Dmitry Peskov · Kremlin briefing, 14 Apr 2025	"I can only repeat and remind you of the repeated statements of our President and of our military representatives that our military strikes exclusively military and near-military targets. [translated]"	Contradicted by monitors
Sergey Lavrov · Kommersant interview, 14 Apr 2025 — and Vassily Nebenzia · Security Council, 29 Apr 2025	"We have facts about who was at the facility that was hit in Sumy... There was another 'gathering' of Ukrainian military commanders with their Western colleagues, disguised either as mercenaries or I do not know who. — ...out..."	No evidence presented

WHAT WE ASK

Put the two MoD statements beside the UN figures in every statement on April 2025 and ask Russia to table the evidence for "85" and "more than 60" · cite OHCHR's legal note of 6 Apr 2025 — "even if... military personnel could be present... may constitute an indiscriminate attack" — as the standard · support the ICC and Ukrainian investigations of both strikes, including identification of the launching units · ask Ukraine to publish the outcome of its inquiry into the Sumy award ceremony, so that the "human shield" line is answered with facts · request that HRMMU's incident verifications for Kryvyi Rih and Sumy be annexed to the next periodic report with weapon and impact details.

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

APR 2025

THE OCCASION AND THE RECORD	
Occasion	Kryvyi Rih, Friday 4 Apr 2025, 18:49 (MoD's own time): one ballistic missile over a residential district — restaurant, playground, multi-storey blocks. Sumy, Palm Sunday 13 Apr 2025, c. 10:15: two ballistic missiles on the historic centre (university congress centre, street, bus), two minutes apart
Where the claims were made	Russian MoD Telegram channel (4 Apr, evening; 14 Apr) · Security Council, 9893rd meeting, 8 Apr 2025 (S/PV.9893, Nebenzia) · Kremlin briefing, 14 Apr (Peskov) · Kommersant interview, 14 Apr (Lavrov) · Security Council, 9908th meeting, 29 Apr 2025 (S/PV.9908, Nebenzia)
Record	OHCHR press release, 6 Apr 2025 (Türk) · HRMMU/OHCHR press release, 24 Apr 2025 · Secretary-General's statement SG/SM/22621, 13 Apr 2025 · S/PV.9893 (Fletcher briefing) · S/PV.9908 (DiCarlo briefing) · Security Council private meeting, 17 Apr 2025 (no verbatim record)
What happened next	Ukraine's government dismissed the Sumy governor on 15 Apr over a reported award ceremony; OHCHR recorded April 2025 as the deadliest month for children in nearly three years; Russia repeated the "command staff" formula for later strikes (Kyiv 2025–26); no Russian investigation was announced

THE SPEAKERS		
Russian Ministry of Defence (press service)	Author of the strike announcements; its Telegram channel is the primary carrier of "up to 85" and "more than 60"	Posted the Kryvyi Rih claim on the evening of 4 Apr (t.me/mod_russia/50918) and the Sumy claim on 14 Apr, a day after the strike
Vassily Nebenzia	Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the UN	At S/PV.9893 (8 Apr) repeated the MoD figure and added the "Ukrainian air defence" version; at S/PV.9908 (29 Apr) called both strikes "outright fakes... proven irrefutably" without producing anything
Dmitry Peskov	Presidential press secretary · under EU sanctions since 28 Feb 2022, US (OFAC) since 3 Mar 2022, UK	Declined to comment on Sumy and referred to the MoD: "our military strikes exclusively military and near-military targets" (14 Apr, translated)
Sergey Lavrov	Minister of Foreign Affairs · under EU, US and UK sanctions since 25 Feb 2022	Told Kommersant on 14 Apr that Russia "has facts about who was at the facility that was hit in Sumy"; none were published

WHAT OTHERS SAID	
Denmark (S/PV.9893, 8 Apr; S/PV.9908, 29 Apr)	Reports that the Kryvyi Rih missile was fired from the Black Sea made Moscow's delays over a ceasefire look cynical; Sumy was "the single worst mass casualty attack on Ukraine's civilian population this year".
Slovenia (S/PV.9893)	"We heard claims that a high precision strike has been launched to target a military group" — claims that had been disproved; condemned the death and destruction "in Kryvyi Rih, Sumy, Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities" (29 Apr).
United Kingdom (S/PV.9893; S/PV.9908)	Nine children "killed, most while playing in a park, as a military weapon exploded into shrapnel above them"; later: "the revolting strike in Sumy on Palm Sunday".
France (S/PV.9893)	Quoted the High Commissioner — "without any apparent military presence — demonstrates a reckless disregard for civilian life" — and condemned the secondary strike on Kryvyi Rih on 5 April while relief operations were under way.
United States (S/PV.9893)	"Strikes like the one on Kryvyi Rih and executions of prisoners of war have the potential to damage peace efforts"; President Trump called Sumy "a horrible thing" (14 Apr).
OSCE participating States (Permanent Council special meeting, 8 Apr 2025)	Delegations condemned the Kryvyi Rih attack that killed 20 people including nine children and observed a minute of silence (Interfax-Ukraine, 8 Apr 2025).
European Union (13 Apr 2025)	Commission President von der Leyen and High Representative Kallas condemned the Sumy strike; Germany's incoming chancellor Merz called it "a war crime".
UN Secretary-General (13 Apr 2025)	"Deeply alarmed and shocked"; attacks against civilians and civilian objects "must end immediately"; Sumy "continues a devastating pattern of similar assaults on Ukrainian cities and towns".

WHAT THE STATEMENTS LEFT OUT
- The site: OHCHR found that the Kryvyi Rih missile detonated over a playground, a restaurant and multi-storey buildings just before 7 pm; witnesses told UN Human Rights that a beauty-industry forum was being held in the restaurant and that there was no military presence (OHCHR, 6 Apr 2025). - The second missile in Sumy: it exploded above ground about two minutes after the first, spreading shrapnel across a wide public area and causing most of the casualties, many of them on a bus; a children's theatre performance was scheduled at the Congress Centre shortly afterwards (HRMMU, 24 Apr 2025). - The month: 848 civilian casualties verified by HRMMU from 1 to 24 April 2025 (151 killed, 697 injured), 46 per cent more than the same period of 2024 (HRMMU, 24 Apr 2025; DiCarlo, S/PV.9908). - The Secretary-General's finding that Sumy "continues a devastating pattern of similar assaults on Ukrainian cities and towns in recent weeks" (SG/SM/22621, 13 Apr 2025). - Any evidence: no list of the "85" or the "60", no imagery of the "20 vehicles", no name of a "Western instructor" has been published by any Russian body in 18 months.

HOW IT TRAVELS
Both MoD posts were carried within the hour by TASS, RIA Novosti, Izvestia, Gazeta.ru and Sputnik's French-language services ("the enemy lost up to 85 servicemen"; "Iskander strike on a meeting of the command staff"). Pro-war Telegram channels first celebrated a "targeted strike on high-ranking Nazis and NATO advisers" in Kryvyi Rih, then, when the playground footage appeared, called it a "staged spectacle" or a Ukrainian air-defence miss — the version Nebenzia took to the Security Council four days later. State TV host Vladimir Solovyov presented Sumy as a "staged provocation". EUvsDisinfo has logged both cases.

Sources: Russian MoD Telegram, 4 and 14 Apr 2025 (via BFM.ru, The Insider, Izvestia, Meduza, Mediazona) · S/PV.9893 (8 Apr 2025) and S/PV.9908 (29 Apr 2025) · OHCHR, 6 Apr 2025 · HRMMU/OHCHR, 24 Apr 2025 · SG/SM/22621, 13 Apr 2025 · Security Council Report, 17 and 28 Apr 2025 · Kommersant/Sputnik, 14 Apr 2025 · Novaya Gazeta Europe, 8 and 15 Apr 2025 · EUvsDisinfo, Apr 2025 · StopFake · Kyiv Independent, Meduza, Washington Post on the Sumy ceremony · full list on page 6



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.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB

VERIFIED RECORD

APR 2025

CLAIM 1 · RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE · 4 APR 2025, EVENING

“At 18:49 Moscow time a strike with a high-explosive missile was carried out on a restaurant in Kryvyi Rih where a meeting of unit commanders with Western instructors was being held... the enemy's losses amounted to up to 85 servicemen and officers of foreign states, and up to 20 vehicles. [translated]”

MoD Telegram channel, t.me/mod_russia/50918, as quoted by BFM.ru and The Insider, 4–5 Apr 2025

CLAIM 2 · VASSILY NEBENZIA · SECURITY COUNCIL, 8 APR 2025

“Unfortunately, owing to the unprofessional actions of the Ukrainian air defence, it was the intercepting Ukrainian missile that caused the deaths of civilians in the area adjacent to the restaurant.”

S/PV.9893, 9893rd meeting, 8 Apr 2025
un-project.org/meeting/S-PV-9893

CLAIM 3 · VASSILY NEBENZIA · SECURITY COUNCIL, 8 APR 2025

“...troop concentrations and Western officers and instructors sent to assist the Kyiv regime are legitimate targets for the Russian army. The very fact that a military meeting was held in a residential building located in a densely populated urban area [shows disregard for civilians].”

S/PV.9893, 8 Apr 2025
un-project.org/meeting/S-PV-9893

CLAIM 4 · VASSILY NEBENZIA · SECURITY COUNCIL, 8 APR 2025

“[The videos] clearly show a large volume of smoke and dust, which indicates that a blast fragmentation warhead was used [and not cluster munitions].”

S/PV.9893, 8 Apr 2025
un-project.org/meeting/S-PV-9893

CONTRADICTED BY MONITORS

Evidence

A

C

OHCHR (6 Apr 2025): "Just before 7 pm local time... a missile detonated over a residential area of Kryvyi Rih"; nine children killed, "most while playing in a park"; "the use of an explosive weapon with wide area effects... in a densely populated area — and without any apparent military presence — demonstrates a reckless disregard for civilian life". HRMMU (24 Apr 2025): 20 civilians killed including nine children, at least 46 injured; "the missile exploded in the air, and the shrapnel spread across the public park" — the highest number of children killed in a single attack it has verified since Feb 2022. Restaurant CCTV obtained by France 24 shows no military personnel inside at the moment of impact; RFE/RL's Systema and local sources identified a beauty-industry forum and a birthday party as the events in the restaurant. OSINT geolocation (D. mojavensis, CIT) places the burst about 20 m from the playground and 70–80 m from the restaurant (Tier C).

What the claim concedes: The launch, the time and the aim-point — a restaurant in a residential district of a city of 600,000, next to a playground.

CONTRADICTED BY RUSSIA'S OWN MOD

Evidence

A

B

The MoD's 4 April post describes one precision strike with a high-explosive missile on the restaurant and says nothing of an interception. Four days later the Mission told the Council the civilians were killed by a Ukrainian interceptor — a second missile for which no debris, trajectory or imagery was presented. The UN describes one weapon: "a missile detonated over a residential area" (OHCHR, 6 Apr); "the missile exploded in the air" (HRMMU, 24 Apr). Ukraine's Air Force (Tier B, operational fact, labelled) said no air-defence missile was launched at the target and that interceptors self-destruct if they miss. Nebenzia offered both versions in the same speech: the warhead hit the meeting, and the civilians were killed by someone else.

What the claim concedes: That civilians died at the aim-point — and, in his own words, that the "military meeting" was "in a residential building located in a densely populated urban area".

NO EVIDENCE PRESENTED

Evidence

A

No name, rank, nationality or image of a commander or "Western instructor" has been published. Witnesses told UN Human Rights there was no military presence at the restaurant or in the area at the time (OHCHR, 6 Apr). OHCHR's legal note answers the premise: "Even if the Russian authorities had information that military personnel could be present, the mode and circumstances of attack may constitute an indiscriminate attack"; such attacks "if they amount to attacks directed against civilians may constitute war crimes". Slovenia at the same meeting: "We heard claims that a high precision strike has been launched to target a military group" — claims it said had been disproved.

What the claim concedes: That Russia chose to fire a ballistic missile at a building it knew to be in a densely populated residential area — which is precisely what Additional Protocol I arts. 51(5)(b) and 57 regulate.

BESIDE THE POINT

Evidence

A

B

Ukraine's General Staff (Tier B) said the Iskander-M carried a cluster warhead; Russia says a blast-fragmentation warhead. The Hub does not adjudicate the warhead. The UN's finding does not depend on it: "a military weapon exploded into shrapnel above them" (Türk); "the missile exploded in the air, and the shrapnel spread across the public park, which sharply increased casualties" (HRMMU). An air-burst fragmentation warhead over a playground is an "explosive weapon with wide area effects" in a populated area under either description.

What the claim concedes: That the weapon was Russian and that it burst in the air over the park — the mechanism the UN describes.



CLAIM, RECORD, CONCESSION (5–8)

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

APR 2025

CLAIM 5 · RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE · 14 APR 2025

“...a strike with two Iskander-M operational-tactical missiles on the venue of a meeting of the command staff of the 'Seversk' operational-tactical group... more than 60 servicemen of the Ukrainian Armed Forces were destroyed. [translated]”

MoD Telegram channel, 14 Apr 2025, as quoted by Izvestia, Meduza and Mediazona
iz.ru/1870469/2025-04-14/vs-rf-nanesli-udar-po-mestu-provedeniia-soveshchaniia-komando-vaniia-vsu-v-sumakh

CLAIM 6 · RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE · 14 APR 2025

“The Kyiv regime continues to use the Ukrainian population as a human shield, placing military facilities and holding events with the participation of servicemen in the centre of a densely populated city. [translated]”

MoD Telegram channel, 14 Apr 2025 (quoted by Novaya Gazeta Europe and Euromaidan Press)
zona.media/news/2025/04/14/sumy

CLAIM 7 · DMITRY PESKOV · KREMLIN BRIEFING, 14 APR 2025

“I can only repeat and remind you of the repeated statements of our President and of our military representatives that our military strikes exclusively military and near-military targets. [translated]”

Kremlin briefing, 14 Apr 2025, as quoted by Meduza; TASS, "Russian forces only hit military targets — Kremlin comments on Sumy strike" (tass.com/politics/1943297: "our forces carry out strikes solely on military and paramilitary targets")
tass.com/politics/1943297

CLAIM 8 · SERGEY LAVROV · KOMMERSANT INTERVIEW, 14 APR 2025 — AND VASSILY NEBENZIA · SECURITY COUNCIL, 29 APR 2025

“We have facts about who was at the facility that was hit in Sumy... There was another 'gathering' of Ukrainian military commanders with their Western colleagues, disguised either as mercenaries or I do not know who. — ...outright fakes, as was the case, for example, with the deaths of civilians in Kryvyi Rih and Sumy on 4 and 13 April, which appear to be the result of the Kyiv regime's egregious violation of international law, as has already been proven irrefutably.”

Sputnik/GlobalSecurity mirror of the Kommersant interview, 14 Apr 2025 · S/PV.9908, 9908th meeting, 29 Apr 2025
www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/ukraine/2025/04/ukraine-250414-sputnik01.htm

NO EVIDENCE PRESENTED · CONTRADICTED BY MONITORS

Evidence

A

B

C

HRMMU (24 Apr 2025): "On 13 April, on Palm Sunday morning, two ballistic missiles struck the historic center of Sumy city"; the first reportedly hit the Sumy University Congress Center; "a second missile exploded above ground only two minutes later", sending shrapnel across a wide public area and causing most of the casualties; at least 31 civilians killed, including two boys aged 11 and 17, at least 80 injured including 14 children; many of the dead were bus passengers. Secretary-General (SG/SM/22621, 13 Apr): "deeply alarmed and shocked"; the attack "continues a devastating pattern". DiCarlo to the Council (S/PV.9908, 29 Apr): "a missile struck the historic centre of Sumy, reportedly killing 35 people". Ukrainian authorities: 35 killed, 129 injured including 15 children (Tier B). The MoD published nothing to support "more than 60": no unit roster, no imagery, no names. Independent researchers found no obituaries of senior officers linked to the "Seversk" group (Novaya Gazeta Europe, 15 Apr).

What the claim concedes: Two ballistic missiles, fired by Russia, at the historic centre of a city of 250,000 on a Sunday morning.

SELF-INCRIMINATING · MISSTATES THE LAW

Evidence

A

The sentence is the Ministry's own description of its aim-point: "the centre of a densely populated city". Under Additional Protocol I art. 51(8), a violation by the defender — even if proven — "shall not release the Parties to the conflict from their legal obligations with respect to the civilian population", including the rules on proportionality (art. 51(5)(b)) and precautions, which require choosing means and methods that avoid or minimise civilian loss (art. 57(2)(a)(ii)) and cancelling an attack that would be disproportionate (art. 57(2)(b)). A second air-burst over the same street two minutes after the first, with people helping the wounded, is the fact HRMMU records.

What the claim concedes: That the target was in the centre of a densely populated city, and that Russia knew it.

CONTRADICTED BY MONITORS

Evidence

A

In the 24 days before Peskov spoke, HRMMU had verified 848 civilian casualties in Ukraine; in the two strikes at issue the UN counted 20 and at least 31 civilians killed, with no military casualty verified by any mandated body. The UN Secretary-General placed Sumy in "a devastating pattern of similar assaults on Ukrainian cities and towns in recent weeks" (13 Apr). OHCHR had already called Kryvyi Rih the deadliest single strike for children it had verified in the war (24 Apr). "Near-military targets" is not a category of international humanitarian law.

What the claim concedes: That the Russian military fired the missiles — Peskov referred all questions on Sumy to the MoD.

NO EVIDENCE PRESENTED

Evidence

A

Neither the "facts" nor the "irrefutable proof" has been placed before the Council, the IAEA-style fact-finding Russia demands of others, or the public. The two statements show the script travelling from Kryvyi Rih to Sumy unchanged: "Western instructors" become "Western colleagues"; "up to 85" becomes "more than 60". At the 29 April meeting Denmark called Sumy "the single worst mass casualty attack on Ukraine's civilian population this year"; the UK spoke of "the revolting strike in Sumy on Palm Sunday"; no member endorsed the Russian account.

What the claim concedes: That the burden of proof is Russia's — Lavrov says the facts exist; the Hub asks for them.



THE RECORD			
QUESTION	WHAT RUSSIA SAYS	WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS	SOURCE
Kryvyi Rih, 4 Apr 2025 — killed	"up to 85 servicemen and officers of foreign states"	20 civilians, including 9 children; at least 46 injured (18 and 75 as first reported)	MoD, 4 Apr · HRMMU 24 Apr 2025; OHCHR 6 Apr 2025
Kryvyi Rih — what was hit	"a restaurant... meeting of unit commanders with Western instructors"	A missile detonated in the air over a residential area — playground, restaurant, apartment blocks; witnesses: a beauty-industry forum, no military presence	OHCHR 6 Apr 2025; HRMMU 24 Apr 2025
Kryvyi Rih — cause of civilian deaths	"the intercepting Ukrainian missile" (Nebenzia, 8 Apr)	One Russian missile; shrapnel from the air-burst; no interception recorded by any monitor	S/PV.9893; OHCHR 6 Apr; HRMMU 24 Apr
Sumy, 13 Apr 2025 — killed	"more than 60 servicemen"	At least 31 civilians incl. two boys aged 11 and 17, ≥80 injured incl. 14 children (HRMMU, 24 Apr); 35 killed, 129 injured (Ukrainian authorities, B; "reportedly 35", DiCarlo S/PV.9908)	MoD, 14 Apr · HRMMU 24 Apr 2025 · S/PV.9908
Sumy — what was hit	"venue of a meeting of the command staff of the 'Seversk' group"	Historic city centre on Palm Sunday morning: university congress centre, a public street, a bus; second missile air-burst two minutes later	HRMMU 24 Apr 2025; SG/SM/22621
Evidence published by Russia for its figures	"We have facts" (Lavrov); "proven irrefutably" (Nebenzia)	None placed on the record of the Council or published, as of Oct 2026	S/PV.9893; S/PV.9908; Kommersant 14 Apr 2025
April 2025, Ukraine	"exclusively military and near-military targets" (Peskov)	848 civilian casualties verified 1–24 Apr (151 killed, 697 injured), +46% on Apr 2024; deadliest month for children in nearly three years	HRMMU 24 Apr 2025; S/PV.9908

FAIR TO SAY

Sumy: a military award ceremony for the 117th Territorial Defence Brigade had reportedly been scheduled in the city that morning. The regional governor, Volodymyr Artyukh, said on 14 April he had been invited to it but did not organise it; the Cabinet approved his dismissal on 15 April. A brigade member told The Washington Post the ceremony was taking place in a university basement; a district council in Zhytomyr region reported that Col. Yuriy Yula of the 27th Rocket Artillery Brigade was among the dead (post later deleted). None of this is UN-verified, and none of it bears on the second missile, which air-burst over a public street two minutes after the first. It should be acknowledged, and Ukraine should publish the outcome of its own inquiry.

Kryvyi Rih: casualty figures moved from 18 (OHCHR, 6 Apr, citing local authorities) to 20 (HRMMU, 24 Apr) as victims died in hospital; the Hub shows both. The warhead type is disputed between Russia and Ukraine's General Staff and is not settled by a Tier A source; the UN's description of an air-burst over the park does not depend on it.

The Security Council did not produce an outcome on either strike. Ukraine's request for an urgent meeting was heard on 8 April as an open briefing; a private meeting on 17 April left no verbatim record; no statement was agreed. The United States reportedly declined to join a G7 statement on Sumy (Tier C press reporting; the Hub has not seen a G7 text).

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
APR 2025

THE LAW

Additional Protocol I, arts. 51(4)–(5) and 57: attacks that employ a method or means which cannot be directed at a specific military objective, or that may be expected to cause civilian loss excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage, are indiscriminate; the attacker must do everything feasible to verify the target, choose means that minimise civilian harm, and cancel an attack that would be disproportionate. An air-burst ballistic missile over a playground or a Palm Sunday street is tested against these rules whatever Russia believed about the restaurant or the congress centre.

Additional Protocol I, art. 51(8): the "human shield" allegation, even if it were proven, "shall not release the Parties to the conflict from their legal obligations with respect to the civilian population". The MoD's 14 April sentence is an admission of the aim-point, not a defence.

Rome Statute, art. 8(2)(b)(i), (ii) and (iv): intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population or civilian objects, and launching an attack in the knowledge that it will cause clearly excessive civilian loss, are war crimes; the ICC has jurisdiction over the territory of Ukraine and has already issued warrants for Russia's strike campaign (5 Mar 2024, 24 Jun 2024). **Convention on the Rights of the Child, arts. 6 and 38:** the right to life and the duty to take all feasible measures to protect children in armed conflict.

Three layers. *Established:* 20 civilians incl. 9 children killed in Kryvyi Rih, ≥31 incl. 2 children in Sumy, by Russian ballistic missiles that burst over populated areas (OHCHR/HRMMU). *Pattern:* the Secretary-General's "devastating pattern of similar assaults on Ukrainian cities and towns" (13 Apr 2025); April 2025 the deadliest month for children in nearly three years. *Position:* that each strike was an intentional attack on civilians is Ukraine's qualification and the Hub's inference, not yet a finding of a mandated body; OHCHR's words are "may constitute an indiscriminate attack... may constitute war crimes".

LINES TO TAKE

1. "Russia announced 85 dead officers in Kryvyi Rih and 60 in Sumy. The UN found 20 and at least 31 civilians, eleven of them children. Eighteen months later Russia has not produced a single name."
2. "In four days Russia gave the Council two stories about Kryvyi Rih: its precision warhead hit the commanders, and a Ukrainian interceptor killed the civilians. The UN found one missile that burst over a playground."
3. "Read the Ministry's own sentence: 'in the centre of a densely populated city'. That is where it aimed."
4. "Even if Russia believed soldiers were present, the UN High Commissioner said, the mode and circumstances of attack may constitute an indiscriminate attack. The law does not switch off because a defender is accused of a violation."
5. "Lavrov says Russia has the facts about who was in Sumy. We ask him to table them."
6. "Where a military ceremony was planned, Ukraine dismissed the governor and should publish its inquiry. That is the difference between accountability and a round number."

Q&A

"There was a military award ceremony in Sumy that day — so it was a military target."

Reports of a planned ceremony exist and Ukraine's government dismissed the regional governor over it; the Hub says so. The UN record is of two ballistic missiles on the historic centre on a Sunday morning, the second bursting over a public street two minutes after the first and killing most of the victims, many on a bus. Proportionality and precautions apply to each missile; an alleged military presence does not license an air-burst over churchgoers.

"Russia said commanders and Western instructors were in the restaurant in Kryvyi Rih."

It said so on 4 April and has published nothing since — no name, rank or image. Witnesses told UN Human Rights there was a beauty-industry forum and no military presence; restaurant CCTV shows no soldiers. Russia's own Permanent Representative then said the civilians were killed by a Ukrainian interceptor, which contradicts the Ministry's account of a precision hit.

"Ukraine's air defence caused the deaths — Ukraine's officials have admitted this before."

No monitor recorded an interception in Kryvyi Rih; the UN describes a single missile detonating over the residential area. The Dnipro precedent Russia relies on (January 2023) rests on a remark that its author retracted and resigned over within three days (see Fact-check "Air defence and depots").

"The warhead was high-explosive, not cluster — Ukraine lied about the weapon."

Russia and Ukraine disagree on the warhead; the Hub does not adjudicate it. The UN's finding — "a military weapon exploded into shrapnel above them" — holds under either description. An air-burst fragmentation warhead over a playground is an explosive weapon with wide-area effects in a populated area.

"Why no Security Council outcome?"

The Council heard an open briefing on 8 April and met in private on 17 April; no statement was agreed. The record that matters is the UN's verification of the dead and the Secretary-General's statement of 13 April; both are public and neither supports the Russian account.

"Ukraine also hits Russian cities."

Where that occurs, the same rules apply and the UN reports what it can verify, including Russian-reported casualties. It does not change the question here: who was under these two missiles, and what evidence Russia has for its 85 and 60. The answer, on the record, is civilians and none.

WHAT WE ASK

Put the two MoD statements beside the UN figures in every statement on April 2025 and ask Russia to table the evidence for "85" and "more than 60" · cite OHCHR's legal note of 6 Apr 2025 — "even if... military personnel could be present... may constitute an indiscriminate attack" — as the standard · support the ICC and Ukrainian investigations of both strikes, including identification of the launching units · ask Ukraine to publish the outcome of its inquiry into the Sumy award ceremony, so that the "human shield" line is answered with facts · request that HRMMU's incident verifications for Kryvyi Rih and Sumy be annexed to the next periodic report with weapon and impact details.



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METHOD

Russian claims are quoted from the primary carrier available: the Security Council verbatim records S/PV.9893 and S/PV.9908 (English as issued by the UN) for Nebenzia; the MoD's Telegram posts of 4 and 14 April 2025 as reproduced by Russian and independent media for the Ministry (translated by the Hub); Meduza's transcription for Peskov and the Sputnik mirror of Kommersant for Lavrov (translated). Words in square brackets are the Hub's.

Each claim is checked first against UN-mandated bodies (OHCHR/HRMMU press releases of 6 and 24 April 2025, the Secretary-General's statement of 13 April, the two Council records); independent sources (France 24 CCTV, RFE/RL Systema, OSINT geolocation, Bellingcat-style analyses by The Insider and Novaya Gazeta Europe) only where no Tier A source speaks. Ukrainian official data (Tier B) appear only as operational facts and are labelled: the Air Force's statement that no interceptor was fired at Kryvyi Rih; the General Staff's warhead identification; the Sumy casualty total of 35/129.

The "fair" section records the reported Sumy award ceremony and the governor's dismissal from Ukrainian and Western press; the Hub has not verified them and says so. Casualty figures that changed over time are shown with their dates.

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.