

PRISONERS: 129 EXECUTED, 95% TORTURED

OHCHR has documented 129 Ukrainian prisoners of war executed after capture and 48 deaths in custody; 95 per cent of released prisoners interviewed describe torture or ill-treatment. The Commission of Inquiry has found the torture to be systematic and a crime against humanity. More than 16,000 civilians are recorded as detained by Russia.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
OCT 2026

129

Ukrainian POWs executed after capture, documented by OHCHR; 48 died in custody A

OHCHR / HRMMU briefing, 10 Aug 2026

95%

of released POWs interviewed by OHCHR report torture or ill-treatment A

OHCHR / HRMMU, 10 Aug 2026

9,048

Ukrainians returned from captivity since 2022; more than 1,000 held since 2022 B

Coordination HQ for the Treatment of POWs · Oct 2026

16,000+

civilians recorded as detained by Russia; Olenivka (29 Jul 2022, 50+ POWs killed) still without an on-site international investigation A

OHCHR; Coordination HQ · 2026

WHAT HAPPENED

Executions. Summary executions of surrendering or captured soldiers, documented from video, forensic evidence and witness accounts; a sharp rise from late 2023 that OHCHR links to public calls by Russian commanders and commentators.

Torture. Systematic in Russian detention: beatings, electric shocks, sexual violence, starvation, denial of medical care; identical patterns across facilities in Russia and occupied territory, indicating policy rather than excess.

Civilians. Thousands of civilians held without charge, status or ICRC access — "incommunicado" — since 2022; Russia does not acknowledge them as detainees. Olenivka: 50+ POWs killed in a barracks explosion; the UN fact-finding mission was denied access and disbanded in Jan 2023.

WHO VERIFIED IT

- A OHCHR / HRMMU: briefing of 10 Aug 2026 (129 executions, 48 deaths in custody, 95% torture); periodic reports on treatment of POWs (2023–26)
- A Commission of Inquiry, A/79/549 (Oct 2024): torture of POWs and civilians is widespread and systematic and constitutes a crime against humanity; A/HRC/58/67 (2025)
- A UN fact-finding mission on Olenivka (2022–23): denied access by Russia; OHCHR assessment that Russia's account was not credible
- B Coordination HQ for the Treatment of POWs; Office of the Prosecutor General; Ombudsman of Ukraine
- C Media Initiative for Human Rights; ICRC statements on access; investigative media (video verification)

LEGAL QUALIFICATION — THREE LAYERS

ESTABLISHED COI (A/79/549): torture of POWs and civilians is a crime against humanity — an international finding. OHCHR: 129 executions of persons hors de combat, each a grave breach of GC III art. 13 and a war crime under Rome Statute art. 8(2)(a)(i).

PATTERN Rome Statute art. 8(2)(a)(i)–(iii), 7(1)(e)–(f); GC III arts. 13, 17, 126 (ICRC access); GC IV arts. 27, 32, 143. The uniformity of methods across facilities is the pattern evidence.

POSITION Ukraine qualifies the executions as a policy directed from command level (art. 28), and the incommunicado detention of civilians as enforced disappearance (art. 7(1)(i)). Pending international findings.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

Units documented in executions	Identified by OHCHR and Ukrainian investigators in individual cases (2023–26)	Notices of suspicion; evidence shared with ICC OTP
Federal Penitentiary Service / detention facilities	Facilities in Russia and occupied territory with identical torture patterns	EU/UK/US sanctions on named officials and facilities
Russian commanders and public figures	Public calls for "no prisoners"	Documented by OHCHR as context for the rise in executions
General Staff / Supreme Commander	Command responsibility for a systematic pattern	Gerasimov (ICC warrant 2024); Putin (ICC warrant 2023); art. 28

RUSSIA SAID / THE RECORD SAYS

MIROSHNIK (MFA), ARRIA, 14 OCT 2026

Ukraine runs "a whole network of secret prisons"; OHCHR noted torture "only in passing".

THE RECORD

OHCHR reports on both sides and has documented cases involving Ukrainian forces; the difference is scale and access: OHCHR visits Ukrainian facilities and is denied access to Russian ones.

AMB. NEBENZIA, ARRIA, 14 OCT 2026

The UN avoids "documenting the crimes of the Kiev regime" and uses a flawed "methodology for collecting and processing data".

THE RECORD

The methodology is public: two independent sources or a field visit per case. Russia's remedy is access — it has refused it for every detention site since 2022.

RUSSIA, STANDING POSITION

POWs are treated "in accordance with international law"; Olenivka was a Ukrainian HIMARS strike.

THE RECORD

95% of released prisoners report torture; the UN mission to Olenivka was denied access; OHCHR found Russia's account not credible.

WHAT WE ASK
OF MEMBER STATES

- Demand ICRC access to all places of detention, as required by GC III art. 126 — the single most verifiable ask.
- Support the all-for-all exchange and a separate track for civilian detainees, with lists provided to the UN.
- Cite the COI finding of crimes against humanity when Russia raises "secret prisons": the record is on both sides and the asymmetry is access.
- Support an independent investigation of Olenivka with site access; no amnesty for executions of prisoners.