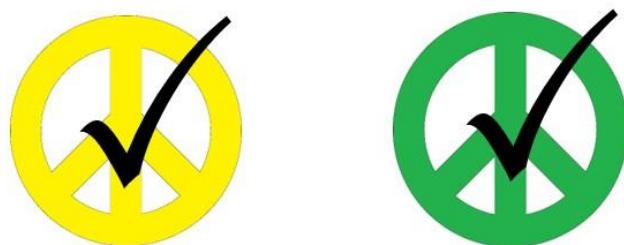




SYLLABUS

WarDatasetOlympics



BibliVerifica.cloud

download here

<http://bit.ly/intolympics>

ITALIAN VERSION

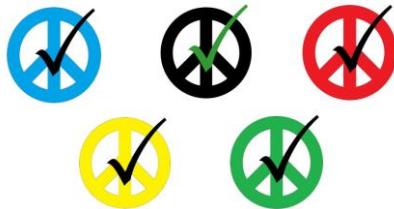
<http://bit.ly/bvolymcis>

Crowdsearcher



BibliVerifica





TOOLS how to spot fake news

(IFLA International Federation of Library Associations)

HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS



CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.



READ BEYOND

Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?



CHECK THE AUTHOR

Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?



SUPPORTING SOURCES?

Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.



CHECK THE DATE

Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.



IS IT A JOKE?

If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.



CHECK YOUR BIASES

Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.



ASK THE EXPERTS

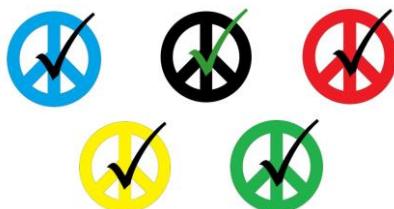
Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

IFLA
 International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
With thanks to www.factcheck.org

SOURCE How to Spot Fake News by IFLA

<https://repository.ifla.org/handle/123456789/167>





TOOLS

combating disinformation about the war in Ukraine (The News Literacy Project)

Here are three tips to help you keep your footing and avoid unintentionally spreading confusion and harm:

1 Be cautious and discerning with what you believe and share. Out-of-context photos and video proliferate during military conflicts and other major news events. Avoid liking and sharing any visuals that haven't been verified by credible, standards-based sources.

Keep in mind: What you endorse and amplify online affects the perceptions of others. Slow down and follow common-sense steps — like these — before you react to information from unfamiliar sources.

2 Familiarize yourself with Russian disinformation outlets, tactics and narratives. Russia has built an extensive foundation of disinformation to try to justify its military actions. Once established, these false narratives can be difficult to dislodge or trace back to their source.

Keep in mind: Russian state-run propaganda outlets have an established presence on major social media platforms and can be hard to identify. A quick web search for the name of any unfamiliar news sources or unsubstantiated claims is your best first step to avoid misinformation.

3 Put yourself in the way of credible information. For all the mis- and disinformation that circulates on social media, these platforms can also be powerful tools for accessing and curating timely, credible information. Be intentional about following professional journalists on the ground, reputable news organizations and fact-checkers debunking falsehoods in real-time.

Keep in mind: Breaking news events create chaotic, fast-moving and challenging information environments. Resist the urge to demonstrate your concern by reflexively sharing sensational but unconfirmed posts and updates. Also remember that it's important to consider fairness and framing — as well as accuracy — as you follow news on Ukraine in the days ahead. Some have criticized recent news coverage, for instance, for including racist and Eurocentric sentiments that reveal a troubling double standard in coverage of this conflict compared to those outside of Europe.

SOURCE: News Literacy Project

<https://newslit.org/combating-disinformation-about-the-war-in-ukraine/>





TOOLS

misuse of conflict statistics

(Andreas, Greenhill “Sex, Drugs, and Body Counts: The Politics of Numbers in Global Crime and Conflict”)

Misuse of conflict statistics and showing that miscalculations can have “perverse and counterproductive consequences.” Getting it wrong might, for instance, help prolong wars, give governments an excuse not to act, or muddy evaluations of policy successes or failures in conflict zones. What can journalists do to get it right? Greenhill provided the following questions that should be routinely asked about crime and conflict data:

WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF THE NUMBERS?

WHAT DEFINITIONS ARE THE SOURCES EMPLOYING, AND WHAT EXACTLY IS BEING MEASURED?

WHAT ARE THE INTERESTS OF THOSE PROVIDING THE NUMBERS?

WHAT DO THESE ACTORS STAND TO GAIN OR LOSE IF THE STATISTICS IN QUESTION ARE – OR ARE NOT – EMBRACED AND ACCEPTED?

WHAT METHODOLOGIES WERE EMPLOYED IN ACQUIRING THE NUMBERS?

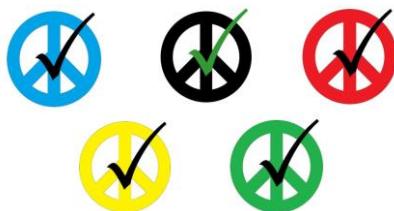
DO POTENTIALLY COMPETING FIGURES EXIST, AND, IF SO, WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT THEIR SOURCES, MEASUREMENT, AND METHODOLOGIES?

“To some degree, the politicization of statistics is inevitable and unavoidable. But journalists as consumers and disseminators of statistics should be more savvy and credulous in their acquisition and utilization of these data,” said Greenhill, a political science and international relations professor at Tufts University.

SOURCE: How to Use Data Journalism to Cover War and Conflict, by Sherry Ricchiardi

<https://gijn.org/2021/05/26/how-to-use-data-journalism-to-cover-war-and-conflict/>





TOOLS guide against fake news

(*Fakenewslab University of Turin*)

BE WARY OF A NEWS STORY WHEN:

1 The story is unlikely

It may be trivial, but if it is too absurd to be true, it may not be true. This is not to say that every unusual news story is certainly false, but that you should never assume that what you read on social media is reality.

Miraculous and cost-free technologies do not exist, natural remedies to cure the most serious diseases do not work, simple and effective economic solutions are a pipe dream. Reality is always a little bit more complex than how they sell it to us in exchange for a click. Pay attention to what has happened and always ask yourself, "Is that possible?" Being wary is the first step.

2 The style is unprofessional

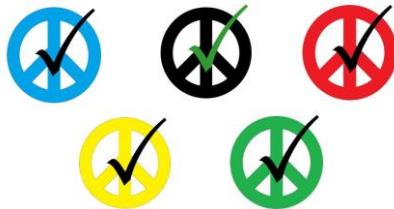
Those who publish fake news are not interested in the facts, but in the readers: they need to get their attention, to tickle their indignation, so that they feel the need to spread the news as much as possible. This is why hoaxes are often written in an inelegant, un "journalistic" style, full of exaggeration, a style that appeals to the emotional sphere first and foremost.

Unfortunately, it is easy to fall for it if you already agree with what you read: it will sound like reinforcement, like a friend who thinks like you. This is not to say that a poorly written one is necessarily false, but at least that it might be written instrumentally. Strive to pay attention to the writer's style, and be wary of those who sound unprofessional even if you agree with them.

3 The author is not trustworthy

The editorial staff of a newspaper is staffed by people with professional skills who report the most important events every day, offer a key to the most complex phenomena, and tell what is happening by making it accessible to everyone. You may disagree with the writer, but the editorial work is certainly respectable. Usually the information from mainstream newspapers is reliable and verified, although sometimes editorial timing can cause some mistakes to be made.





Independent information is a cultural asset, but it is more difficult to distinguish reliable sources from captious sources. Always check the source from which the article comes . Pay attention to the web address, which often resembles that of a real newspaper.

4 Lack of sources

A common practice in quality journalism is to point out the sources from which you take a news story, perhaps even attaching the credited video or photo of the incident to the text. This is not only a way of giving credit to those who produced those sources, but also a means of certifying that the news is not an invention of the newsroom, that it really happened. News that comes from a very reliable source has more credibility than news with no source at all. Disinformation blogs, on the other hand, are full of news without sources: quotations from interviews that never happened, or that are distorted or partial; excerpts from documents that never existed; parts of documents that were mistranslated on purpose. That is why in the non-news there are no links to sources, so they cannot be verified, and when there are they often refer to other unreliable sources.

Always remember to look for sources when you read a news story and to investigate all the links you find on the page: if you are on an unreliable site and the authors cannot prove what they say, it is probably false.

5 The news does not exist elsewhere

Except for very few exclusives, all major events are independently relaunched by several newspapers together. Everyone will want to devote a few pages to a major event, no one will want to fail to offer readers news that others have covered adequately. Disinformation sites, by contrast, often have news that other newspapers do not report. The reason is simple: no one else has covered it because that event never happened.

If you read an unlikely news story you are in doubt, look for the news elsewhere as well: if you find no other results from reputable sources, the news is probably fake.

SOURCE: Fakenewslab University of Turin

<https://www.fakenewslab.it/guida.php>





TOOLS the full fact toolkit *(Full Fact)*

Simple practical tools anyone can use to identify bad information. To spot bad and misleading information, ask yourself these three simple questions:

Where's it from? What is missing? How do you feel?

WHERE'S IT FROM?

A trusted source is your safest option. If you don't know the source, check out the about page or ask yourself why they're sharing the story. If there's no source, search for one.

You can search for images to find out where they've been seen before or search for the story to see where it started. If it doesn't look right, be careful.

False news can be hidden on websites made to look like the real thing. Look for the little clues: phony URLs, bad spelling, or awkward layouts. On social media, check their handle to verify the name matches.

WHAT'S MISSING?

Get the whole story, not just a headline.

One click can help you spot false news. Read the whole story and watch out for images, numbers, and quotes that don't have sources or that might have been taken out of context.

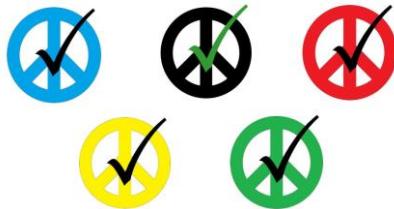
Images and videos can be faked.

False news stories often contain images or videos that have been changed. Even real images can be made to look like things they're not with a false date or caption. Videos can be edited or the voices can be changed - check for the original.

Check what other people say.

Check out the sources they give. See what trusted news sites or fact checkers are saying - breaking news is quickly picked up by different news sources. In an emergency, look for the official emergency services.





HOW DO YOU FEEL?

People who make false news try to manipulate your feelings.

They know that making you angry or worried means they're more likely to get clicks. If it's winding you up, stop and think about how you could check it before you share.

If it looks too good to be true, it probably is.

Hope can be used to manipulate us too. Most of the time, the miracle cure doesn't exist.

Don't be the one who doesn't spot the joke.

Sometimes jokes and satire online aren't obvious. Funny or outrageous details, the way it's written, or the site it's on might give it away.

SOURCE: The Full Fact Toolkit. Simple practical tools anyone can use to identify bad information

<https://fullfact.org/toolkit/>



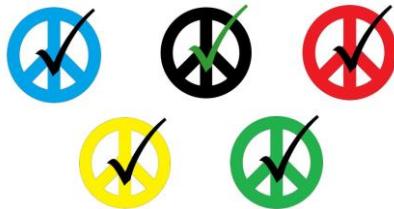


TOOLS decalogue of good information

(*Google-AltroConsumo-MondoDigitale*)

1. Don't trust news with resounding or sensationalist headlines, be wary of headlines that are highbrow
2. Read the whole news story and don't stop at the headline
3. Research information about the sources of the news you read: Research the source. Use the search engine to gather information, then match the name of the source with words like "hoax" or "fake" to check for misleading content.
4. Cross-check: Compare different sources of a news story and check how they cover the topic. With Google News, cross-checking a news story is easy. Just use the feature to see the full coverage and check whether other news outlets have also reported on the news and how they cover it.
5. Check that the URL is correct. Make sure that the https security protocol is in place and that the URL is correct. Often sites offering low-quality content use deceptive URLs that are very similar to authoritative and popular source names.
6. Pay attention to web page formatting: typos, typos, and unusual layouts often signal low-quality content. Check for errors in the formatting of a web page to see if it is fake news
7. Check the date and location of news stories to see if they are up-to-date.





8. Be careful with photos and videos

Images can often be faked or used in an inappropriate context. You can check whether a photo or image has been faked, edited, or used in an inappropriate context

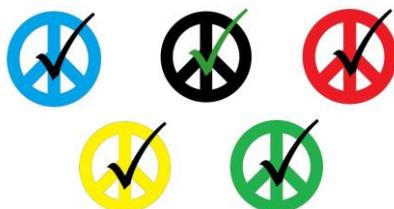
9. Make sure the news reported is not a joke. Satirical newspapers publish fake news to make people laugh or entertain. Verify that the news is not a joke.

10. Think before you share or comment on a news item thus making it spread

SOURCE: Decalogo della buona informazione

https://safety.google/intl/it_it/comeinformarsionline/#cross-check





TOOLS

search author or hashtag

(European Journalism Centre EJC VERIFICATION HAND BOOK)

Linkedin: <https://linkedin.com/>

through work history and connections Linkedin can provide additional means to track an individual down and verify the person's identity or story.

WebMii: <https://webmii.com/>

searches for weblinks that match an individual's name, or can identify unspecified individuals by keyword. It gives a web visibility score which can be used to identify fake profiles.

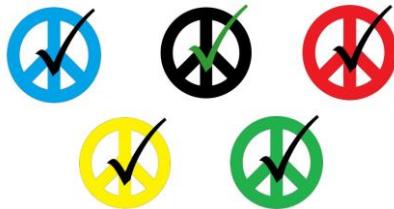
Library of Congress <https://catalog.loc.gov/advanced>

Advanced Search can be useful if you are looking for specific items but do not know, for example, the complete name of an author/creator or the first words of a title. This form can also help you develop more precise search strategies to combine or exclude search words or phrases.

OPAC SBN <https://opac.sbn.it/ricerca-avanzata>

Italian National Library Service (SBN) is the Italian libraries network promoted by the General Direction for Library Heritage and Cultural Institutes in cooperation with the Regions and the Universities, with the coordination of the Central Institute for the Union Catalogue of Italian Libraries and for Bibliographic Information (ICCU). Participating to the SBN are at now about 4900 state, university, academies, local bodies, and public and private institutions libraries, operating in different sectors.



**Google Books** https://books.google.com/advanced_book_search

reference pages for every book so you can quickly find all kinds of relevant information: book reviews, web references, maps and more.

Google Scholar <https://scholar.google.it>

Google Scholar is a freely accessible web search engine that indexes the full text or metadata of scholarly literature across an array of publishing formats and disciplines. Released in beta in November 2004, the Google Scholar index includes peer-reviewed online academic journals and books, conference papers, theses and dissertations, preprints, abstracts, technical reports, and other scholarly literature, including court opinions and patents

CINECA - Search University <https://cercauniversita.cineca.it/>

CINECA is a service that aggregates possible searches involving the Italian University, from degree programs to funding, from faculty to undergraduate students, from announcements to statistics. Some very basic searches are possible already from this home page. Many others can be done from the advanced searches or dedicated sites.

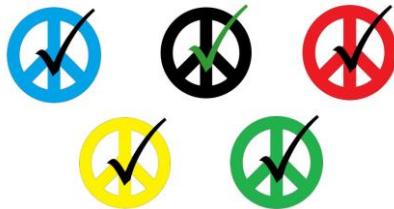
Social Search <https://www.social-searcher.com/>

The search engine allows you to monitor all public social mentions in social networks and web. Quickly measure and track what people are saying about your company, brand, product, or service in one easy to use dashboard, which would streamline your online presence tracking efforts and be a huge time saver.

RESEARCH GATE <https://www.researchgate.net/>

ResearchGate is a European commercial social networking site for scientists and researchers to share papers, ask and answer questions, and find collaborators.





ACADEMIA <https://www.academia.edu/>

Academia is a platform for sharing academic research. Academics have uploaded 36 million papers, and 103 million academics, professionals, and students read papers on Academia every month.

MENDELEY <https://www.mendeley.com/>

Web products and services for academic researchers: reference manager which is used to manage and share research papers and generate bibliographies for scholarly articles. Mendeley Profile, a public showcase for research outputs and receiving citation and usage statistics on one's personal research output.

SOURCE: Verification Handbook: An Ultimate Guideline on Digital Age

<https://verificationhandbook.com/>





TOOLS

how verifying images and videos in combating misinformation and disinformation (International Center for Journalists)

Tools for verifying images and videos is an absolute must, as they spread with the speed of light.

TinEye <https://tineye.com/>

When users upload an image to TinEye, the site reverse image searches to find duplicates and scours the internet for other sites where the image occurs.

YouTube Data Viewer <https://citizenevidence.amnestyusa.org/>

This tool shows users the upload time of a video after they copy and paste the link into the search bar. With this website, users can also view thumbnails and a link to reverse image search the thumbnails.

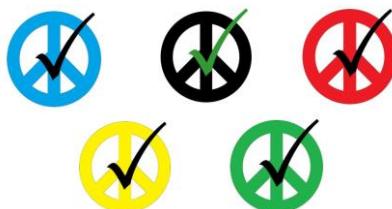
FotoForensics <http://fotoforensics.com/>

This tool provides an in-depth analysis of images on the internet. Although FotoForensics doesn't simply state whether an image is real or fake, it can identify hidden pixels, error level analysis and metadata details.

Google Reverse Image Search <https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/1325808?co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop&hl=en&oco=0>

With this tool, you can Google search an image, and the results will display similar images and websites that contain these images.





InVID Verification <https://www.invid-project.eu/tools-and-services/invid-verification-plugin/>

InVID is a plugin available on Chrome and Firefox. Upload an image or video to the system and it will show you its original location, date of creation, thumbnails and keyframes. It allows you to reverse search on Google and Twitter, magnify images without losing clarity and analyze metadata with an Image Verification Assistant.

App Serelay <https://www.serelay.com/>

Users can upload images to this free app and it will perform a series of tests to conclude whether or not the image is doctored. It also shows which part of the image has been modified. Serelay does not keep an inventory of photos in attempts to protect users' privacy. But it does store a digital fingerprint of each image that can detect even a single-pixel edit.

Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps>

an online map providing high-resolution aerial or satellite imagery covering much of the Earth, except for areas around the poles. Includes a number of viewing options such as terrain, weather information and a 360-degree street level view.

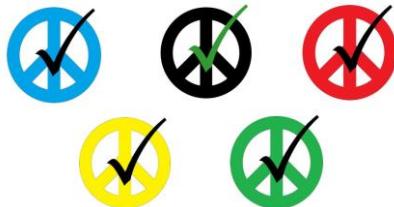
SunCalc <https://suncalc.net/#/41.888,12.411,12/2022.08.03/09:30>

SunCalc is an application shows the sun's movement throughout the day on any map area. This helps users verify information by matching the shadows in videos to the time of day the video was taken.

SOURCE: 9 tools for verifying images by MOLLY STELLINO

<https://ijnet.org/en/story/9-tools-verifying-images>





TOOLS

dataset search & fact check tools (Google)

GOOGLE DATASET SEARCH (e.g. “Ukraine GDP”)

<https://datasetsearch.research.google.com/search?src=0&query=UKRAINE%20gdp>

There are academic researchers, finding data to develop their hypotheses (e.g., try oxytocin), students looking for free data in a tabular format, covering the topic of their senior thesis (e.g., try incarceration rates with the corresponding filters), business analysts and data scientists looking for information on mobile apps or fast food establishments, and so on.

GOOGLE FACT CHECK TOOLS CONSIST OF TWO TOOLS:

Fact Check Explorer and Fact Check Markup Tool.

<https://toolbox.google.com/factcheck/explorer>

Both tools aim to facilitate the work of fact checkers, journalists and researchers. Google does not endorse or create any of these fact checks. If you disagree with one, please contact the website owner that published it.

Goal. This tool allows you to easily browse and search for fact checks. For example, you can search for a politician's statement, or for a topic. You can also restrict results to a specific publisher. What can I search for? You can search by keywords and see a list of matching claims and the corresponding fact checks.

SOURCE: Fact Check Tools

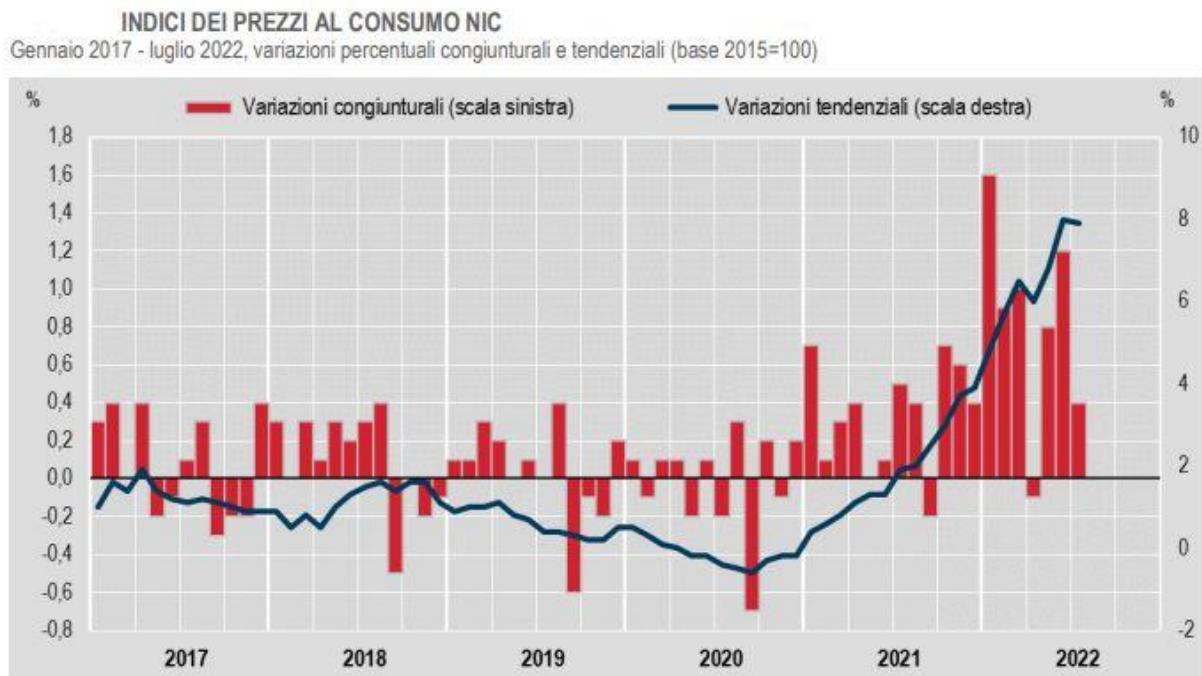
<https://toolbox.google.com/factcheck/about>





DATASET

Italy consumer prices - ISTAT



In July 2022, the National Index of Consumer Prices for the Whole Community (NIC), before tobacco, is estimated to increase by 0.4% on a monthly basis and by 7.9% on an annual basis (from +8.0% in the previous month), confirming the preliminary estimate. Inflation on a trend basis remained high although it fell by a tenth of a percentage point. This is due to contrasting trends. On the one hand, in fact, prices of Energy Goods slowed (from +48.7% in June to +42.9%) due to Regulated Energies (from +64.3% to +47.9%) with prices of Unregulated Energies growing by 39.8% (from +39.9%) and prices of Recreational, Cultural and Personal Care Services decelerated (from +5.0% to +4.6%); On the other hand, prices accelerated for processed food (from +8.1% to +9.5%), transport services (from +7.2% to +8.9%), non-durable goods (from +2.9% to +3.6%), durable goods (from +2.8% to +3.3%) and miscellaneous services (from +1.1% to +1.6%).

SOURCE: ISTAT

<https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/273781>





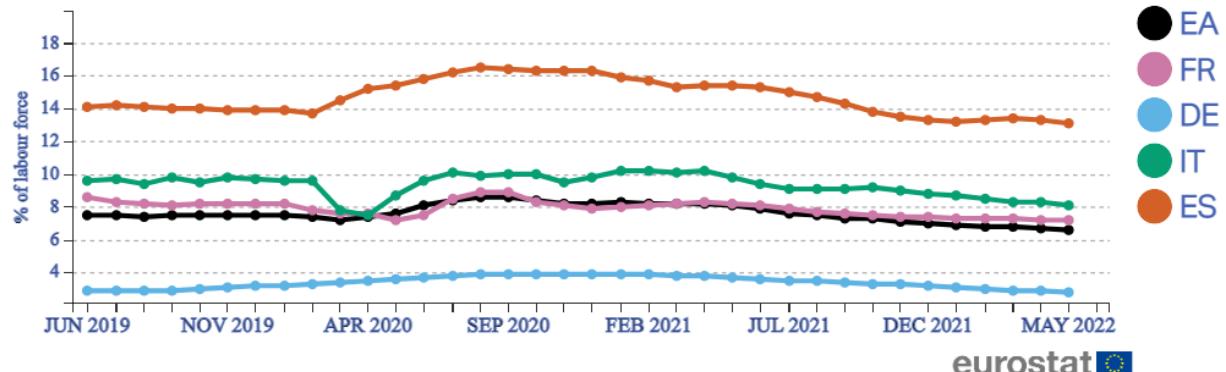
DATASET

european statistical recovery dashboard - EUROSTAT

Monthly unemployment rate

EUROPEAN STATISTICAL
Recovery Dashboard

% of labour force aged 15-74

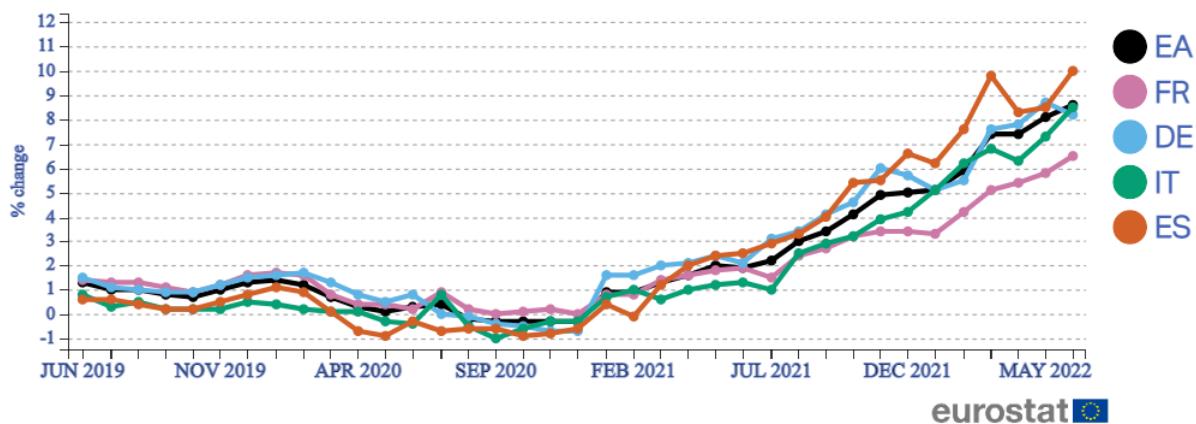


ea= EURO ZONE / it= ITALY / fr= FRANCE / de= GERMANY / es= SPAIN

Annual inflation rate

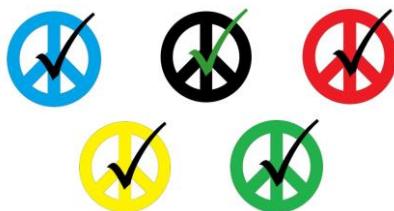
EUROPEAN STATISTICAL
Recovery Dashboard

annual rate of change



SOURCE: EUROSTAT

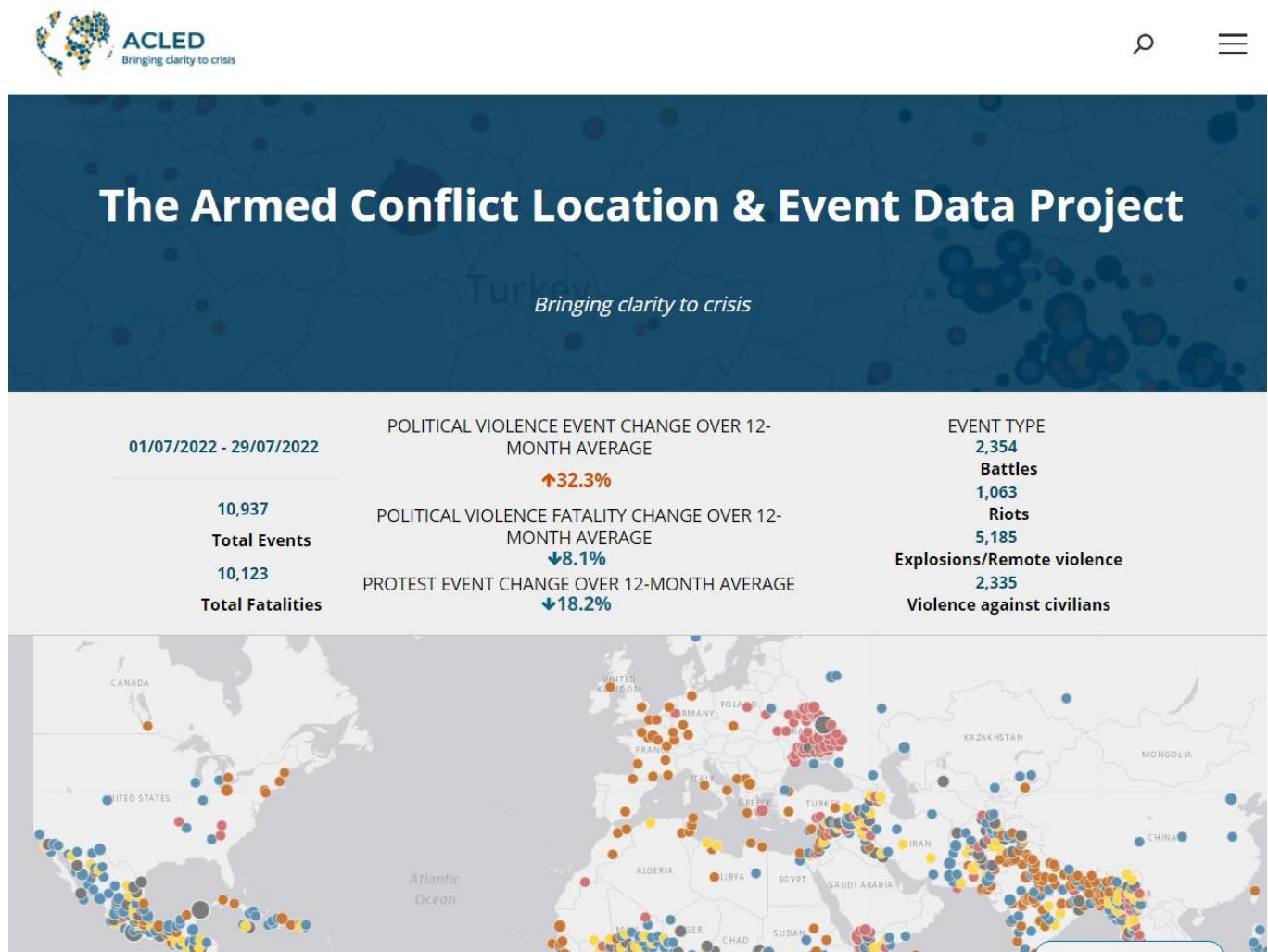
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/recovery-dashboard/>



DATASET

armed conflict location & event data project ACLED

Real-time data on the locations, dates, actors, fatalities, and types of all reported political violence and protest events around the world.



<https://acleddata.com/#/dashboard>





DATASET

global terrorism databases

Open-source databases with information on terrorist events around the world from 1970. Includes data on domestic as well as international terrorist incidents with more than 140,000 cases.

GTD GLOBAL TERRORISM DATABASE

[ABOUT GTD](#) [USING GTD](#) [FAQ](#) [TERMS OF USE](#) [CONTACT](#) [START ➤](#)

Search the Database

[I'm a New User](#)
[ADVANCED SEARCH](#)

Browse by:

Go

Information on more than 200,000 Terrorist Attacks

The Global Terrorism Database™ (GTD) is an open-source database including information on terrorist events around the world from 1970 through 2020 (with annual updates planned for the future). Unlike many other event databases, the GTD includes systematic data on domestic as well as international terrorist incidents that have occurred during this time period and now includes more than 200,000 cases. [Learn more](#)

GTD DATA VISUALIZATIONS



FEATURED

Data Update: A Look Back at 2020



A Look Back at 2020: Trends from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD)

2020 DEVELOPMENTS

GLOBAL PANDEMIC: COVID-19

PROTEST-RELATED VIOLENCE & HATE CRIME

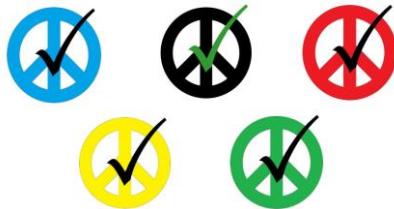
UNITED STATES - TURKISH AGREEMENT

ISLAMIC STATE POST-'CALIPHATE'

Data through 2020 are now available. GTD Program Manager Dr. Erin Miller provides a [virtual lecture](#) exploring the most recent terrorism trends found in the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). Twenty years after University of Maryland researchers began developing the GTD in 2002, Miller presents trends.

<https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>



**DATASET****stockholm international peace research institute SIPRI**

Data on security, peace operations, military expenditures, arms transfers, arms embargoes, and arms exports.

STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL
PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Search the site



The independent resource on global security

[Home](#) [Research](#) ▾ [Databases](#) [Publications](#) [SIPRI Yearbook](#) ▾ [News and Events](#) ▾ [Media](#) ▾ [Commentary](#) ▾ [About](#) ▾

SIPRI databases

SIPRI Arms Transfers Database

The SIPRI Arms Transfers Database shows all international transfers of major conventional arms since 1950 and is the most comprehensive publicly available source of information on international arms transfers.

CONNECT



SIPRI Mapping ATT-Relevant Cooperation and Assistance Activities

Database

The SIPRI Mapping ATT-relevant Cooperation and Assistance Activities Database provides information on cooperation and assistance activities in the field of arms transfer and small arms and light weapons (SALW) controls. The database supports states' implementation of the 2001 UN Programme of Action on SALW and the 2013 Arms Trade Treaty and includes activities carried out since 2012.

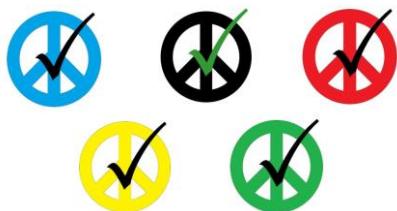
SIPRI Arms Industry Database

The SIPRI Arms Industry Database contains information on the 100 largest arms-producing and military services companies.

<https://www.sipri.org/databases>

Pag. 21 di 116
Crowdsearcher Olympics 2022: War Dataset

<http://bit.ly/intolympics>



DATASET

amnesty international

war crimes and crimes against humanity

AI is funded by members and people, it is independent of any political ideology, economic interest or religion. No government is beyond scrutiny.

The screenshot shows the Amnesty International homepage. The top navigation bar includes links for WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO, COUNTRIES, GET INVOLVED, DONATE NOW (underlined), LATEST, and a search icon. Below the navigation is a search/filter bar with dropdown menus for CONTENT TYPES, COUNTRIES, RESOURCE TYPES, TOPICS, and an APPLY button.

My filters

WAR CRIMES AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY X

CLEAR ALL X

The screenshot shows the search results page with 2,227 results. The results are sorted by MOST RECENT. The first two results are news articles:

- Ukraine: Russian soldiers filmed viciously attacking Ukrainian POW must face** (News, July 29, 2022)
- Russia: Charging 92 members of Ukraine's military with 'crimes'** (News, July 25, 2022)

On the right, there is a sidebar for a research article titled "Nepal: Amend Transitional Justice Bill, New Draft Falls Short of Promised Reforms to Protect Victims' Rights" (July 25, 2022).

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/topic/war-crimes-and-crimes-against-humanity/?qtopic=2066>





DATASET

united nations peacekeeping statistics

Troop and Police contributors by country, gender breakdowns, and fact sheets.

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United Nations Peacekeeping #A4P

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DATA

PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

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Click on a marker on the map to select a mission

See all peacekeeping operations

Leaflet | Produced by: UN Geospatial

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Data

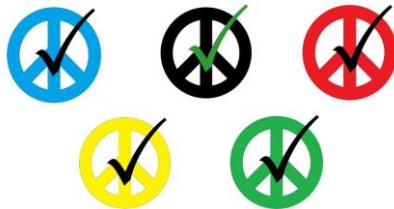
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<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/data>





DATASET United Nations data

UNdata provides statistics on agriculture, education, employment, energy, environment, health, HIV/AIDS, human development, industry, information technology, national accounts, population, refugees, tourism, and UN Millennium Development Goals.



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32 databases - 60 million records

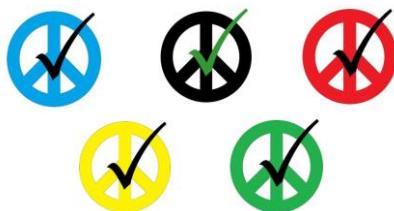
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Other UNSD Databases:

[Popular statistical tables, country \(area\) and regional profiles](#)

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DATASET Unctad STAT

UNCTADstat offers ready-to-use analytical groupings, with a unique coverage for countries and products and a particular focus on developing economies. This approach ensures data consistency across multiple data series, and enables users to harness its full potential by mixing and matching data from various domains. Access to basic and derived indicators built upon common rules, harmonized environment and clear methodology supported by powerful data browsing system.

The screenshot shows the UNCTADSTAT website interface. At the top, there's a banner with a bar chart graphic and the text "UNCTADSTAT" and "UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT". To the right is the United Nations UNCTAD logo. Below the banner is a navigation menu with five items: "ABOUT DOCUMENTATION", "DATA", "COUNTRY PROFILES", "DATA EXPLORATION", and "INFOGRAPHICS". The "DATA" item is highlighted. Below the menu is a search bar with a "Search" button and a "Reports" tab. On the left, there's a sidebar titled "Folders" containing a list of report categories. The main content area shows a table with columns for "Name" and "Date (yyyy-mm-dd)".

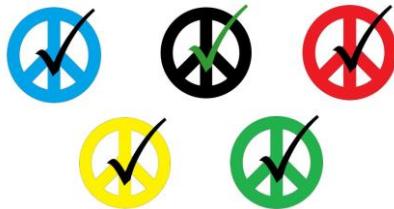
Name ↑↓	Date (yyyy-mm-dd) ↑↓
Trade value and volume	
Trade structure	
Trade indicators	
Market access	

Folders

- + International merchandise trade
 - International trade in services
 - Digital economy
 - Technology and innovation
 - Trade and Biodiversity
 - Ocean trade
 - Plastics trade
 - Creative economy
 - Iron ore (Discontinued)
 - Maritime transport
 - Transport costs
 - Balance of payments
 - Output and income
 - Productive capacities
 - Inflation and exchange rates
 - Commodity prices
 - Population

https://unctadstat.unctad.org/wds/ReportFolders/reportFolders.aspx?sCS_ChosenLang=en





DATASET WTO STATS

The WTO Stats Dashboard allows users to filter and change displayed information. Depending on the graph, data can be explored by reporting economy, trade flow, period (annual, quarterly, monthly), trade category, and product or sector breakdown.

Selection

Display

Indicators 0 / 255

✖ Expand ✖ Collapse

Filter

- ▶ International trade statistics
- ▶ Foreign affiliates statistics
- ▶ Balanced International Trade in Services EBOPS 2010 (2005-2019) - (Experimental data set)
- ▶ Tariff indicators - Applied
- ▶ Bilateral imports
- ▶ Tariff indicators - Bound
- ▶ Export perspective in top 5 markets
- ▶ Non-tariff measures indicators

Reporting Economies 0 / 292

Years 0 / 76

NEW

[Dashboard](#) | [Database Inventory](#) | [Technical Notes](#) | [User Guide](#) | [Contact Us](#)

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DU COMMERCE
ORGANIZACIÓN MUNDIAL DEL COMERCIO

WTO STATS

The WTO Stats portal contains statistical indicators related to WTO issues. Available time series cover merchandise trade and trade in services statistics (annual, quarterly and monthly), market access indicators (bound, applied & preferential tariffs), non-tariff information as well as other indicators.

Data retrieval functionalities include data selection, display and export, including available metadata.

Please proceed to indicator selection.

NEW The WTO Stats Dashboard, a new data visualization tool, is available. In this tool selected WTO Stats Portal data sets are presented visually via three distinct dashboards: Merchandise Trade, Commercial Services Trade, and Market Access. Depending on the dashboard, data can be explored by reporting economy, trade flow, period (annual, quarterly, monthly), indicator, and product or sector breakdown. Available [here](#).

For analytical reports on official tariff and import data of WTO members, go to [Tariff Analysis Online](#) (login required).

<https://stats.wto.org/>

Pag. 26 di 116
Crowdsearcher Olympics 2022: War Dataset

<http://bit.ly/intolympics>



DATASET

International Monetary Fund data

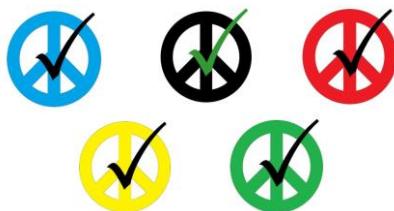
The IMF provides statistical data on government finance, monetary relations, financial stability, international trade, exchange rates, balance-of-payments and global economic prospects.

The screenshot shows the official website of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). At the top, there is a navigation bar with links to 'IMF.ORG', 'ELIBRARY', 'BOOKSTORE', 'MCM DATA', 'DATASETS', 'DATA TOPICS', and 'HELP'. To the right of the navigation bar is a 'SIGN IN OR' button. Below the navigation bar, a large banner reads 'INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND' with the IMF logo on the left. The main content area is titled 'IMF DATA ACCESS TO MACROECONOMIC & FINANCIAL DATA'. In this section, there is a sub-header 'To set up machine-to-machine data retrieval by dataset or across datasets, use Application Programming Interface' with a 'API' button. Below this, there is a list of datasets with download icons:

- Asia and Pacific Regional Economic Outlook (APDREO)
- Balance of Payments (BOP)
- Balance of Payments (BOP), World and Regional Aggregates
- Commodity Terms of Trade
- Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- Coordinated Direct Investment Survey (CDIS)
- Coordinated Portfolio Investment Survey (CPIS)
- Currency Composition of Official Foreign Exchange Reserves (COFER)
- Direction of Trade Statistics (DOTS)
- Export Diversification
- Export Quality

<https://data.imf.org/>





DATASET

World Bank Open Data

The World Bank recognizes that transparency and accountability are essential to the development process and central to achieving the Bank's mission to alleviate poverty. The Bank's commitment to openness is also driven by a desire to foster public ownership, partnership and participation in development from a wide range of stakeholders. As a knowledge institution, the World Bank's first step is to share its knowledge freely and openly.

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World Bank Open Data

Free and open access to global development data

Browse by [Country](#) or [Indicator](#)

MOST RECENT

[Most commodity prices fell in July—Pink Sheet](#)

John Baffes, Maria Hazel
Macadangdang, Aug 03, 2022

Beverage commodity markets: Stable subjected to weather volatility

John Baffes, Kaltrina Temaj, Aug 01, 2022

Using PIP's Statistics Online (SOL) for your poverty and inequality analysis

WHAT YOU CAN LEARN WITH OPEN DATA

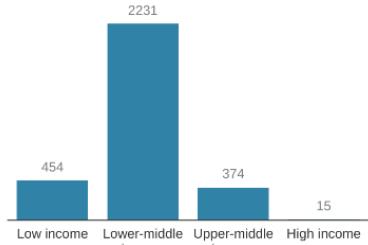
Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.90 a day (2011 PPP) (% of population)



Extreme Poverty

The proportion of the world's population living in extreme poverty has dropped significantly

Population who cannot afford a healthy diet (millions) in 2020



Food Prices for Nutrition

Over 3 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet and most live in lower-middle-income countries.

<https://data.worldbank.org/>





DATASET

UPPSALA university department of peace and conflict research data

Web-based system for visualizing, handling and downloading data, including ready-made datasets on organized violence and peacemaking.

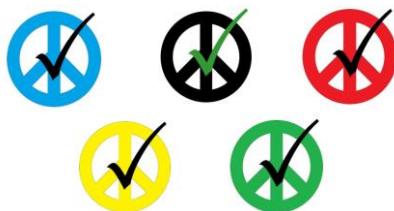
The screenshot shows the homepage of the Uppsala University Department of Peace and Conflict Research. At the top right is a 'Menu' icon. Below it is the Uppsala University logo and a search bar with a magnifying glass icon and a 'SEARCH' button. A navigation bar below the header includes a 'Department of Peace and Conflict Research' link. The main content area features a world map with red circles indicating conflict data points, overlaid with text boxes for 'Download charts and graphs', 'Follow UCDP on social media', 'Sign up for the UCDP Newsletter', and 'UCDP'. The 'UCDP' section contains a detailed description of the program's history and definition of armed conflict. At the bottom are links for 'Contact the UCDP' and a large '→' button.

UCDP DATA**DOWNLOAD UCDP DATA**<https://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/>

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Crowdsearcher Olympics 2022: War Dataset

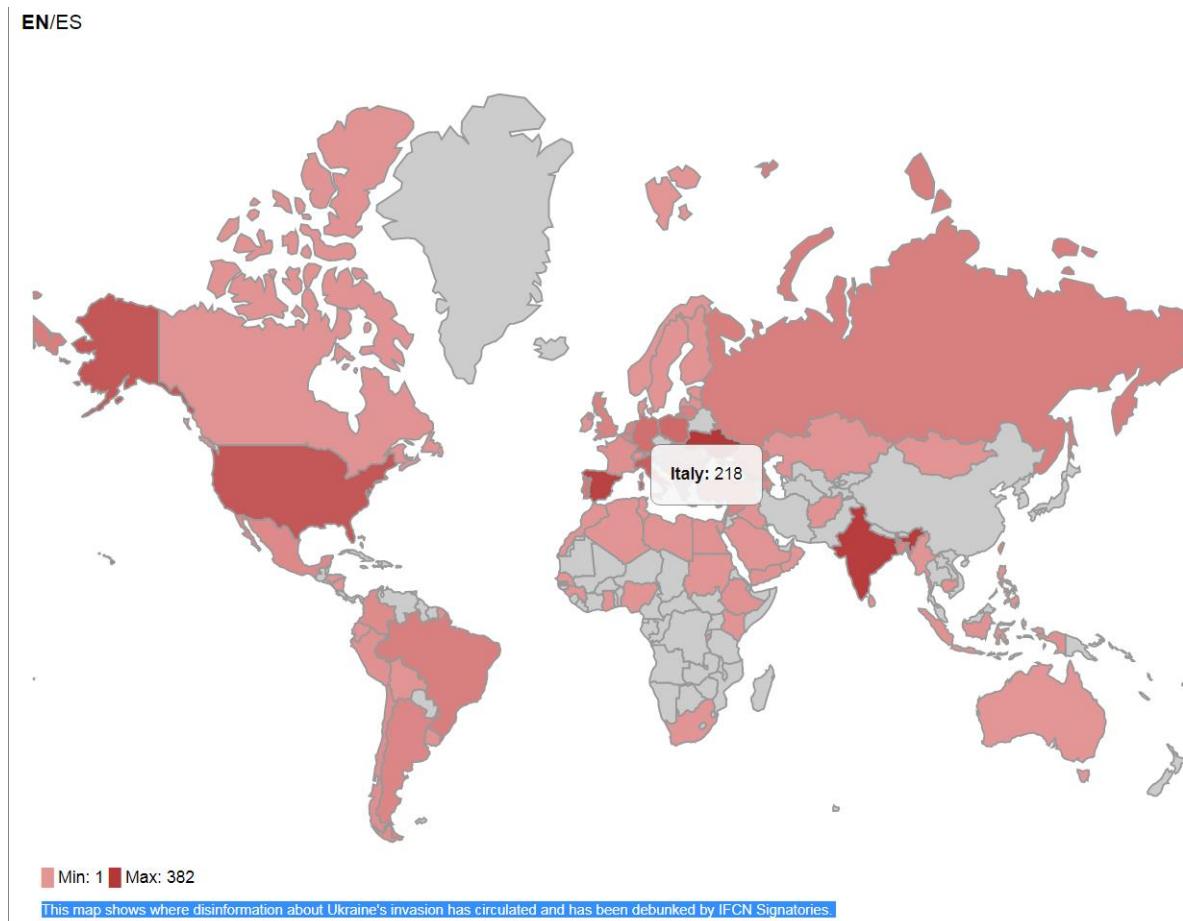
<http://bit.ly/intolympics>



DEBUNKER

#UkraineFacts International Fact-checking Network

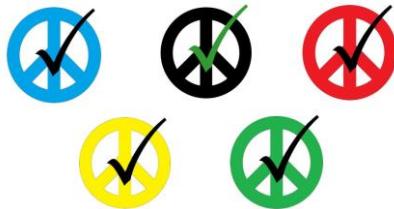
This map shows where disinformation about Ukraine's invasion has circulated and has been debunked by IFCN Signatories.



Countries in shades of red represent the amount of disinformation that has been identified and debunked by national fact-checkers in each country. When you click on a piece of disinformation, countries in which that hoax has circulated highlight in blue and you can access each country's debunking in its language below. When you click on a country you can see which disinformation has been identified and fact-checked in that country and access the national fact-checker's articles in their language.

SOURCE International Fact-checking Network <https://ukrainefacts.org/>





DEBUNKER pagella politica

Pagella Politica is an editorial project born in 2012 that deals with fact-checking and analysis of current political events. Our mission is to help readers understand what drives the dynamics of politics, based on numbers and facts.



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LE DICHIARAZIONI DEI POLITICI

VISUALIZZA	DICHIARAZIONI	VERDETTO	FILTRA PER	TUTTI I PARTITI ▾	TUTTI I POLITICI ▾
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VAI AL VERDETTO «Io [al voto] di questa legge elettorale non c'ero, e a quella precedente non votai la fiducia» <small>3 AGOSTO 2022</small>	VAI AL VERDETTO «52.987 richieste di asilo nel 2021, più della metà negate (ben 29.790, il 56 p...» <small>2 AGOSTO 2022</small>	VAI AL VERDETTO «[il 2 agosto] Nicola Fratoianni votava contro l'adesione di Svezia e...» <small>3 AGOSTO 2022</small>
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<https://pagellapolitica.it/progetto>





DEBUNKER facta

As of March 2021, we are a member of the International Fact-Checking Network (Ifcn) and signatory of its Code of Principles. The website has been online since 25 March 2020. Our slogan, 'Choose whom not to believe', sums up our goal: to point out to readers which news, among those circulating in the media or on social networks, is false, inaccurate, decontextualised or real, and which edited images or videos convey instances of disinformation.

ANTIBUFALE
FUORI CONTESTO

Questo video non dimostra che la Bbc manipola le mappe del meteo per evidenziare gli effetti del cambiamento climatico

AGO 04, 2022

RI CONTE

VERIFICA & SEGNALA LE NOTIZIE VIA WhatsApp
342-1829 843

Perché le bugie hanno le gambe corte
pagella politica

QUANDO I FACT-CHECKER SBAGLIANO
Correzioni, retifiche, aggiornamenti

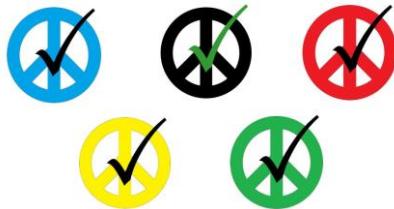
WhatsApp

Hai trovato una notizia falsa o che non ti convince?

SEGNALA ORA
 WhatsApp

<https://facta.news/antibufale/>





DEBUNKER

la voce

In lavoce.info's fact-checking, we aim to assess the accuracy of statements by influential public figures and organisations in the national public debate, following three guiding principles: transparency of sources, impartiality, and willingness to self-criticise.

 **lavoce.info** | GIOVEDÌ 4 AGOSTO 2022 | 

Modulo di ricerca 

ARGOMENTI / DOSSIER ▾ / LA PAROLA AI GRAFICI / PODCAST E DIRETTE ▾ / FACT-CHECKING ▾ / LA REDAZIONE ▾

/ SOSTIENI LAVOCE ▾

CATEGORIA: FACT-CHECKING PAGINA 1 DI 10

La diffusione di informazioni imprecise o inventate di sana pianta tra l'opinione pubblica è diventata così potente da influenzare in modo determinante il dibattito economico e politico. Nel fact-checking de lavoce.info ci proponiamo di valutare l'accuratezza delle dichiarazioni di personaggi pubblici e organizzazioni influenti nel dibattito pubblico nazionale, seguendo tre principi guida: **trasparenza delle fonti, imparzialità, disponibilità all'autocritica**.

A questo [link](#) sono disponibili maggiori informazioni e la possibilità di segnalare dichiarazioni da esaminare.

 **SOSTIENI IL NOSTRO LAVORO** [FAI UNA DONAZIONE](#)

UN EBOOK PER COMPRENDERE IL DIBATTITO SUL SALARIO MINIMO NEGLI ULTIMI VENT'ANNI



Un ebook che raccoglie tutti i contributi de lavoce.info sul salario minimo negli ultimi vent'anni

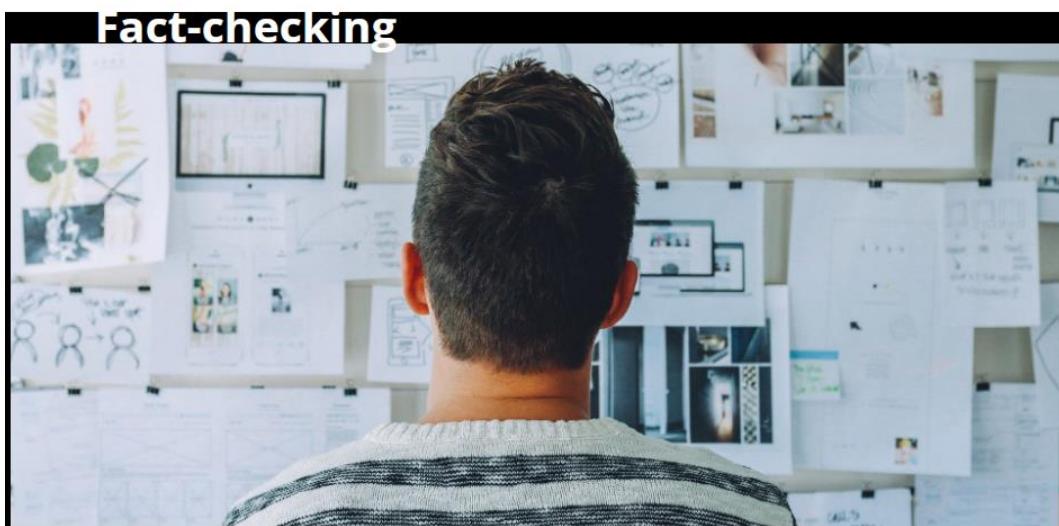
<https://www.lavoce.info/archives/category/rubriche/fact-checking/>





DEBUNKER open

Fact-checking by Open is an independent journalistic project that aims to monitor false or misleading news spread in Italy and abroad, providing a service of correct information and the necessary tools for citizens to learn to recognise hoaxes, misinformation and all other falsehoods that undermine society and the democratic process.



Fact-checking di Open è un progetto giornalistico indipendente che mira a monitorare le notizie false o fuorvianti diffuse in Italia e all'estero, fornendo un servizio di corretta informazione e degli strumenti necessari ai cittadini per imparare a riconoscere le bufale, la disinformazione, la misinformation e tutte le altre falsità che minano la società e il processo democratico.

Da aprile 2021 siamo membri dell'IFCN (International Fact-Checking Network).

METODOLOGIA

I MEMBRI DEL TEAM

CONTATTACI



<https://www.open.online>





DEBUNKER

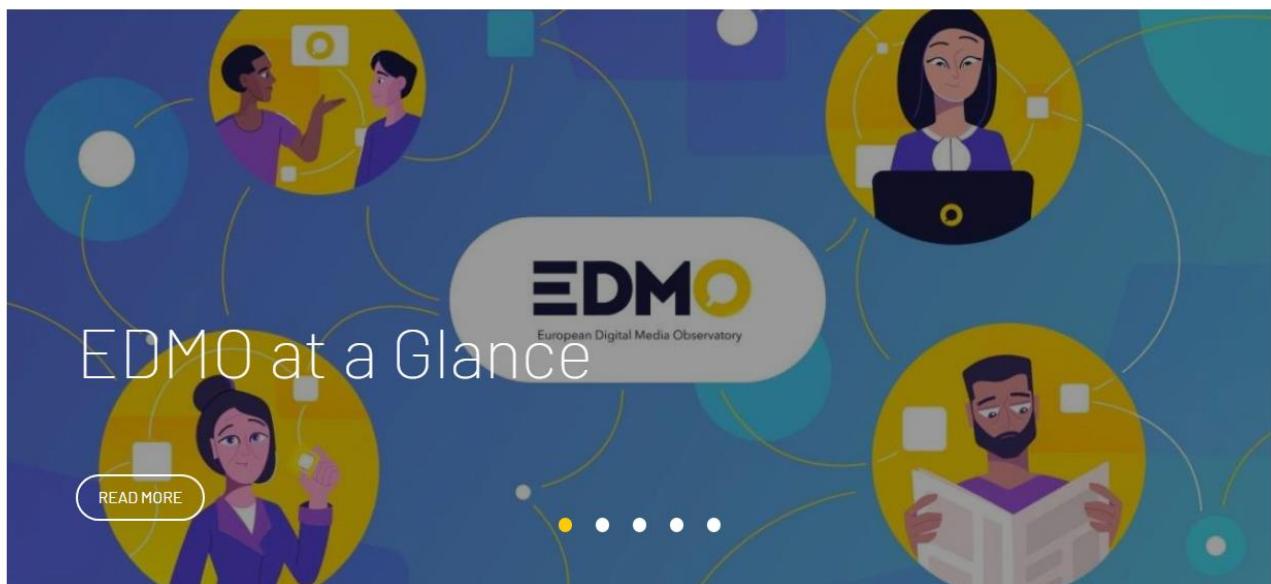
european digital media observatory edmo

The European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) brings together fact-checkers, media literacy experts, and academic researchers to understand and analyse disinformation, in collaboration with media organisations, online platforms and media literacy practitioners.

EDMO will deploy a platform to support the work of a multidisciplinary community with expertise in the field of online disinformation. EDMO will contribute to a deeper understanding of disinformation relevant actors, vectors, tools, methods, dissemination dynamics, targets, and impact on society.

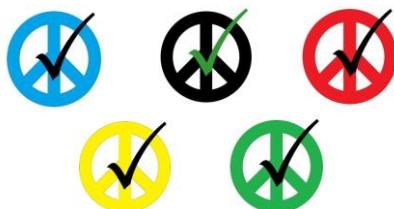


≡



<https://edmo.eu/>





MISINFORMATION

Russia-Ukraine disinformation tracking center: 252 websites spreading war disinformation and the top myths they publish

(by NEWSGUARD - August 11th 2022)

NewsGuard's team has identified and is tracking 252 domains some with a history of publishing false, pro-Russia propaganda and disinformation — that have promoted false claims about the Russian-Ukraine conflict. These websites include official Russian state media sources of the kind that some of the digital platforms have temporarily sanctioned since the onset of the Russian invasion. But many websites that are not official propaganda arms of the Russian government and are not being sanctioned by the platforms also promote false claims supporting the government of Vladimir Putin. These sources include anonymous websites, foundations, and research websites with uncertain funding—at least some of which may have undisclosed links to the Russian government.

By [Alex Cadier](#), [Madeline Roache](#), [Sophia Tewa](#), [Chine Labbe](#), [Virginia Padovese](#), [Roberta Schmid](#), [Edward O'Reilly](#), [Marie Richter](#), [Karin König](#), [McKenzie Sadeghi](#) and [Chiara Vercellone](#).

SOURCE

<https://www.newsguardtech.com/special-reports/russian-disinformation-tracking-center/>

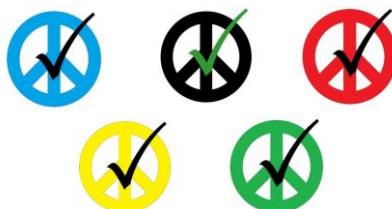
Deutsche Welle reported that German police arrested a Ukrainian refugee for blackmailing women

On June 16, 2022, a Japanese-language [Twitter account](#) posted a video purportedly from public-service German broadcaster Deutsche Welle about the arrest of Ukrainian refugee Petro Savchenko in Germany for allegedly blackmailing women.

“According to TV, refugee Savchenko threatened the girl for several months,” the June 16, 2022, [Twitter post](#) says. “He used a hidden camera to capture intimacy with women who were easily fooled, and then shook money from the women in exchange for a guarantee that they wouldn’t post records on social media.”

The accompanying video states that “Savchenko met women at bars all around Germany. Savchenko filmed





intimacy with his victims on a hidden camera. He tracked down the girls on Facebook a few days later and demanded money in exchange for a promise not to share the recordings online.” The video carries the Deutsche Welle logo and a link to its website, and features alleged photos of Savchenko and security camera footage that supposedly shows him talking to women.

In fact, the video is a fabrication. [Deutsche Welle](#) said in a July 8, 2022, article, “Fake news and content targets international media,” that the video was not created by the broadcaster. Moreover, a German police spokesperson told Deutsche Welle the police were not aware of any case similar to the one described in the video, and there have been no legitimate news articles about such a case.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church canonized nationalist leader Stepan Bandera

On June 20, 2022, four months after Russia invaded Ukraine, various pro-Russian social media accounts and news sites, including EADaily.com and Yudsn.ru, posted a photo of a fabricated decree allegedly released by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The decree purported to announce a decision by the church to canonize Ukrainian nationalist Stepan Bandera, recognizing him as a saint.

During World War II, Bandera led a radical wing of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, which fought alongside Germans in the Nazi invasion of Soviet Ukraine before attempting to claim the Nazi-occupied Lviv region as an independent Ukrainian state, according to [historical accounts](#). While Bandera was revered by many in Western Ukraine, many in Eastern Ukraine decried his association with the Nazis.

The Russian government attempted to justify its invasion of Ukraine by claiming, among other things, a need to “de-nazify” the country and purge it of Bandera’s ideology.

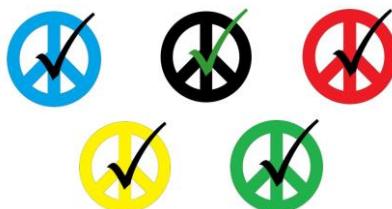
However, the decree announcing that Bandera was canonized by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is a fake, according to a church spokesperson. “A crude montage was used to create this picture, and its content is absurd and illiterate from the point of view of canonization language and church traditions,” the spokesperson told Ukrainian fact-checking organization [StopFake](#). “The content of the document and its style of writing, directly indicate it is a fake.”

The church spokesperson also told StopFake that as a Greek Catholic by faith, Bandera is not even eligible for canonization by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The Red Cross in Ukraine is involved in children’s organ trafficking

Nearly a week after Russia declared victory in its battle to capture the Ukrainian city of Mariupol in May 2022, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation announced on [Telegram](#) that it would investigate a video, [posted](#) to Telegram by Vladimir Taraneiko, who heads “People’s Squad,” a civic organization in the Donetsk People’s Republic, purporting to show hundreds of medical records on





children's healthy organs at the Red Cross' premises in Mariupol. The post stated that the footage would be studied "within the framework of the criminal cases already being investigated in the department about the crimes of the Kyiv regime" and given "a criminal legal assessment."

Pro-Russian media outlets, including [Tsargrad](#), owned by Russian oligarch Konstantin Malofeev, cited Taraneiko's video and the committee's statement in May 2022 to accuse the Ukrainian Red Cross Society of organ trafficking. However, the video does not provide any evidence to support the claim, which was denied by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

"The ICRC has not collected any such records," the ICRC said in a May 2022 [statement](#), calling the claim "another unequivocally false allegation." Earlier, in March 2022, the ICRC issued a statement [saying](#) that all Red Cross staff members had left the warehouse in Mariupol "and we don't know how it's been used since."

Separately, the Red Cross Society of Ukraine [told StopFake](#), a Ukrainian fact-checking organization, that none of their volunteers have collected medical data on children, nor have they been involved in organ transplantation.

Prominent Ukrainian medic Yuliia Paievskaya [told](#) The Associated Press in July 2022 that organ trafficking accusations are "invented, a huge fabrication." She added: "Seized organs on the battlefield. Do you have any idea how complicated this operation is?"

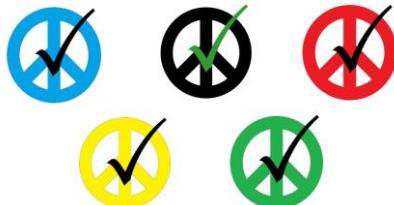
Unproven [allegations](#) of Ukraine being involved in organ trafficking have [persisted](#) online ever since the 2014 invasion of Crimea. Joel Newman, a senior communications strategist at the United Network for Organ Sharing, [told](#) fact-checking website Polygraph.info in 2019 that false illegal organ harvesting accusations typically surface in war zones, but that "the reality of using organs from deceased persons [illicitly] is small."

A Russian strike on a munitions depot led to a fire at a defunct mall in Kremenchuk, Ukraine

The Russian government declared that the Amstor mall in the central Ukrainian city of Kremenchuk was set ablaze on June 27, 2022, as a result of a Russian strike on a nearby vehicle factory, KredMash, which the government said contained Western weapons. The Kremlin also asserted that the mall was not open for business at the time of the attack.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said on June 28, 2022: "On June 27, the Russian Aerospace Forces delivered a strike by air-launched high-precision weapons against hangars of weapons and ammunition from the United States and European countries in the area of the Kremenchug road machinery factory in the city of Kremenchug in the Poltava Region.... The detonation of stored ammunition





for Western weapons caused a fire in a non-functioning shopping center located near the territory of the plant.”

Vitaly Kiselyev, assistant to the head of the Russian-backed Lugansk People’s Republic, said on June 28, 2022, that local troops “stored their ammunition” at the mall, and used it as a place for “training territorial defense units,” implying it was a military facility.

The claims that the Amstor shopping mall was not operational and destroyed by an explosion erupting from the nearby factory are baseless.

Investigative news outlet Bellingcat [analyzed](#) the location seen in CCTV footage posted to Twitter on June 29, 2022, by Mihailo Podolya, an advisor to the Ukrainian president, showing a missile approaching the mall and exploding on impact. Bellingcat concluded that “the mall appears to have taken a direct hit given there is no clear or significant impact site anywhere in the area around it, which would seemingly undermine Russian MOD [Ministry of Defense’s] claims that a fire spread from the factory area.”

Refuting the claim by Lugansk People’s Republic politician Kiselyev that the mall was being used to store weapons, Bellingcat wrote that “the fact that multiple explosions could not be observed after the initial impact likely suggests that … munitions were not kept at the Amstor building.” Bellingcat added: “Although one report in 2014 stated that the factory had been used to repair three military vehicles, this in itself does not prove that it was a storage site for US and European weapons and ammunition eight years later, as Russia has claimed.”

Additionally, witness testimony confirms that the mall was indeed operational at the time. The BBC [reported](#) that “a woman who lives in a nearby village and regularly goes shopping in Kremenchuk, told the BBC that the shopping center had been ‘constantly open’ and her family had visited it at least once a week.” The team pointed to a [YouTube video](#) by a Ukrainian family that had apparently been recorded the day before the attack and showed the mall open with dozens of people inside.

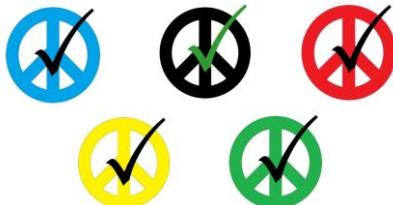
The Ukrainian army seized a United Nations office in Kramatorsk, Ukraine

In early June 2022, the Russian-backed separatist Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) posted a statement on Telegram claiming that the Ukrainian Armed Forces had seized a United Nations office and three UN vehicles in the Kyiv-controlled Kyiv-controlled city of Kramatorsk, in the eastern Ukrainian region of Donetsk.

The [DPR post stated](#) that “Representatives of the international organization lost their office and 3 official cars with diplomatic plates. The [Ukrainian army] does not allow mission staff to enter their property, and also prohibits them to take photos and videos to report to higher management.”

This claim was amplified by Russian state media outlets, including [TASS](#), [RIA-Novosti](#), and [AIF](#), among other Russian sites.





However, [Krzysztof Janowski](#), a spokesman for the UN Crisis Coordinator's office, told Ukrainian fact-checking group StopFake in June 2022 that [the UN did not occupy](#) any facilities in Kramatorsk. As for the claim that three official cars with diplomatic license plates were stolen, Janowski said, "All our cars are registered and accounted for."

The UN did previously have an office [in Kramatorsk](#), which was used by staff from the UN's [Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine](#) and the [UN Development Programme](#), among others. However, in February 2022, the UN staff left the office due to security concerns, Janowski said.

Ukraine asked Poland to deport Ukrainian men of military age for them to join the frontlines

In June 2022, pro-Russian news sites, Telegram channels, and social media posts shared a photo of a letter purportedly sent by Dmitry Kuleba, Ukraine's Foreign Affairs Minister, to Zbigniew Rau, Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, requesting that Poland deport all male Ukrainian citizens between the ages of 18 and 60.

The letter is a fabrication. A spokesperson for the Head of Poland's National Security Department, Stanislav Zaryn, [said](#) in a June 17, 2022, Twitter thread that "A #fake letter from the Head of the MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] of Ukraine to the MFA of Poland was produced as part of disinformation activities." Zaryn continued: "The fake document suggests that Poland will look for Ukrainians and send them back home. This is yet another disinformation action calculated to destabilize relations between Poles and Ukrainians."

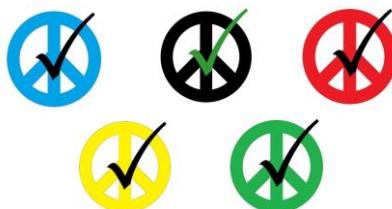
In June 2022, social media posts and pro-Russian news sites published [other fake letters](#) purportedly from Polish government officials, announcing the deportation of Ukrainian men of military age to join the frontlines in Ukraine.

A video showed a Ukrainian girl injured by a Russian missile singing the national anthem

In June 2022, multiple news sites and social media posts shared a heart-tugging video of a young Ukrainian girl singing the Ukrainian national anthem while her left foot was being bandaged in the hospital. The video was accompanied by the claim that she was injured by shrapnel from a Russian missile strike in Mykolaiv on June 29, 2022.

The video appeared in Ukrainian and English-language news sites, as well as in posts on Twitter and Telegram. Censor.net, a Ukrainian website, posted the video on June 29, 2022, stating, "This little Ukrainian girl is from Mykolaiv. She suffered from the morning shelling of the city by Russian invaders. The child is being treated for her wounds, and she sings the anthem of her country."





In fact, the video shows a girl receiving medical treatment for an injury sustained in a bicycle accident, not in a Russian missile strike. According to [Reuters](#), the video was traced to the now-private Instagram account of the girl's mother, Romana Komarevich. Komarevich told the news agency that her four-year-old daughter, Elizaveta, was injured on a bicycle, and that claims about her being wounded due to shelling were false.

Moreover, Komarevich and her daughter live in Ternopil Oblast, which is 500 miles away from Mykolaiv, Reuters reported.

Ukraine's Azov Battalion used explosives to blow up the Mariupol Drama Theater

The Russian Defense Ministry falsely declared that Ukraine's Azov Battalion, an infantry military unit, which is part of Ukraine's National Guard, was responsible for the March 16, 2022, bombing of the Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theater in Mariupol, in southern Ukraine. The Russian Defense Ministry said "militants of the Azov nationalist battalion carried out another bloody provocation by blowing up the theater building they had mined." The Ministry continued: "Previously, refugees that escaped Mariupol, informed that Nazis from the Azov battalion could have held civilians hostage in the theater building, using the upper floors as emplacements."

Reports on the matter by [The Associated Press](#), [The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe](#) and [Human Rights Watch](#) all concluded that Russia was responsible for the bombing.

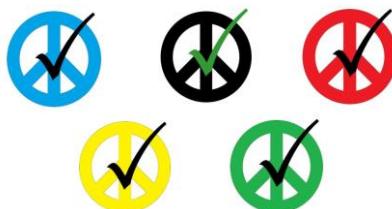
The AP said that none of the 23 witnesses it interviewed, including survivors and rescuers, saw Ukrainian soldiers in the theater. The AP said that its findings "refute Russian claims that the theater was demolished by Ukrainian forces or served as a Ukrainian military base. None of the witnesses saw Ukrainian soldiers operating inside the building."

Moreover, two munitions experts interviewed by the AP said that the scope of the destruction caused by the attack "points to a 500-kilogram bomb from a Russian warplane," the AP reported. "It's much too much for an artillery shell," Mark Cancian, an explosives analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a former artillery officer, told the AP.

Zelensky used a green screen to fake appearances in Ukraine

In June 2022, a photo of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky standing in front of a green screen spread on some news sites and [social media networks](#), along with the claim that Zelensky was not actually in Ukraine. For example, a June 17, 2022, post on [Toutiao](#), a Chinese news site, included the Zelensky photo, with a caption stating in Chinese: "This confirms that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is often absent in Ukraine, especially when the war in Ukraine is tense, not at all in Ukraine."





In fact, the photo shows Zelensky in Kyiv, Ukraine, on June 14, 2022, filming a hologram message that was delivered to technology festivals in Amsterdam, London, Paris, and Stockholm, according to [The Associated Press](#) and [the Guardian](#). “I directed the piece and was in the room,” the director of the holographic message, Martin Williams, told the AP, confirming Zelensky’s presence in Kyiv. “We built the green screen studio ... for an AR [augmented reality] hologram,” he said.

The AP also reported that the same photo was published on June 16, 2022, as part of a [press release](#) about the technology used to produce the film. Zelensky used the hologram technology in a bid to solicit donations to Ukraine from tech companies, according to a report in the Guardian.

Innumerable news reports and interviews have placed Zelensky inside Ukraine throughout the war. Moreover, there is no evidence that Zelensky has ever left Ukraine during the Russian invasion, which began on Feb. 24, 2022. His last major official trip was on Feb. 19, 2022, [to attend a security conference](#) in Munich, Germany. The U. S. offered to evacuate Zelensky shortly after the invasion, but he declined, [The Associated Press](#) reported.

Ukraine is requiring women to register for military service

In June 2022, pro-Kremlin Telegram channels including WarJournal [Z] [circulated](#) a fabricated military order that supposedly claimed that women in Ukraine will be drafted into military service. The document, which was purportedly signed by Ukrainian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Sergei Shaptala, stated that military recruitment centers have until the end of June 2022 to carry out the mobilization measures and to organize the registration of women aged 18 to 60.

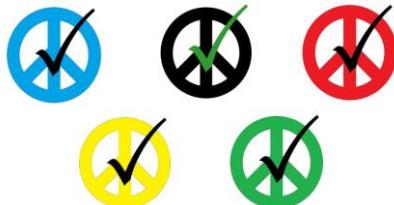
The document is a fabrication. As of June 2022, Ukraine had not announced the mobilization of women, according to Ukraine’s Ministry of Defense. “We are not currently considering the question of mobilizing women,” Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar [told](#) Ukrainian non-profit news broadcasting service, Hromadske Radio, in June 2022. “At present, it is impossible to predict how the mobilization will be carried out in the future, everything will depend on the situation at the front.”

In a March 18, 2022, opinion [column](#) published on Ukrainian website NV, Maylar wrote that women could one day be mobilized, but that “there is no such need.” She added that, “no woman has been called up for military service during the mobilization without her consent.”

The document itself contains inaccuracies indicating that it was forged, according to [StopFake](#), a Ukrainian fact-checking organization. For example, the purported order claims that military registration must be completed by June 31, 2022, when June only has 30 days.

Moreover, a side-by-side comparison of the fake order and a legitimate document from the Armed Forces of Ukraine, [published](#) by the Washington, D.C.-based think-tank the Atlantic Council, shows that the formatting of the fabricated document is inconsistent with authentic Ukrainian orders. The dates and





numbers on the legitimate document use a different font, and include a footer with blue text, according to the Atlantic Council.

In December 2021, the Defense Ministry issued an [order](#) requiring women from 100 professions to register for possible national service by the end of 2022. However, according to the [Kyiv Independent](#), “in case of a war they [women] can be required to participate in civil defense efforts, possibly using their professional skills. It doesn’t mean they will be fighting.” At an international conference in June 2022, Ukrainian first lady Olena Zelenska [said](#) that 37,000 women currently serve in the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

Ukrainian refugees burned down a house in Germany where they were staying while attempting to burn the Russian flag

In mid-May 2022, several [pro-Kremlin news sites](#) and [social media accounts](#) began sharing a fake video made to look like a news segment from the website of German tabloid Bild. The fake segment reported that Ukrainian refugees had burned down a house in Germany after setting fire to a Russian flag with a Tesla coil, an electromagnetic generator. The fabricated report did not specify where in Germany the incident supposedly took place.

A May 19, 2022, article [in Tsargrad TV](#), a pro-Kremlin media outlet owned by Russian oligarch Konstantin Malofeev, stated: “In Germany, Ukrainian refugees tried to destroy the Russian flag with fire, but burned down the house in which they were sheltered by a German family. The incident was reported by BILD.” The article continued: “We add that the Europeans very quickly came to their senses after the avalanche of Ukrainian migrants that hit them. The warm welcome was replaced by disappointment and fatigue.”

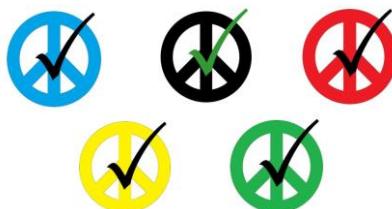
The 30-second video, which featured the Bild logo, contains three clips that show a tesla coil and Russian flag burning, smoke emerging from a house that is engulfed in flames, and a woman, who is identified as Natalie Michalski, speaking in tears from a burnt-out room.

In fact, Bild did not report that Ukrainian refugees burned down a house in Germany. Bild’s Chief Editor Timo Wokoschat [said on Twitter](#) on May 17, 2022, “The truth is: BILD never wrote this report. A complete fake.”

Indeed, the three clips used in the video have nothing to do with the claim in question. The first clip, which shows the Russian flag burning, was created by a Czech Technical University student named [Marek Novotny](#) in March 2022 to show support for Ukraine, he [told the Agence France-Presse](#) in May 2022.

The second clip, which shows a house fire, is from 2013. Using a reverse image search, AFP reported that the video [was posted on YouTube](#) on July 18, 2013, with the caption, “House burning in Walluf, Germany.” NewsGuard confirmed this as well.





The last clip, which shows a woman identified as Natalie Michalski crying, is from [a Jan. 27, 2021, news clip](#) about a house fire that Bild posted on YouTube. The video caption said, “Family drama in Lower Saxony: House burns down.”

Hunter Biden helped finance a bioweapons research program in Ukraine

A month after Russia invaded Ukraine, Russian officials falsely claimed that Hunter Biden's Rosemont Seneca investment fund financed the Pentagon's military biological program in Ukraine.

Igor Kirillov, head of the radiation, chemical and biological defense forces of the Russian Armed Forces, said during a March 24, 2022, [briefing](#) that, “The Rosemont Seneca investment fund of Hunter Biden, the son of U.S. President Joe Biden, financed the Pentagon's military biological program in Ukraine.”

Kirillov also said that companies affiliated with Hunter Biden and the U.S. Department of Defense were involved in implementing the program. “There is a close connection of the fund [Rosemont Seneca] with the main contractors of the US military department, including Metabiota, which, along with Black & Veatch, is the main supplier of equipment for Pentagon biolaboratories around the world.”

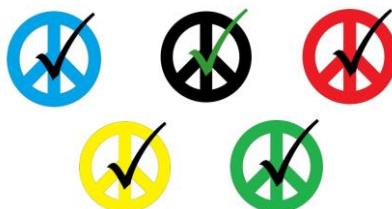
Kirillov's statements contain false claims. First, there is no evidence that the U.S. is developing biological weapons in Ukrainian labs (see our fact-check into this myth [here](#)). Second, there is no evidence that Metabiota, a U.S.-based biotech firm, supplied equipment for purported biolaboratories run by the Pentagon in Ukraine or elsewhere.

The U.S. has been providing aid to Ukrainian laboratories since 2005, when the Ukrainian Ministry of Health and the Pentagon signed an agreement intended to limit the threat of bioterrorism. The agreement was part of the U.S. Department of Defense's Biological Threat Reduction Program, which collaborates with partner countries to reduce the threat of outbreaks of dangerous infectious diseases, according to the [U.S. Embassy in Ukraine's website](#).

To that end, the Pentagon hired various companies to work in Ukraine, including the Kansas-based engineering firm Black & Veatch, which, in 2013, subcontracted Metabiota. Andrea Chaney, a Public Affairs Affairs Officer at the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, which implements the Biological Threat Reduction Program told NewsGuard in May 2022 that Metabiota's work in Ukraine was focused on endemic disease research, along with the training of Ukrainian personnel.

Third, Hunter Biden and Rosemont Seneca Partners, the Washington, D.C., based investment firm that he co-founded in 2009, were not involved in funding a military biological program in Ukraine. It is true that Metabiota received investments from an equity firm called Rosemont Seneca Technology Partners (RSTP), which at one time was affiliated with Hunter Biden and his Rosemont Seneca Partners fund. However, a Metabiota employee told NewsGuard in May 2022 that the firm's investments had nothing to do with biolabs





in Ukraine and were focused on “leveraging data and analytics to model epidemic risk to try to make it more predictable.”

A former RSTP investor also [told](#) The Washington Post that the investments were unrelated to any military biolabs. Additionally, a 2014 [Metabiota memo](#), which The Post obtained and published, said that Metabiota had an office in Ukraine and that it planned to “implement a research project in Ukraine aimed at understanding the threat of tularemia and anthrax” and “develop and implement a public awareness campaign to mitigate the threat of African swine fever.” NewsGuard’s review of the memo found that it made no mention of a military biological program in Ukraine.

Additionally, The Post reported that “Hunter Biden was barely involved in the RSTP deal.” Although Hunter Biden was a partner in RSTP through his stake in Rosemont Seneca Partners, “he was not on the committee making decisions on investments,” an investor at the time [told](#) The Post.

A French man who was killed in Ukraine's Donbas region was not a journalist, but a mercenary

On May 30, 2022, Andrey Marochko, an officer of the Lugansk People’s Militia falsely [claimed](#) that Frederic Leclerc-Imhoff, a 32-year-old French journalist who was killed during shelling in the Lugansk region in eastern Ukraine’s Donbas, was actually a mercenary. He said: “I wouldn’t call him a journalist because his actions indicated quite a different line of activity. It is quite possible to call him a foreign mercenary. And it is absolutely clear that he was an accessory to Ukrainian far-right radical forces.”

Despite not providing any supporting evidence, Marochko’s claims were repeated by Russian state media outlets, including Tass and NTV.

In fact, Leclerc-Imhoff was a professional journalist who was reporting on the war in Ukraine, according to Lugansk regional governor Sergiy Gaidai and Leclerc-Imhoff’s employer, the French TV channel BFMTV. There has been no evidence to suggest that Leclerc-Imhoff was a mercenary or was associated in any way with Ukrainian far-right groups.

On May 30, 2022, Gaidai [wrote](#) on his Telegram account, “Today, our armored evacuation vehicle was going to pick up 10 people from the region and came under enemy fire. Shrapnel from shells pierced the armor of the car, a fatal wound to the neck was received by an accredited French journalist who was gathering material about the evacuation.... We are officially stopping the evacuation.” Gaidai posted an image of Leclerc-Imhoff’s Ukrainian press accreditation, which contains a photo of the journalist and states that he represented BFMTV.

BFMTV [confirmed](#) that Leclerc-Imhoff had been killed while covering a humanitarian operation in an armored vehicle on the road to Lysychansk, near the city of Severodonetsk in eastern Ukraine in a May 30, 2022, article titled “BFMTV is heartbroken to announce the disappearance of Frederic Leclerc-Imhoff, a TV





reporter, killed in Ukraine."

Leclerc-Imhoff, who graduated from the Bordeaux Aquitaine Institute of Journalism at Bordeaux Montaigne University in 2014, had been reporting in Ukraine on his second mission since the war broke out on Feb. 24, 2022. He had worked for BFMTV for six years, according to the channel.

Kateryna Prokopenko, the wife of Ukraine's Azov Regiment commander, is a neo-Nazi.

In May 2022, [multiple pro-Russian](#) websites accused Kateryna Prokopenko, the wife of the Ukrainian commander of the Azov regiment Denys Prokopenko, of being a neo-Nazi. They cited as evidence several [social media posts](#) that purported to show photographs of Prokopenko in Nazi regalia giving the Nazi salute.

However, four of the photos that circulated online depict a well-known Ukrainian neo-Nazi militant named Vita Zaverukha, not Prokopenko. The Ukrainian newspaper Vesti published [one of the photos](#) of Zaverukha holding a Nazi flag in a 2016 article, and the Daily Mail released the [three other photos](#) in 2015.

Another photo that purported to show Prokopenko giving the Nazi salute with two other people first appeared on Polish websites as early as February 2010, with no known links to Prokopenko, according to the Italian fact-checking organization [Open](#). On May 13, 2022, Prokopenko [shared](#) the Open fact-check on her Twitter account, adding in the tweet: "GUYS I'M NOT THIS GIRL!"

According to multiple news organizations, including French newspaper [Libération](#) and [France 24](#), Prokopenko has never publicly expressed support for far-right or neo-Nazi groups.

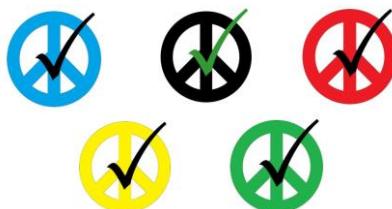
The false allegations surfaced online after Prokopenko and Yuliya Fedosiuk, the wife of another member of the Azov Regiment, met with Pope Francis at the Vatican on May 11, 2022. For example, Russian news site TVZvezda.ru reported, "The wives of the fighters of the Azov nationalist battalion, who were received by Pope Francis, themselves sympathize with the ideas of Nazism and have called for murders on social networks." The women asked the pope for assistance in rescuing their husbands, who were at the time defending the besieged Azovstal steel plant, the last pocket of Ukrainian resistance in the Donbas city of Mariupol. Fedosiuk [said](#) after the meeting that the pope "told us he will pray for us."

In mid-May 2022, according to [Reuters](#), hundreds of fighters at the steel plant surrendered to Russian armed forces and were taken into custody.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is Russian and therefore is an illegitimate president

THE FACTS: In April 2022, Ilya Kiva, a pro-Russian former Ukrainian politician, [shared](#) an image on Telegram purporting to show Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's Russian passport. Kiva claimed





that Zelensky was an illegitimate president because Ukraine does not allow dual citizens to run for president.

The story was quickly picked up by Russian news sites, including [Gazeta.ru](#) and [Ura.ru](#).

In fact, there is no evidence that Zelensky is a Russian citizen. A May 2022 [fact-check](#) by German news agency Deutsche Presse-Agentur found that the image shared by Kiva was apparently fabricated using RF Screateo, an editing software that allows users to generate fake Russian passports using an online template. Deutsche Presse-Agentur found that virtually identical passport photos that were created using the same software have circulated online for years.

The image also contains several inconsistencies. For example, according to news organization [Bellingcat](#), the third and fourth digits of a Russian passport number reveal the year that it was issued. In the purported Zelensky document, those digits are 0 and 3, which would mean that his passport was issued in 2003. This is contradicted by the title page of the document, which states that the passport was issued in 2001.

Also, the black and white image of Zelensky in the document is not an authentic passport photo. Fact-checkers have noted that it was cropped from a full-size image of Zelensky that has appeared in color in numerous Ukrainian news [articles](#). And the signature that appears on the supposed passport does not match Zelensky's verified signature, according to a side-by-side comparison by fact-checking site [Lead Stories](#).

The U.S. is recruiting ISIS mercenaries to fight in Ukraine.

THE FACTS: In May 2022, Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) issued a [statement](#) claiming that the U.S. was recruiting members of international terrorist organizations, including ISIS, to fight in Ukraine. The SVR alleged that approximately 60 ISIS militants, aged 20 to 25, were released from prisons in Syria and transferred to an American military base at Al-Tanf, in southern Syria.

SVR's claim was repeated by Russian state media, including [Sputnik News](#) and [RT](#), as well as by China state-affiliated media such as [People's Daily](#) and [Xinhua](#). Iranian news outlets [published](#) similar reports.

The SVR and the other outlets did not provide any evidence for this claim, which was denied by the Pentagon in a statement to NewsGuard. "This report is completely false," the Pentagon said in an unsigned statement issued to NewsGuard, referring to the SVR claim that the U.S. recruited ISIS militants to fight in Ukraine.

Indeed, news reports, U.S. defense officials, and analysts have said that it is the Kremlin, not the U.S., that is recruiting Syrian and other foreign fighters to participate in the war against Ukraine.





The U.S. base in Al-Tanf, located in Syria near the Iraqi and Jordanian borders, was established in 2016 to train Syrian opposition forces to counter Islamic State militants, according to the [International Crisis Group](#), a non-governmental organization that says it aims to “prevent wars and shape policies that will build a more peaceful world.” Approximately 200 U.S. forces are stationed at Al-Tanf, according to a May 2022 [report](#) by the Pentagon’s Inspector General.

There is no evidence that the base was turned into a “terrorist hub” to train ISIS militants during the Russia-Ukraine war, as some pro-Russian sites have claimed. “I have seen no evidence or even reputable claim that the U.S. is recruiting members of international terrorist organizations to fight in Ukraine,” Martha Crenshaw, a senior fellow at Stanford’s Center for International Security and Cooperation, told NewsGuard in a May 2022 email. “I do not know about Russia, although I have also seen reports of recruitment.”

On March 6, 2022, The Wall Street Journal [reported](#) that Moscow was recruiting Syrian fighters experienced in urban combat to help capture Ukraine’s capital, Kyiv.

In April 2022, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a U.K.-based war monitoring group, [reported](#) that 40,000 Syrians signed up to join Russian forces in Ukraine. The group reported that 22,000 Syrians registered with the Russian military and that 18,000 signed up with the Wagner Group, a Russian military contractor.

Residents of the city of Tampere, Finland, filmed a Finnish train transporting hundreds of tanks and military equipment to its eastern border with Russia in May 2022, following the country’s move toward NATO membership.

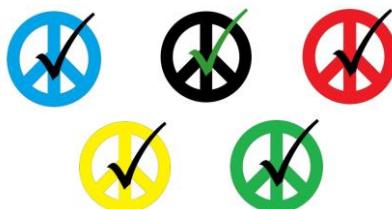
THE FACTS: Amid weeks of rising tensions between Finland and Russia caused by the Finnish government’s announcement that it would apply for membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a May 3, 2022, [video](#) on the pro-government, Belarussian Telegram account BelVestnik claimed that Finland was sending tanks to the Russian border.

In fact, the train seen in the video was heading in the opposite direction from the Finland-Russia border, a NewsGuard [analysis](#) of Google Maps satellite imagery showed. The Finnish military strongly denied the claim and also explained that the train was moving away from Russia.

“Residents of Tampere (Finland) record the transfer of military equipment to the eastern border” with Russia, the caption of the video posted on Telegram stated. Tampere is a city in southwestern Finland, nearly 200 miles from Russia. The 50-second clip, which had accumulated over 10,000 views by May 16, 2022, shows a cargo train carrying dozens of tanks and armored vehicles across a bridge in a seemingly-residential area of Finland. The video was later reposted on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

On the video, the train can be seen traveling toward the [Nässineula observation tower](#) in the background,





and on its left is a red brick red tower. NewsGuard's analysis of [Google Maps satellite imagery](#) of these Tampere landmarks, in relation to the train's location, shows that it was heading toward western Finland, not toward the Russian border to the east.

On May 4, 2022, the Finnish Defence Forces dismissed the claim that Finland was deploying military equipment to its eastern border. The military said [in a tweet](#) that the cargo seen in the video was being transported to the Finnish towns of Niinisalo and Säkylä for a military training exercise called Arrow 22. "A video has been circulating online claiming to show tanks being moved to Finland's border," The Finnish Defence Forces tweet stated. "This is not true. The tanks were being moved to the army mechanised exercise Arrow 22. The exercise takes place in Niinisalo and Säkylä."

Niinisalo and Säkylä are west of the city of Tampere, near the Gulf of Bothnia that separates Finland and Sweden — approximately 250 miles away from the Russian border.

The objective of [Arrow 22](#) is [to develop](#) "the competence and capability of Army units for the purposes of national defence and to create and sustain international interoperability and connectivity," according to a Finnish Army press release about the exercise.

Putin used a green screen to record a fake TV appearance.

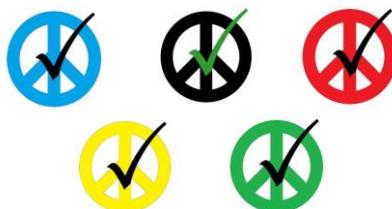
THE FACTS: On March 5, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin traveled to an Aeroflot aviation training facility outside Moscow and met with the airline's employees. In the hours following his visit, widely shared social media [posts](#) and Ukrainian news [articles](#) claimed that a video clip from the Aeroflot meeting proved that Putin was not at the event, but instead was photoshopped into the video with the use of a green screen. Many posts [stated](#) that at one point, Putin's hand appeared to pass through a microphone.

While Russia has a track record of pushing manipulated content for propaganda purposes, the video of Putin is authentic, and evidence shows he was not using a green screen. Users and websites that shared the claim [cited](#) poor-quality videos and screenshots as evidence, but the microphone moment does not appear in higher quality versions of the footage.

As fact-checking organization [Snopes](#) and several [news outlets](#) noted, the image of Putin's hand passing through the microphone was a technical glitch caused by a low-quality rendering of the video and not the result of visual effects or a green screen. A higher-resolution video of the meeting, posted to YouTube by [NBC News](#) and U.K. newspapers [The Telegraph](#) and [The Independent](#), does not show his hand moving through the microphone. Moreover, images of Putin attending the meeting were [captured](#) by Sputnik photographer Mikhail Klimentyev and [republished](#) by The Associated Press on March 5, 2022.

The video gained traction after it was uploaded to [Reddit](#) on March 5, 2022, captioned: "Green screen detected! Today's 'meeting' with 'Aeroflot' workers." Some Twitter users falsely suggested that Putin faked his appearance at the meeting in response to criticism from the Western media for his taking strict measures





to isolate himself during the COVID-19 pandemic — such as using a long table to communicate with his aides.

The clip was also promoted on Twitter by anti-Putin politicians, including Russian opposition leader [Lyubov Sobol](#). Ukrainian diplomat Alexander Scherba claimed in a March 6, 2022, [tweet](#) that Putin was mocked for his “photoshopped videos.” Ukrainian news outlet NV wrote about the video in a March 6, 2022, [article](#) in Russian and Ukrainian titled: “He put his hand through objects? The latest video of Putin turned out to be a mediocre fake.” NV cited the Center for Counteracting Disinformation, under the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, which falsely claimed in a [Facebook post](#) that the video of Putin was digitally created by combining two or more frames into one.

Poland is preparing to invade Western Ukraine.

THE FACTS: In early May, multiple social media posts [shared](#) a fake BBC News clip announcing that Poland was preparing to invade Ukraine. The one-minute video, which the BBC never aired, was shared online in a number of languages, including Russian, French, Italian, Polish, Czech, and Turkish.

In fact, the video was fabricated to look like a BBC news report. Shayan Sardarizadeh, a BBC journalist reporting on misinformation, shared a screenshot of the clip in a May 5, 2022 [Twitter post](#), with the comment: “Another fake video with the logo and branding of BBC News is making the rounds... The BBC has made no such video and Poland is not about to get involved in the war.” There has been no evidence that Poland, a member of NATO and the European Union, was preparing to invade Ukraine.

The video opens with the BBC news logo and footage of a military helicopter landing. The text, which is written in the same font used by the BBC, read, “Polish commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces ordered the army to prepare for an invasion of Ukraine,” with footage of troops in the background. The video also said, “Poland is going to send in troops under the pretext of ‘protection from Russia.’ This will be done with the endorsement of Washington, but the North Atlantic Alliance will officially stand aside.”

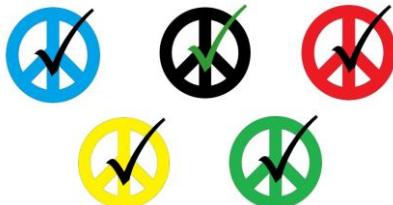
The clip also featured a fabricated military order. The clip said, “General Jaroslaw Mika signed an order to put the Polish army unit in full combat readiness.” A photo of the fake order was used in [posts](#) on social media and in [articles](#) on pro-Russian news sites, including Pravda.ru.

In a May 3, 2022, [post](#) on Twitter, the Polish General Command of the Armed Forces wrote: “This is a false order of the Polish General Staff. The whole document is FAKE! We observe more and more such counterfeit military documents in Polish mass media. Please, DO NOT share this FAKE NEWS.”

Ukraine is selling surplus weapons to African countries.

THE FACTS: On April 19, 2022, the [Kremlin](#)-linked Telegram channel [Rezident](#) published a fake document





from Ukraine's Defense Ministry, dated March 29, 2022, which purportedly showed that Ukraine was selling surplus weapons to African countries. The false claim was shared by pro-Kremlin Telegram channels, including Denazification UA ("Denatsifikatsii UA") and news sites such as News-Front.info.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, a Sweden-based defense think-tank, Ukraine exported a "significant volume" of major conventional weapons to sub-Saharan Africa from 2005 to 2009, including surplus aircraft, artillery, and armored vehicles. However, there is no evidence that the deal outlined by the Rezident channel was real or that Ukraine is currently selling weapons to African countries.

The Rezident Telegram post claimed that among the weapons sold to African countries were "armored vehicles, tanks, submachine guns, rifles, grenades and even body armor." It said that the sale amounted to a "cunning scheme of enrichment," adding that, "While the Ukrainian military is dying from a shortage of weapons and ammunition, Defense Ministry officials are selling it to African countries under the guise of 'surplus.'"

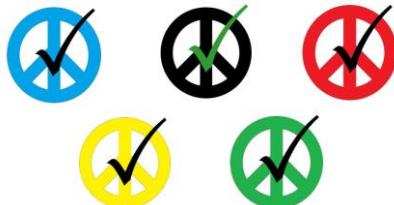
The fake document shared by the Rezident channel cites Amendment Number 1919 from the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, introduced in 2001, which allows the ministry to sell surplus weapons to other nations. The document also claimed that NVK Techimpex, a private manufacturer of military equipment and weapons in Ukraine, was selling the surplus weapons, citing an alleged 970-page report that outlines the deal.

That document contains obvious signs of forgery. While the letterhead mirrors the official Defense Ministry documents, the alleged signature of Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov differs from his usual signature. Additionally, the document was signed with "A.YU. Reznikov," which is the Russian spelling of the minister's name. The Ukrainian spelling, which the minister uses in official documents, is "O.YU. Reznikov." The document does not include a barcode or an address after the name of a People's Deputy of Ukraine, which does not comply with the Ministry of Defense's rules of document circulation.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has an estimated net worth of \$850 million. He accumulated his wealth after he was elected.

THE FACTS: On April 25, 2022, the far-right Forum for Democracy party in the Netherlands claimed without evidence on Telegram and Twitter: "Zelensky owns a fortune: Various estimates put it at around 850 million. He didn't get most of this until after he took office as president." Shortly after these postings, a flurry of social media posts and Russian-state news sites including Sputnik News and RIA-Novosti amplified the allegation, citing as a source the Forum for Democracy party, whose leader Thierry Baudet is reported to have close ties to the Kremlin.





Other [articles](#) published in April 2022, including a story headlined “In the Netherlands, they are interested in the origin of Zelensky’s \$850 million income” on the Russian-language channel of state-owned RT, referenced an April 2022 segment from Fox News host Tucker Carlson, in which he [suggested](#) Zelensky’s finances be audited. Other social media [posts](#) claimed Zelensky was worth \$1.4 billion.

The figures referenced in these claims are unfounded and not supported by credible estimates of Zelensky’s fortune. In fact, news reports and financial disclosures suggest that he was worth between \$20 million and \$30 million, as of April 2022.

According to reporting by [Forbes Ukraine](#), Zelensky “never was a billionaire” and he is worth approximately \$20 million. Additional [reporting](#) by Forbes U.S. puts that number at less than \$30 million, with his main asset being a 25 percent stake in Kvartal 95, a comedy studio he co-founded in 2003. Most of his net worth derived from his past career as an entertainer and comedian.

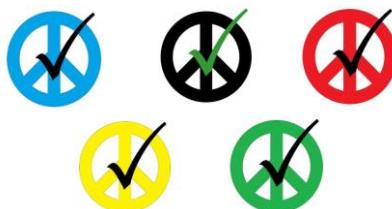
Zelensky transferred his stake in Kvartal 95 to his business partners before winning Ukraine’s presidential election, Forbes U.S. reported, valuing his stake in the company at \$11 million. Forbes estimated that his real estate portfolio is worth \$4 million. Forbes U.S. and Forbes Ukraine both estimated that he and his wife Olena Zelenska hold roughly \$2 million in a joint bank account, and that their other assets, including cars and jewelry, are worth \$1 million at most.

Zelensky’s most recent financial disclosures similarly do not show that his net worth is in the hundreds of millions. He reported a family income of roughly \$751,388 (22,748 million hryvnias) for 2020, according to a press [statement](#) and his asset [declaration](#) in the National Agency on Corruption Prevention. His financial disclosure shows that he received \$11,000 (336,000 hryvnias) in salary, \$152,000 (4.6 million hryvnias) in royalties, and \$442,000 (13.4 million hryvnias) from real estate sales that year. That puts his total income for 2020 at roughly \$605,000.

Google Maps revealed uncensored satellite images of Russian military sites in April 2022 during the Russia-Ukraine war, which were previously blurred. The change was meant to help Russia’s enemies better assess the Russian military’s capabilities and advances.

THE FACTS: On April 17, 2022, Ukraine-based defense news website Defense Express published [an article](#) that falsely claimed that Google Maps had unveiled “high-quality” satellite images of several Russian military bases and “strategic points.” Defense Express said that the move by Google presented an opportunity to assess the Russian military’s progress and resources, including aircraft carriers and





ammunition storages. The article included photos of several purported Russian military facilities.

The next day, an unverified and now-deleted account for the Ukrainian Armed Forces (@ArmedForcesUkr) [tweeted](#) that Google Maps had “opened access” to Russia’s military facilities, allowing people to see for the first time “a variety of Russian launchers, intercontinental ballistic missile mines, command posts and secret landfills with a resolution of about 0.5 meters per pixel.”

In fact, Google has not changed its publicly available satellite imagery in Russia. On April 18, 2022, Google Maps’ official Twitter account [stated](#) “please note that we haven’t made any blurring changes to our satellite imagery in Russia.”

Google Maps has occasionally blurred satellite imagery for sensitive military areas, such as the French military’s Air Base 705, which has been [pixelated](#) since 2014. The BBC [reported](#) in 2018 that European countries including Germany and Belgium have asked Google Maps to blur its military sites. However, there is no evidence that Google previously blurred images of military sites at the request of Russia. In fact, a NewsGuard analysis found that for years, Google has provided detailed satellite images of the Russian locations mentioned in @ArmedForcesUkr’s tweet.

For example, the first image featured in the Ukrainian forces’ tweet shows several aircraft stationed at an outdoor field in the [Kursk-Khalino airbase](#) — home to about [two dozen fighter jets](#) in 2021. Google Earth’s Historical Imagery feature, which allows users to access [past versions](#) of Google Maps’ satellite imagery, shows that Google has provided unblurred, detailed imagery of the base since at least 2003. (Google Maps and Google Earth share the [same satellite images](#).)

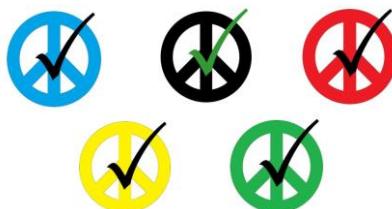
Another image shows a large red ship and at least four submarines [in Krasheninnikov Bay](#) in the Pacific Ocean. The port is near a ballistic nuclear submarine base in the Kamchatka Peninsula that [housed](#) submarines with nuclear capabilities during the Cold War. Google Earth has provided clear satellite images of the site since at least 2013.

Commenting on the claim that Google Maps recently unblurred these images, [Rob Lee](#), a senior fellow of the Eurasia program at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, [tweeted](#) on April 18, 2022, that he’s “always been able to look at Russian military facilities with Google Maps, including its most elite special operations units’ bases ...”

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky urged Ukrainians to surrender.

THE FACTS: On March 16, 2022, Ukrainian TV channel Ukraine 24 broadcast a video purporting to show Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky ordering Ukrainians to surrender to Russia. In the [video](#), Zelensky appeared to say, “My advice to you is to lay down arms and return to your families. It is not worth it dying in this war. My advice to you is to live. I am going to do the same.” The clip was posted to YouTube, Telegram,





Facebook and Russian social network Vkontakte.

In fact, the video was a “deepfake,” which is a visual or audible manipulation of a person or object saying and doing something that is fabricated. Zelensky did not call on Ukrainians to surrender. Shortly after the deepfake was published, Ukraine’s Defense Ministry published on Twitter a [video](#) of the real Zelensky, who called the clip a “childish provocation” and said: “We are not going to lay down any weapons until our victory.”

Nina Schick, a tech expert and author of “Deepfakes: The Coming Infocalypse” said that the video looked like “an absolutely terrible faceswap,” referring to programs that digitally paste one person’s face onto another’s body, Reuters [reported](#) on March 17, 2022. The video showed discrepancies between the skin tone of Zelensky’s neck and face, and pixelation around his head, which was disproportionately large. His voice was also deeper than his usual tone.

Nathaniel Gleicher, the head of security policy at Facebook parent Meta, said that the company removed the clip for violating its policy against misleading manipulated media. In a March 16, 2022, Twitter [post](#), Gleicher wrote that “our teams identified and removed a deepfake video claiming to show President Zelensky issuing a statement he never did.”

Ukraine 24 said in a March 16, 2022, Facebook [post](#) that the video was broadcast by “enemy hackers” and was “FAKE!”. The video also briefly appeared on Ukraine 24’s website.

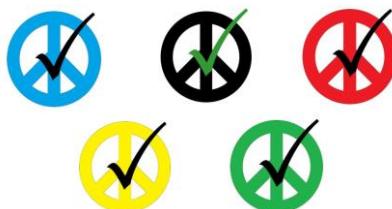
NATO military advisors are hiding out in a subterranean NATO bioweapons laboratory called PIT-404, which is financed by Metabiota, a company affiliated with Hunter Biden. The lab is located underneath the Azovstal Iron and Steel Works in Mariupol, Ukraine.

THE FACTS: In early April 2022, numerous [blogs](#), [websites](#) known to promote Russian disinformation, and [social media users](#) spread stories claiming that a secret NATO bioweapons lab is located underneath the Azovstal Iron and Steel Works in Mariupol, Ukraine. Many claimed that NATO military advisers were hiding in the lab, often called “PIT-404.” Some also claimed that the lab was financed by Metabiota, a company with connections to Hunter Biden. This claim has been made in several languages, including [Russian](#), [English](#), [Italian](#), and [French](#).

The Azovstal Iron and Steel Works became the last stronghold of Ukrainian forces during the siege of the city, which began in late February 2022. However, there is no evidence that there is a NATO bioweapons lab sheltering NATO military advisers underneath the steel plant. The social media users and websites that made this claim did not provide any credible evidence to support it. Ukraine is [not a member](#) of NATO, and the organization says that it does not have any [military bases](#) in Ukrainian territory.

Azovstal Director General [Enver Tskitishvili](#) issued a denial about the claims in an April 12, 2022, [Facebook post](#). “There are no secret tunnels with biochemical laboratories in Azovstal,” he wrote. “The plant did not





have and does not have anything to do with the development or storage of any weapons, including biochemical ones. Our company has never researched or manufactured anything like this.”

A Metabiota spokesperson told [The Washington Post](#) in March 2022 that the company no longer operates in Ukraine, saying, “Metabiota worked in Ukraine until 2020, providing training to help improve local capacity to detect and respond to health threats.” Metabiota and Hunter Biden have had no association since 2015, [The Washington Post reported](#). Biden was on the management team of one of Metabiota’s investors, Rosemont Seneca Technology Partners (now called Pilot Equity Group), but was pushed out of the firm in 2015 after being discharged from the Navy Reserve for cocaine use the previous year.

There is also no evidence of a business relationship between Metabiota, an American company that advises governments and businesses on epidemics, and the Azovstal Iron and Steel Works.

The claim that there is a NATO bioweapons lab beneath Azovstal follows similar claims made by Russian officials and Russian state-owned media outlets about U.S. bioweapons labs in Ukraine going back to at least 2018, for which there is also no credible evidence.

A secret document called the “Chancellor’s File” proves that NATO planned a war against Russia decades ago.

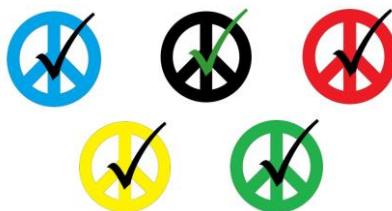
THE FACTS: On March 24, 2022, German author and filmmaker Ralph T. Niemeyer shared on his [Telegram channel](#) and Facebook account a photo of a letter, claiming that it proved that “NATO planned the war against Russia long in advance and forced Chancellor Scholz to approve it in January. Long before President Putin invaded anywhere.” The post claimed that this information could be found “in the Chancellor’s File.” The claim has been widely shared by [pro-Russian](#) and [QAnon Telegram](#) channels, accumulating more than 250,000 views on the messaging service as of April 2022. Similar posts appeared on other social network platforms, including Facebook.

The claim that NATO planned a war against Russia long before the Russian invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, is baseless.

German fact-checking organization Mimikama [reported](#) in April 2022 that the document posted by Niemeyer on Telegram was falsified. According to Mimikama, the letter first appeared on the website of the far-right magazine Unabhängige Nachrichten in 1999, supposedly addressed to Germany’s Federal Intelligence Service and purporting to be from “Minister of State Dr. Rickermann.” In fact, Germany never had a Minister of State named Rickermann. (Unabhängige Nachrichten described the letter as a “teaser” — or excerpt — for a book written by somebody named “James Shirley.” Such a book never made it to print.)

Ten years after the publication of the book’s teaser, Unabhängige Nachrichten published another [article](#) on the subject. This time, the publication reported that it “could not prove the authenticity of the information. All inquiries about a certain Dr. James Shirley, who is supposed to have reported on this in a book, were





unsuccessful..."

The letter claimed that Germany had signed a secret treaty with the Western allies after World War II that supposedly required every German chancellor to sign an agreement called the "Chancellor's File."

On Nov. 19, 2007, in response to a question about whether then-German Chancellor Angela Merkel "had to sign the Chancellor's File," the Press and Information Office of the Federal Government [issued a statement](#) saying: "The 'secret state treaty' you mention belongs to the realm of legends. This state treaty does not exist. And the Chancellor, of course, did not have to sign a so-called 'Chancellor's File' by order of the Allies before taking her oath of office."

According to Mimikama, the letter that some contend proves that NATO has long planned a war against Russia contains several spelling mistakes and other errors. The letterhead seems to indicate that it comes from the German Federal Intelligence Service, but Mimikama noted that in 1992, the agency was not yet using that letterhead. Moreover, as noted above, Germany has never had a Minister of State named "Rickermann."

As for the war in Ukraine, NATO has helped fund Ukraine's armed forces, and some of its member countries began sending weapons to Ukraine in mid-January 2022, ahead of Russia's invasion. NATO itself has not engaged militarily, because Ukraine is not a member of the alliance.

Russia does not use the type of missile that was employed to attack the Kramatorsk train station.

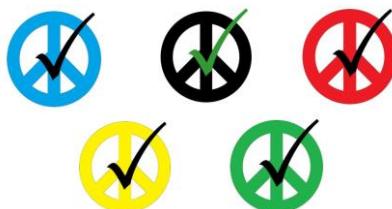
THE FACTS: On April 8, 2022, missiles struck a railway station in Kramatorsk, a city in eastern Ukraine. At least 50 people were killed, according to Ukrainian officials. The UN said on April 8, 2022, that the attack "killed and injured scores of civilians."

Russia and Ukraine both said that Tochka-U, a short-range ballistic missile, was used in the attack, but they blamed each other.

Russia claimed that only Ukrainian forces use Tochka-U missiles. The Russian Defense Ministry [said](#) in an April 8, 2022, statement posted on Telegram: "All statements by representatives of the Kyiv nationalist regime about the 'rocket attack' allegedly carried out by Russia on April 8 at the railway station in the city of Kramatorsk are a provocation and are absolutely untrue." The statement continued, "We emphasize that Tochka-U tactical missiles, fragments of which were found near the Kramatorsk railway station and published by eyewitnesses, are used only by the Ukrainian armed forces."

It is true that Ukraine uses Tochka-U missiles, but so does Russia, according to experts. Patrick Wilcken, an arms control researcher at Amnesty International, told NewsGuard in an email interview that "both Ukraine and Russia have the Tochka." He added, "We have seen Russia deploying the [Tochka] system in





Ukraine and documented an indiscriminate attack by Russia near a hospital building in Vuhledar, in Donetsk involving a 9M79 Tochka ballistic missile."

On March 29, 2022, the [Belarusky Hayun](#), an activist group that monitors military activity in Belarus, posted a video showing a column of Tochka missiles marked with the letter V, moving north of Kyiv. According to the Ukrainian fact-checking group [StopFake](#), V and Z are the two Latin script letters used to indicate that equipment belongs to the Russian army.

The Russian state news agency RIA-Novosti and other pro-Russia media that claimed that Ukraine struck Kramatorsk cited the similarity between a serial number on a Tochka-U missile found at the train station and other missiles launched by Ukraine in previous years. They obtained the serial number from a still of a video on the Italian TV channel TG-LA 7.

An April 9, 2022, article by [RIA-Novosti](#) quoted a Telegram post by the Donetsk TV channel Z Union, which said: "The serial number of the Tochka-U rocket that fell on the train station in Kramatorsk the day before appeared on the Web. Rocket 9M79-1, serial number Ш91579. Previously, Ukrainian militants used rockets from the same series." The article shared the Z Union's post, which listed missiles carrying a similar serial number, allegedly used by the Ukrainian army in 2015.

In fact, the serial number does not prove that the missiles used in Kramatorsk belonged to the Ukrainian army. StopFake wrote on April 10, 2022: "This serial number – Ш91579 – is a factory marking and does not in any way identify the missile as belonging to the Ukrainian military."

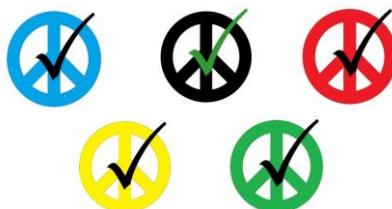
Wilcken of Amnesty International told NewsGuard that he agreed with this assessment. "A factory production number says nothing about which military these missiles originate from, it just tells you which factory manufactured the missile," he said. "Only through analysis of the blast site to determine direction/trajecotry of the missile and a mapping of the positions of different forces in relation to the assumed trajectory could one be absolutely certain of who fired this missile, but Russian provenance seems likely."

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) helped carry out forced evacuations of Ukrainians to Russia.

THE FACTS: On March 24, 2022, the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Peter Maurer, met with Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow. The Turkish Anadolu Agency [reported](#) the same day that Maurer had asked Lavrov for permission to open an office in the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don, near Ukraine's eastern border, and social media [posts](#) and online commentary began accusing the ICRC of supporting or participating in the forced transportation of Ukrainians to Russia.

There is no credible evidence that the ICRC helped organize forced evacuations of Ukrainians to Russia.





The ICRC has repeatedly denied this charge, publishing a [press release](#) on March 26, 2022, on its website stating that “The ICRC does not ever help organize or carry out forced evacuations.”

Twitter users have issued posts claiming to show evidence of ICRC assistance in the deportation of Ukrainians to Russia. One March 26, 2022, [post](#) containing a link to a YouTube video claimed to show that “Mariupol residents fleeing west are stopped by Russian troops, forced onto Red Cross buses to Russia.” The video showed a traffic jam with people standing around outside of cars and buses displaying the Red Cross symbol, but did not actually show Russian soldiers forcing people onto buses.

In fact, the video was originally published on Twitter earlier the same day by the governor of the Donetsk administrative region, [Pavlo Kirilenko](#), who made no mention of anyone being forced onto Red Cross buses to Russia. The only buses he mentioned were “evacuation buses that transport people from Berdyansk to Zaporizhia,” a city under Ukrainian control.

Other [Twitter users](#) posted screenshots of a report on Russian Red Cross activity titled “Evacuation of people from Donbas area to Russia” that was briefly published and then deleted from the website of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), suggesting that the report showed ICRC participation in the evacuation of Ukrainians to Russia. One [post](#) suggested that a screenshot showing the phrase “Assisted by RCRC Movement: 9,000” was proof of this. Other screenshots showed descriptions of arrangements made to accommodate displaced persons arriving in Russia from Ukraine, but did not indicate that the Russian Red Cross had participated in the transportation of Ukrainians to Russia.

The IFRC denied that either it or the Russian Red Cross participated in the transport of Ukrainians to Russia on its website: “Neither the IFRC nor the Russian Red Cross have ever been engaged in any movement of people from Ukraine into Russia.” In an April 2022 email to NewsGuard, the IFRC’s interim communications director, Benoît Carpentier, stated: “Regarding the 9,000 people assisted, this refers to the number of people who have crossed the border between Ukraine and Russia and received assistance from the Russian Red Cross. Neither the IFRC nor the Russian Red Cross are involved in people’s transportation.”

The report was deleted because it “referred to parts of Ukraine in a manner not aligned with our neutrality and impartiality,” the IFRC explained on its site, alluding to the report’s use of the terms “Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics,” the chosen names of the two breakaway regions in eastern Ukraine recognized only by Russia as of April 2022.

Classified documents show Ukraine was preparing an offensive operation against the Donbas.

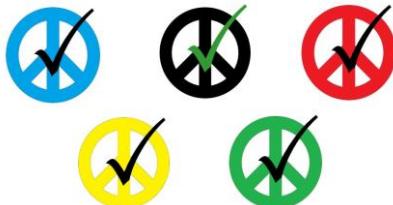
THE FACTS: On March 9, 2022, the [Russian government](#) falsely claimed that classified documents

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Crowdsearcher Olympics 2022: War Dataset



<http://bit.ly/intolympics>



obtained by the Russian Defense Ministry showed that Ukraine was preparing an attack on Donbas in March 2022. A March 9, 2022, post on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) by the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry shared photos of the documents in Ukrainian with the comment, “Classified documents (order by the Commander National Guard of Ukraine) acquired by @mod_russia confirm without a shadow of a doubt: the Kyiv regime was covertly preparing an offensive operation against #Donbass, scheduled for March 2022.” Twitter added a label to the post, warning users that “This media is presented out of context.”

These claims were repeated uncritically by various news sites, including the Russian state news agency [Tass](#). A March 10, 2022, article in Einreich.de, a pro-Russian German site that NewsGuard has found to have repeatedly published false content, claimed that Russia prevented Ukraine’s planned attack on the Donbas region in March 2022.

In fact, [according to](#) StopFake, a Ukrainian fact-checking organization, the document is not classified and contains no mention of a planned offensive. The Ukrainian National Guard (NSU) told StopFake that the document is not secret, and that it has nothing to do with Donbas. “This is a standard order for regular joint training camps of the AFU [Armed Forces of Ukraine] and NSU [National Guard of Ukraine] in Starychy (Lviv Region). Such orders are issued regularly every year. This document is about organizing a training camp” in Lviv, the NSU told StopFake. Lviv is located in Western Ukraine — on the opposite side of the country from Donbas.

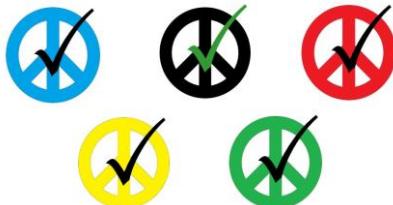
Christo Grozev, the executive director of Bellingcat, an online investigative journalism organization, told PolitiFact that while the Donbas region was mentioned in the document, it was neither “a prominent part of the document nor stated in an offensive context, both of which were alleged in the misleading Russian presentation.”

The massacre of civilians in Bucha, Ukraine, was staged.

THE FACTS: In early April, 2022, multiple news organizations, including Reuters, The Associated Press, and AFP, documented the killing of civilians in Bucha, a city near the capital Kyiv, that had been under Russian occupation for about a month, beginning on Feb. 27, 2022. Various news organizations spoke with residents in Bucha after the Russian army left. They all said that Russians were responsible for the killings of civilians.

The Russian government disputed these accounts. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs [said](#) in an April 3, 2022, statement, “not a single local resident has suffered from any violent action.” On April 3, 2022, the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry shared on Telegram a statement by the Russian Defense Ministry, which [claimed](#) that “the photos and video footage from Bucha are another hoax, a staged production and provocation by the Kyiv regime for the Western media.”





On April 3, 2022, the Russian Ministry of Defense [shared](#) on Telegram a slowed-down version of a video that was originally published by Ukrainian TV channel, Espresso.tv. The Telegram post claimed that one body was seen raising its arm and another was seen sitting down, proving that they were alive. “The video of the bodies is confusing: here at the 12th second the ‘corpse’ on the right is moving his arm. At 30th second in the rear view mirror the ‘corpse’ sits down,” the post stated. “The bodies in the video seem to have been deliberately laid out to create a more dramatic picture.”

In fact, the video did not show one of the corpses raising its arm. Shayan Sardarizadeh, a BBC journalist who covers online disinformation, [published](#) an even more slowed-down version of the video on Twitter, provided by international fact-checking group Aurora Intel. Sardarizadeh noted that the video, which was reviewed by NewsGuard, showed that a mark or a raindrop on the screen had created the false impression of the body moving in low-resolution clips.

The video also did not show a corpse “sitting down,” as Russian officials claimed. According to Sardarizadeh, the “slowed down version shows the buildings in the background being distorted by a rearview mirror. Add social media compression and the video gives the impression the body is moving.” This same phenomenon was also [demonstrated](#) by Finnish fact-checker Janne Ahlberg.

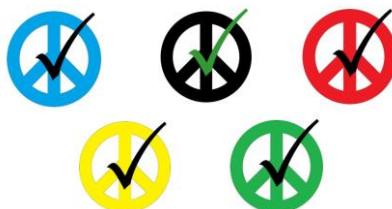
An April 4, 2022, [review](#) of videos and satellite imagery conducted by The New York Times showed that many of the dead civilians lying on the streets of Bucha were killed in mid-March 2022, when Russia, by its own account, was in control of Bucha. One video filmed by a local council member on April 1, 2022, showed multiple dead bodies strewn along Yablonska Street in Bucha, according to the Times. Satellite images provided to the newspaper by Maxar Technologies, a Colorado-based space technology company, showed that at least 11 of the bodies appeared on the streets of Bucha between March 9 and 11, 2022, and therefore were likely killed during that time period.

Additionally, residents in Bucha [told](#) Human Rights Watch that civilians were killed by Russians in March 2022. In an April 3 2022 report, the international human rights organization stated that Russian forces in Bucha rounded up five men and summarily executed one of them on March 4, 2022.

On May 19, 2022, The New York Times published an in-depth report based on eyewitness testimonies and three videos, which detailed the execution of eight Ukrainian men by Russian paratroopers, who were occupying Bucha on March 4, 2022. The newspaper obtained a video, which was taken by a witness, showing captives being marched in a single file at gunpoint, flanked by Russian troops. It then shows troops forcing captives to the ground, including one man who is wearing a bright blue hooded sweatshirt. “The video ends,” The Times said, “But eight witnesses recounted to The Times what happened next. Soldiers took the men behind a nearby office building that the Russians had taken over and turned into a makeshift base. There were gunshots. The captives didn’t return.”

The Times said that it also obtained a drone video, which was filmed on March 5, 2022, showing the dead





bodies on Yablonska Street as two Russian soldiers stood beside them. The Times reported: “Among the bodies, a flash of bright blue was visible — the captive in the blue sweatshirt.” The Times said that the videos were the “clearest evidence yet” that Ukrainian men were in the “custody of Russian troops minutes before being executed.”

The U.S. is developing bioweapons designed to target ethnic Russians.

THE FACTS: Shortly after the start of the Russian invasion, Russian officials made multiple public allegations that military biological programs run by the U.S. and its NATO allies in Ukraine were using dangerous pathogens to create bioweapons that could only infect “ethnic Slavs.”

Igor Kirillov, head of the radiation, chemical, and biological defense department of the Russian Armed Forces, said during a [briefing](#) on March 10, 2022, that labs in Ukraine were working on dangerous pathogens custom-designed to target Russians and other ethnic Slavs.

“The available documents confirm numerous cases of the transfer of biological samples of Ukrainian citizens abroad. We can say with a high probability that one of the goals of the United States and its allies is the creation of bioagents capable of selectively infecting various ethnic groups,” Kirillov [said](#), citing as an example a report that researchers in Ukraine had sent blood serum samples to the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity, a medical research facility in Australia.

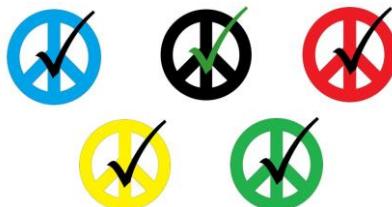
In response to the Kremlin’s allegations, a Peter Doherty Institute spokeswoman told the [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#) that it had received about 300 serum samples from Ukraine in 2019, to be used in measles research. The spokeswoman explained that receiving samples from other labs was “routine practice for the success of this public health initiative.” There is no evidence that the institute was ever involved in biological weapons research.

There is also no evidence that the U.S. is developing biological weapons in Ukrainian labs (see our fact-check into this myth [here](#)). A State Department spokesperson told [Newsweek](#) in March 2022 that claims about ethno-specific biological weapons in particular were completely false.

Moreover, experts say that biological agents are simply not capable of targeting specific groups based on their ethnicity. In a [comment](#) to the U.K.-based Science Media Centre, Oliver Jones, head of biosciences and food technology at RMIT University in Melbourne Australia, said: “This claim belongs purely in the realm of science fiction! Humans are just too genetically similar to find something that would affect only certain some people and not others.... There is no way to make any sort of agent, biological or otherwise, that could affect one ethnic group and not others. It is just not going to happen.”

In March 2022, U.S. news site [The Intercept](#) reported that a group of Russian-speaking biologists looked at the Russian claims and concluded that creating “a ‘military’ bacterium specific only for a certain nationality





and especially for Russians is absolutely evolutionarily impossible."

Photos show Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky fighting in combat after Russia invaded Ukraine.

THE FACTS: Social media posts and some news sites have shared old images of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky wearing camouflage, a bulletproof vest and helmet, falsely claiming that they show the president fighting after Russia invaded Ukraine. The claim has appeared in multiple languages since February 2022, including Spanish, French, Arabic, and Hebrew.

Hananya Naftali, an Israeli social media influencer with more than 1.2 million Facebook followers, [shared](#) one of the images in a Feb. 25, 2022, Facebook post, the day after Russia invaded Ukraine. He wrote: "This is the President of Ukraine Zelensky. He took off his clothes and put on a military uniform to join the troops in fighting to protect the Ukrainian homeland. He is a true leader." The post was shared more than 70,000 times. Facebook added a label to the post, warning users that "independent fact-checkers say this information could mislead people."

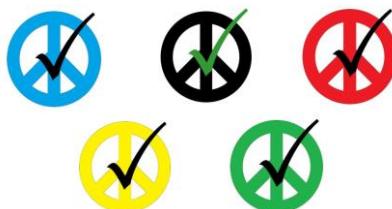
A Feb 25, 2022, Twitter post shared the image, with the comment "Ukraine's President is on the front lines fighting for his people. President Zelensky has taken up arms and joined the troops to repel Russian invasion." The photo is not new and does not show Zelensky on the frontlines in 2022. It was taken during Zelensky's [December 2021 visit](#) to the front line positions of the Ukrainian army in Donbas, in eastern Ukraine. A reverse image search by NewsGuard found that the [original photo](#) first appeared on Getty Images, a global photo agency. The original photo's caption reads: "Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky visits the front-line positions of Ukrainian military in Donbas, Ukraine on December 06, 2021."

Other photos of Zelensky taken during Feb, April and October, 2021, trips in east Ukraine, were also shared on social media after the invasion to claim that the president was visiting the front lines.

Videos show the “Ghost of Kyiv” shooting down Russian planes.

THE FACTS: On February 24, 2022, the commander-in-chief of Ukraine's Armed Forces, Valerii Zaluzhnyi, wrote in a [post](#) on Facebook that at least six Russian planes and two helicopters had been destroyed on the first day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The following day, a video began appearing on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) purportedly showing a Ukrainian MiG-29 shooting down a Russian Su-35 fighter jet. The video was subsequently retweeted by the Ukrainian [Ministry of Defense](#). Some users [claimed](#) that this video showed "the Ghost of Kyiv," an unidentified Ukrainian pilot said to have shot down several Russian planes.





The above-mentioned video of a Ukrainian MiG-29 shooting down a Russian Su-35 is not real-life footage, but was actually made using the videogame [Digital Combat Simulator](#) (abbreviated “DCS”) and then miscaptioned by social media users. The video posted on Twitter and Facebook was first uploaded to [YouTube](#) with the title “GHOST OF KIEV KILL” and its description read, “This footage is from DCS, but is nevertheless made out of respect for ‘The Ghost of Kiev.’”

The Ghost of Kyiv has not been identified or proven to exist. While the [General Staff](#) of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and former president [Petro Poroshenko](#) have made references to the Ghost of Kyiv on social media and [The Times](#) reported that “a Ukrainian military source” had said that the pilot was real, attempts by fact-checking organizations including PolitiFact and Deutsche Welle to confirm the Ghost of Kyiv’s existence have gone unanswered by the Ukrainian government.

Ukraine threatened Russia with invasion.

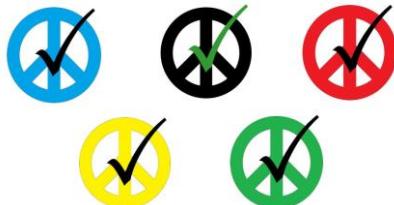
THE FACTS: On March 7, 2022, [Russian state-owned news sites](#) claimed that Ukraine’s Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council Oleksiy Danilov threatened Russia with a Ukrainian invasion, citing a March 7, 2022, [Facebook post](#) by Danilov. An article by Russian-state owned news agency [RIA-Novosti](#), titled “The Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council threatened Russia with an invasion,” quoted the following part of Danilov’s post as evidence: “We remember everyone and everything, we will never forget anyone. You will not hide anywhere: neither behind the fences of your houses, nor in villas in Miami, nor on a yacht in Seychelles or in a bunker in the Urals... You came to our land and to our families – we will come to you.”

The article misrepresented Danilov’s statement. Danilov did not threaten to invade Russia. In the Facebook [post](#), he asserted his view that Russia will not escape justice for its invasion of Ukraine, alluding to the International Criminal Court’s [investigation](#) into possible war crimes carried out by Russia in Ukraine, launched on March 3, 2022. He wrote: “I am convinced that the future tribunal on Russian criminals will be significant for the whole world and for Russia itself, as the war with Ukraine, among other things, has launched a process of liquidation of the Putin regime itself.” Addressing the Russian government, he added, “Your crimes are documented, and the memory of them is hot iron in the hearts. Both those who gave orders and those who carried them out aiming for a missile strike on our peaceful cities are on our list. You have come to our land and our families – we will come to you.”

U.S. paratroopers landed in Ukraine.

THE FACTS: A March 7, 2022, [Facebook video](#), posted from the account “Current News Update,” shows U.S. paratroopers and falsely claimed that they were “American soldiers in Ukraine Sky.” The video had





been viewed more than 7.6 million times, as of March 16, 2022. It spread to India, Pakistan, Brazil, the Philippines, and Ghana on Facebook, and was shared on other social media platforms.

The video is not new and does not show U.S. paratroopers landing in Ukraine in 2022. A reverse image search using the [Amnesty International YouTube Data Viewer tool](#) showed that the original video was first posted to YouTube in 2016 by the account “AiirSource Military,” which says it covers “military events and missions” from the US military. The account has not posted videos in three years. The video shows paratroopers from the 82nd and 101st Airborne Division performing parachute drills in Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

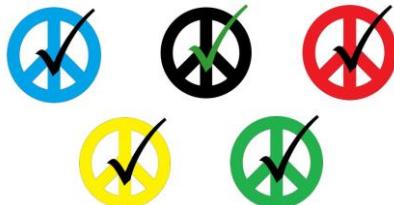
The U.S. was not directly involved in the 2022 war in Ukraine, although it did provide weapons and aid to the country. In mid-February 2022, about two weeks before Russia invaded Ukraine, U.S. soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division, which was seen in the video, were deployed to a base near Przemysl, Poland, about 6 kilometres (3.7 miles) from the Ukrainian border, “to reassure our NATO allies, deter any potential aggression against NATO’s eastern flank,” a U.S. senior defense official said, [according](#) to The Washington Post.

Russian missiles hit a nuclear waste facility in Kyiv.

THE FACTS: On [Feb. 27](#), 2022, [multiple](#) news sites published articles in Ukrainian, [Russian](#) and [English](#), claiming that Russian missiles hit a nuclear storage facility of the Kyiv branch of “Radon,” a state-owned enterprise. The articles cited a [post](#) on the official Facebook page of the Ukrainian Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which said: “As of February 27, 2022, at 1:20 Kyiv time, as a result of the mass bombing of Kyiv with all types of anti-aircraft and missile weapons available in the Russian Federation, shells got into the radioactive waste disposal of the Kyiv branch of Radon Association.” The post also stated that, “According to the preliminary assessment of the State Regulation, there is no threat to the population outside the sanitary and protective zone.” According to the Ukrainian fact-checking site, StopFake, the commission was [relying](#) on “information received by telephone from facility staff who called from a bomb shelter.”

However, on Feb. 27, 2022, the State Emergency Service of Ukraine [posted](#) a statement on its official Facebook page, saying that they visited the site of the attack to examine the damage and found that debris from nearby explosions fell close to the facility, but had not damaged any of its buildings. The post said: “At the scene, we determined that as a result of the shelling, an unknown object struck near the building and did not hit any important objects.” As of March 15, 2022, multiple articles had not included the update from the State Emergency Service of Ukraine.



**Ukrainian “nationalists” seized about 20 OSCE vehicles in eastern Ukraine.**

THE FACTS: On March 1, 2022, several Russian state media organizations including [TASS](#), [RIA Novosti](#), [Sputnik News](#), and [RT](#) published stories claiming that Ukrainian “nationalist forces” had captured about 20 vehicles belonging to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission in Kramatorsk, a Ukrainian city near the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR). The articles said that the “Ukrainian nationalists” planned to use the vehicles to carry out “provocations” against OSCE employees that would be blamed on the DPR militia, and that the fate of the OSCE employees previously in possession of those vehicles remained unknown. (The OSCE is a [regional security organization](#) that has had a Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine since 2014 to report in an impartial way on the situation in Ukraine and to facilitate dialogue among all parties.)

There is no evidence that OSCE Special Monitoring Mission vehicles in Kramatorsk were stolen in late February or early March 2022, and the OSCE denied that any vehicles had been stolen from Kramatorsk. On March 1, 2022, the organization [tweeted](#), “All OSCE vehicles in Kramatorsk are accounted for. Reports that @OSCE_SMM vehicles were stolen from our compound there are false.” Representatives of the OSCE also denied that its vehicles had been stolen when contacted by the French fact-checking site [FactAndFurious.com](#) and the Ukrainian fact-checking site [StopFake.org](#).

The OSCE’s Special Monitoring Mission’s daily reports from [Feb. 28, 2022](#), and [March 1, 2022](#), made no mention of any vehicles or personnel being captured, and the Feb. 28 report indicated that there were no OSCE personnel remaining in Kramatorsk at that time. “The Mission completed the evacuation activities of most international mission members following the 25 February decision,” the organization said. “The evacuation of the Monitoring Teams located in Lviv, Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Dnipro, Odessa, Kyiv and Kyiv Head Office, as well as the Monitoring Teams from the Sievierodonetsk, Mariupol and Kramatorsk Patrol Hubs is complete.”

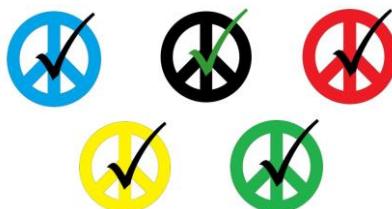
Ukraine staged the attack on the hospital in Mariupol.

THE FACTS: [Russian officials](#), the [Russian state-owned media](#) and pro-Kremlin [news sites](#) falsely claimed that the March 9, 2022, airstrike on a [maternity hospital](#) in Mariupol in southern Ukraine, which injured 17 people, [according](#) to the WHO, was staged by crisis actors and that the hospital was a base for the Ukrainian army and radicals.

The Russian Embassy in the U.K. said in a March 10, 2022, Twitter post that images of two injured women taken by The [Associated Press](#) at the scene of the attack, were fake. The embassy claimed that a beauty blogger, Marianna Podgurskaya, “played the roles” of the two women; a pregnant woman being carried on a stretcher and a pregnant woman in polka dot pyjamas descending the stairs of the hospital.

This claim is false. The pregnant woman pictured in polka dots pyjamas was indeed a beauty blogger;





however, her name is Marianna Vishegirskaya. As evident in the photos, she is not the same person as the woman being carried on a stretcher, who later died along with her baby, [according](#) to a March 15, 2022, report by The Associated Press. Bellingcat, an investigative news outlet, using a facial verification tool, [found](#) that there was a zero percent likelihood that the two faces in the photos belonged to the same person. The Associated Press [said](#) it was unable to determine the identity of the woman on the stretcher.

[Russian officials](#) and state-owned media also claimed that the hospital was being used as a base for the Azov battalion, a Ukrainian far-right militia that is part of Ukraine's National Guard, according to [Reuters](#), and emptied of staff and patients. During a March 10, 2022, press conference, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov [said](#) that the hospital had "long been taken over by the Azov battalion and other radicals and that all the women in labor, all the nurses and in general all the staff had been told to leave it. It was a base of the ultra-radical Azov battalion."

Echoing Lavrov's statement, a March 9, 2022, Twitter [post](#) from the official account of the Russian embassy in Israel shared an image that purportedly showed tanks in front of the empty maternity hospital, with the comment: "The truth is that the maternity hospital has not worked since the beginning of Russia's special operation in Ukraine. The doctors were dispersed by militants of the Azov nationalist battalion. [#StopFakeNews](#)."

In fact, the image used in the embassy's Twitter post was not of the maternity hospital in Mariupol. According to [Bellingcat](#), on March 11, 2022, geolocation data showed that the building in the photo was actually located 10 kilometres (6.2 miles) from the hospital.

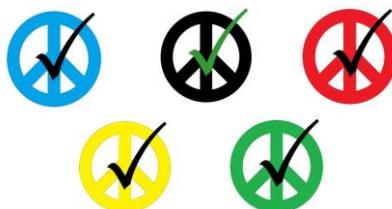
Additionally, photographer Yevgeny Maloletka, who took some of the photos of the Mariupol hospital attack for The Associated Press, [told](#) Latvia-based news site The Insider on March 10, 2022, "We photographed what was happening. There was an airstrike, and the hospital was full of people. People were coming out of the basement and the building — and we recorded it. The Azov Battalion wasn't there."

European universities are expelling Russian students.

THE FACTS: As of March 2022, there was no evidence that European universities expelled or threatened to expel Russian students in retaliation for the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These allegations appear to have started after Russia's human rights ombudsman, Tatiana Moskalkova, wrote in a since deleted, Feb. 28, 2022, [Instagram post](#) that she and the Russian Minister of Science and Higher Education Valery Falkov were "taking unprecedented measures to protect the rights of Russian students who have been expelled from universities in France, the Czech Republic, Belgium, and other European states due to the situation in Ukraine."

Moskalkova did not provide evidence to support her claim, but social media accounts and prominent





Russian websites supportive of Russian President Vladimir Putin soon began repeating the allegation. State-run news agency [RIA Novosti](#) reported that Russian students expelled from European universities would be able to study for free at Russian universities, such as the Higher School of Economics, Moscow State University, and Saint Petersburg State University.

The claim spread throughout European campuses and social media. More than a dozen universities, including schools in France, the Czech Republic, and Belgium issued statements in March 2022 stating that Russian students were not at risk of expulsion.

In a [tweet](#) posted on March 1, 2022, the European University Association (EUA), which includes about 850 universities across more than 40 countries, said that “Various rumors have emerged that European #universities have been expelling Russian students since the aggression on Ukraine... It is untrue and EUA hasn’t received any report of potential expulsions by any of its members.”

Luc Sels, the rector of KU Leuven, a university in Belgium, [tweeted](#) about the rumor on March 2, 2022, that “nothing could be further from the truth. We support all students at #kuleuven and welcome new ones, in a spirit of peace & solidarity.” Michel Deneken, president of the University of Strasbourg in France, told [French radio broadcaster Radio France](#) in March 2022 that Russian students enrolled at his university took the news as fact. “The fact that we had responses from Russian students saying, ‘thank you for reassuring us’, shows that they were worried about this fake news,” Deneken said.

The French Ministry of Higher Learning also denied the rumor, and said in a February 2022 meeting with university officials that the approximately 5,000 Russian students and researchers studying in France would be allowed to continue their studies in the country, Radio France [reported](#).

A man named “Bernie Gores” was the first American casualty of the Ukraine crisis.

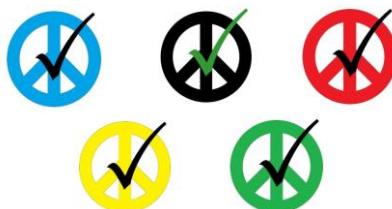
THE FACTS: A [Twitter](#) post from an account masquerading as CNN falsely announced on Feb 23, 2022, that a man named Bernie Gores was the “first American casualty of the Ukraine crisis.” The post, from the unverified and [now suspended](#) account @CNNUKR, showed a photo of Gores saying, “Thoughts and prayers with the family of activist Bernie Gores who passed away this morning after a mine planted by Russian backed separatists exploded.”

A similar Twitter post on Aug. 16, 2021, from an unverified and [since suspended](#) account @CNNAfghan, shared an image of the same man. The post said: “#CNN Journalist ‘Bernie Gores’ executed in #Kabul by #Taliban soldiers.”

Some social media users shared the Twitter posts side by side, with allegations that CNN was producing misinformation. A Feb 25, 2022, [Facebook post](#) said: “See how CNN Blatantly LIES to the public!” Another [Facebook post](#), on Feb. 26, 2022, said “CNN is the enemy of the people.”

The claims are false. The photos allegedly showing “Bernie Gores” are actually of a YouTuber and gamer





called Jordie Jordan. As stated above, these Twitter posts came from unverified accounts and were not shared by CNN. In a March 2022 fact-check, CNN said of the false reports about Gores: “Both tweets about a ‘Bernie Gores’ being killed are fabrications not connected to CNN. The ‘CNN Ukraine’ and ‘CNN Afghanistan’ accounts behind the tweets are both phonies that have been suspended by Twitter for violating its policy against impersonation.”

A reverse Google Image search by NewsGuard showed that the image used in the Twitter posts was published on Jordie Jordan’s profile on [Wikitubia](#), a Wikipedia-type site of gamers. Jordie Jordan is alive, as shown by his last [YouTube video](#), which was March 16, 2022.

Ukraine is training child soldiers.

THE FACTS: In February 2022 and March 2022, multiple social media posts shared photos of Ukrainian children wearing military uniforms and brandishing weapons, with captions falsely claiming that children were training to fight after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022.

The photos appeared in a March 8, 2022, [post](#) in the Telegram channel of a conspiracy group, Outreach Worldwide, which claimed that “child soldiers” are being trained in “the model of ISIS” and that Ukraine is violating human rights law as a result.

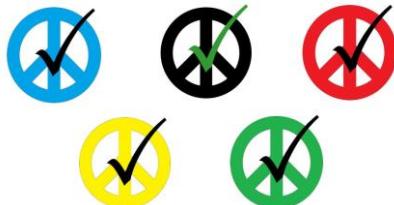
A Feb. 25, 2022, Facebook [post](#) in Sinhala, the most widely spoken language in Sri Lanka, shared the photos under the caption, “War is a curse. Children take up arms to save their motherland. Child soldiers of Ukraine.” In fact, the photos were taken by The Associated Press as part of an [essay](#) titled “Ukraine Groomed to Fight,” in July 2017, three years into the conflict between the Ukrainian army and Russian-backed separatists. The original caption of one photo read, “In this photo taken on Saturday, 8 July 2017, students at a paramilitary camp for children hit their fists onto their hearts during an evening ceremony outside Kyiv, Ukraine. As the deadly conflict in eastern Ukraine entered its third year, some parents in Ukraine are anxious to make sure their children are ready to fight it, instead of swimming and playing volleyball.”

Other photos that claimed to show Ukrainian child soldiers in 2022 were actually taken by the European Press photo Agency in August 2015. The caption of one photo in part [reads](#), “Children hold mock weapons as they attend training in the youth military-patriotic summer camp ‘Azovets’ in the outskirts of Kyiv, Ukraine, 12 August 2015.” There have been no reports or other evidence indicating that children are fighting in the war between Russia and Ukraine.

The war in Ukraine is a hoax.

THE FACTS: In March 2022, social media users spread false claims that the war in Ukraine was a hoax,





staged by crisis actors and orchestrated by the Western media.

A [video](#) of a news reporter in front of dozens of people lying on the ground covered in what looks like body bags went viral on several major social networks. Seconds into the clip, a person in a bag moves around conspicuously. A March 1, 2022, [post](#) on Twitter miscaptioned the video, “Miracle! Death (dead) Ukrainians coming to life after dying on social media but caught on live camera.”

In fact, the video clip is not new and does not show crisis actors in Ukraine in 2022. The video was posted by Austrian news channel OE24 to [YouTube](#) on Feb. 4, 2022, with the caption: “Vienna: Demo against climate policy.” It shows a climate change protest in Austria, which took place on Feb. 1, 2022, more than three weeks before Russia invaded Ukraine, [according to the Austrian newspaper Osterreich](#). The protest was organized by climate activists of the youth movement “Friday for Future” and the use of body bags aimed to highlight the threat of carbon emissions.

A more sophisticated manipulated video used an Austrian news report, and replaced the audio with an English-language [NBC News report](#) shot from Lviv in western Ukraine, in which correspondent Cal Perry spoke about casualties on the first day of the war. This fake also replaced the Austrian outlet’s original on-screen banner, with the English text that appeared on NBC, reading “UKRAINIAN HEALTH MINISTRY: 57 DEAD, 169 HURT ACROSS UKRAINE AS RUSSIA LAUNCHES ATTACK.” The video was [shared](#) on Twitter on March 2, 2022, by Lee Stranahan, a self-described Russia supporter, who hosts a show on Russian-state owned Radio Sputnik, with the caption “How to lose your job as a crisis actor...” The fake video generated more than one million views on Twitter alone, before it was taken down by the platform on March 7, 2022.

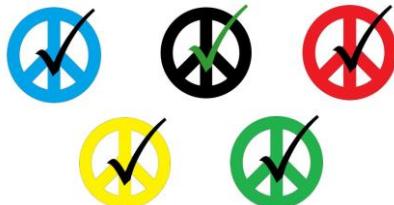
In late February, social media users falsely claimed that a photo of a wounded woman in Ukraine was taken in 2018, not in 2022, and that the woman was a crisis actor. For example, a Feb 26, 2022, TikTok [video](#) wrongly said that the photo was used in a July 2018 news article about a gas leak. The TikTok video garnered more than 473,000 views and 22,000 likes as of March 15, 2022, and was reposted to [Facebook](#). One Feb. 26, 2022, Facebook post shared the video with the comment “Crisis actors at there [sic] best...”.

In fact, the photo was taken by photographer Wolfgang Schwan on Feb. 24, 2022, the first day of Russia’s invasion in Ukraine, and shows a woman, who was injured in a shelling attack on a residential building in Chuhuiv, Ukraine. A reverse image search by NewsGuard did not find the photo published anywhere else before Feb. 24, 2022.

The U.S. has a network of bioweapons labs in Eastern Europe.

THE FACTS: On Feb. 24, 2022, a thread by the Twitter account @WarClandestine suggesting that the Russian invasion of Ukraine was actually targeting U.S. bioweapons laboratories in Ukraine was widely





shared on social media using the hashtag #USBiolabs. The thread cited claims by Russian officials that the U.S. maintains a network of bioweapons labs near Russia's borders in Eastern Europe. Russian state-owned media outlets have been making similar claims since at least 2016.

These claims are typically based on a misrepresentation of the U.S. Department of Defense's Biological Threat Reduction Program, which collaborates with partner countries to reduce the threat of outbreaks of dangerous infectious diseases by helping partners to secure dangerous pathogens and to quickly detect outbreaks, according to the [U.S. Embassy in Ukraine's website](#). The U.S. has been providing aid to Ukrainian laboratories since 2005, when the Ukrainian Ministry of Health and U.S. Department of Defense signed an [agreement](#) intended to limit the threat of bioterrorism by implementing safeguards on deadly pathogens from Soviet-era biological weapons programs. The Biological Threat Reduction Program has since helped to construct and modernize Ukrainian laboratories. The labs themselves are run and primarily financed by the Ukrainian government. The [Security Service of Ukraine](#) (SBU) noted in response to claims about the presence of U.S. military biological laboratories in a May 2020 [statement](#) that "no foreign biological laboratories operate in Ukraine."

Russia was not using cluster munitions during its military operation in Ukraine.

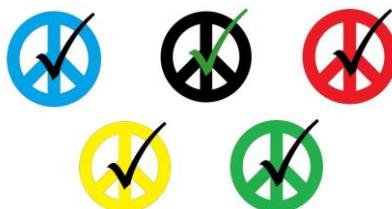
THE FACTS: Russia insisted that its armed forces were only using high-precision weapons during its war with Ukraine in 2022 and denied reports that its army was using cluster munitions, which can inflict more damage on civilians. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on March 1, 2022, that such reports are "undoubtedly fake news," according to Reuters. Peskov said that Russian operations are focused on military targets, not civilian ones, Reuters reported.

Cluster munitions are notoriously dangerous for civilians because they produce undetonated bombs that effectively act like land mines. As a result, a [2008 United Nations](#) treaty signed by 108 countries, excluding Russia, Ukraine, the U.S. and other countries, banned its use.

Human Rights Watch [said](#) on March 4, 2022, that on Feb. 28, 2022, Russia used cluster munitions in at least three residential areas in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city, which killed at least three civilians. Human Rights Watch said, "Interviews with 2 witnesses and an analysis of 40 videos and photographs reveal the use of submunitions delivered by Russian-made 9M55K Smerch cluster munition rockets."

The investigative journalism site, Bellingcat, [said](#) that evidence appears to show Russia inflicting civilian harm, including through the use of cluster bombs in civilian areas, based on credible videos and photos. Bellingcat wrote in a Feb. 27, 2022, report, that Russia appears to have been firing cluster bombs from multiple launch rocket systems, BM 27 and BM 30. It said, "We can tell this by the distinctive munitions used by each system and the direction from which they appear to have travelled before impact."





A March 4, 2022, [BBC investigation](#) analyzed footage of a Feb. 28, 2022, attack in Kharkiv and drew insights from weapons experts. The BBC concluded: “The evidence points clearly to the attack in question being carried out by Russian forces. Other images shared online show Russian sub-munitions dropped in the same neighbourhood on the day of the attack.”

During a March 4, 2022, meeting in Brussels, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg confirmed that Russia attacked Ukraine with cluster bombs, according to reports by [Reuters](#) and [The New York Times](#). “We have seen the use of cluster bombs and we have seen reports of use of other types of weapons, which would be in violation of international law,” Stoltenberg said.

NATO has a military base in Odessa.

THE FACTS: In December 2021, various pro-Russia news sites claimed that NATO established a naval base in Odessa, a southern port city in Ukraine.

NATO ships have been increasing their presence on the Black Sea since Russia’s annexation of Crimea 2014, according to the [news section](#) on NATO’s official website in July 2021. The Alliance states that “NATO ships routinely operate in the Black Sea, consistent with international law, usually patrolling the waters for around two-thirds of the year.”

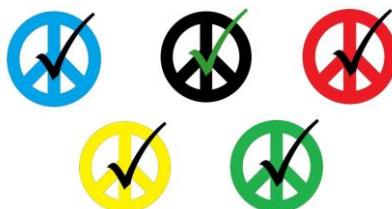
In fact, foreign military bases are not permitted in Ukraine, according to article 17 of the country’s [constitution](#), and there is no evidence of such a base. [NATO’s interactive map](#), which shows where surveillance systems and Alliance training centers are located, shows no NATO base or center or any other military facility in Ukraine. On a page of its website last updated in January 2022, NATO [wrote](#) that “Outside NATO territory, the Alliance only has a military presence in Kosovo and Iraq.”

Russia did not target civilian infrastructure in Ukraine.

THE FACTS: As Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, the Russian government claimed that the Russian army was using precision-guided weapons aimed only at military targets, not civilian infrastructure. These claims have been repeated uncritically by various Russian-state news sites.

In fact, [Amnesty International](#) has documented multiple attacks by the Russian army against civilian targets in Ukraine. One day after the invasion, Amnesty International said that Russia was carrying out “indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas and strikes on protected objects such as hospitals,” after documenting three incidents in the cities of Vuhledar, Kharkiv, and Uman, that it believes to have killed at least six civilians and injured at least 12 more. Agnès Callamard, the group’s Secretary General, [said](#) the Russian military used “ballistic missiles and other explosive weapons with wide-area effects in densely-





populated areas,” adding that some of these attacks may constitute war crimes.

Modern Ukraine was entirely created by communist Russia.

THE FACTS: In Feb. 21, 2022, just three days before Russia launched a full invasion of Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin [said](#) “Modern Ukraine was entirely created by Russia, more precisely, Bolshevik, communist Russia,” Putin said, lamenting that the communists “gave these republics the right to leave the (Soviet) union without any terms and conditions.”

It is true that today’s Russia and Ukraine, both former Soviet states, share long periods of history. However, they have spent considerably more time apart than together. Russia and Ukraine’s shared heritage dates back more than 1,000 years, when Kyiv was the center of the first Slavic state, Kievan Rus, a medieval empire founded by Vikings in the 9th century and the birthplace of Ukraine and Russia. The historical reality of Ukraine is a complicated 10-century history of [shifting borders](#) and conquest by multiple, competing powers. While parts of modern-day Ukraine existed within the Russian empire for centuries, other parts in the west [fell](#) to the control of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Poland, or Lithuania.

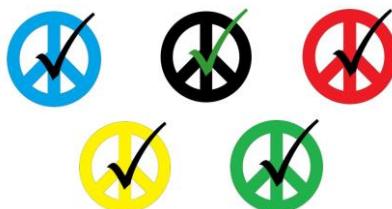
Contrary to Putin’s claim that “the Bolsheviks invented Ukraine,” Ukraine had fought for, and gained, independence in 1918 — a status that lasted only a few years. In [1922](#), Russian Bolsheviks defeated Ukraine’s national government and established the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Ukraine would spend the next 69 years as part of the Union.

Putin’s claim that Moscow “gave” Ukraine the right to become independent of the Soviet Union “without any terms and conditions,” is incorrect because it was the Ukrainians who chose independence in a democratic referendum. In 1991, as the Soviet Union was dissolving, 84 percent of eligible voters in Ukraine went to the [polls](#), and more than 92 percent voted to leave the Soviet Union. Moscow even vowed to respect Ukraine’s sovereignty as a condition of Ukraine’s giving up its nuclear weapons — which was memorialized in 1994, in an [agreement](#) known as the [Budapest Memorandum](#).

Crimea joined Russia legally.

THE FACTS: At the end of February 2014, troops operating without national insignia seized government facilities and checkpoints in the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea, including the parliament building in Simferopol. In an April 2014 [press conference](#), Russian President Putin admitted that Russian troops had been deployed to Crimea to support local defense forces, having [insisted](#) a month earlier that the armed men were local defense forces. In March 2014, the newly installed Russian separatist prime minister, Sergei Aksyonov, held a referendum on the status of Crimea, the results of which were overwhelmingly in favor of





the peninsula joining Russia. The Russian government has falsely [claimed](#) that Crimea legally joined Russia because the referendum was held in compliance with international law.

In fact, the referendum was not legitimate and, as a result, most countries do not recognize Crimea as a part of Russia. The [UN Assembly](#) and the [Venice Commission](#), an advisory body of the Council of Europe consisting of legal experts, declared the referendum and its outcome illegitimate for a number of reasons. First, the referendum did not give all of Ukraine's citizens the right to vote on Crimea's status, violating Ukraine's constitution, which requires that any changes to the territory of Ukraine be approved by a referendum of all eligible voters in Ukraine. Moreover, the options on the ballot excluded the possibility for Crimea to maintain the status quo and remain part of Ukraine. The [two options](#) were: Join Russia, or return to the 1992 constitution, which gave the peninsula significant autonomy.

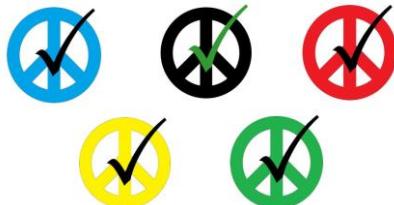
In addition, international law does not recognize a referendum held under armed aggression. As Marc Weller, Professor of International Law at the University of Cambridge, wrote [for the BBC](#) in March 2014, "Crimea cannot proceed with a possible secession or even incorporation into Russia while Moscow holds sway on the ground." Igor Strelkov, a leading Russian commander in Crimea in 2014, who is also known as Igor Girkin, said during a 2015 [interview](#) on the Russian program "Polit-Ring" that militants under his command "forced" lawmakers to vote in the referendum. "Members of parliament were gathered by the militants and forced into the hall [parliament chamber] to make them vote," he said.

Polish-speaking saboteurs attempted to bomb a chlorine plant in Donbas.

THE FACTS: Days before Russia invaded Ukraine, the Russia-backed Donetsk People's Republic in eastern Ukraine shared a video claiming to show that its militia prevented Polish-speaking "saboteurs" from blowing up chlorine containers at a sewage treatment plant near separatist-controlled town Horlivka in Donetsk on Feb. 18, 2022. The Donetsk People's Republic also said that the saboteurs were part of "two special purpose groups of the VFU [Ukrainian army]." However, the video turned out to be manipulated, and there is no evidence that saboteurs attempted such an attack in Horlivka.

According to investigative news outlet Bellingcat, analysis of the video's metadata revealed that it had been [recorded](#) days before the attack was claimed to have happened. The video's metadata, which was reviewed by NewsGuard, confirmed that it was recorded on Feb. 8, 2022, ten days before the attack allegedly happened. Additionally, according to Bellingcat, the audio track had been manipulated with the addition of explosion sounds that appear to have been [lifted](#) from a [video](#) of Finnish military exercises, which was posted to YouTube in April 2010.





Ukrainian forces bombed a kindergarten in Lugansk on Feb. 17, 2022.

THE FACTS: Russian news sites claimed that the Ukrainian army bombed a kindergarten in the village Novaya Kondrashovka, which they said was located in the Russian separatist-controlled Lugansk republic in eastern Ukraine. However, analysts at Bellingcat [reported](#) that both the location of the kindergarten and evidence from the scene indicate that the shelling came from the south, where Russian-separatist frontlines are located. Correctly placing the kindergarten in the Ukrainian village of Novaya Kondrashovka, a few kilometres north of the frontline with the Russia-backed separatists, and analysis of a crater next to the site, shows that “the shell clearly came from the south” according to Bellingcat’s Director of Training and Research, Aric Toler.

The U.S. and U.K. sent outdated and obsolete weapons to Ukraine.

THE FACTS: The U.K. and the U.S. began sending weapons to Ukraine in mid-January 2022 as fears mounted over a possible Russian invasion of the country. The U.K. supplied Ukraine with short-range anti-tank NLAW missiles while the U.S. has sent 300 Javelin missiles and other supplies, as part of a \$200 million security package for Ukraine.

The Russian-state media and pro-Russian news sites claimed that the weaponry was outdated, obsolete, and ineffective. Such claims were used to suggest that the arms would not bolster the Ukrainian army’s capabilities in the event of a war and that the West is not actually interested in helping Ukraine.

In January 2022 the Russian news site, Vesti, wrote that the shelf life of the U.K.’s NLAW is “coming to an end” and that Ukraine was becoming a “convenient landfill for the West.”

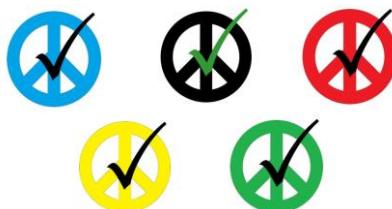
In fact, NLAW is not becoming obsolete. The shelf life of NLAW anti-tank missiles is 20 years, according to Saab, a Swedish aerospace and defense company, which manufactured the weapon. NLAW came into service in 2009 and was procured by the U.K. the same year. Therefore, the weapon will not expire until 2029.

Vesti also suggested that Javelin anti-tank missiles from the U.S. were not effective. The site quoted Ruslan Pukhov, Director of the Moscow-based Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, saying “these will not strengthen the Ukrainian army.”

U.S. Javelins have been used in 5,000 combat firings with a 94 percent engagement success rate, according to manufacturer Lockheed Martin. Javelins have also proven to be effective in Ukraine. In December 2021, the Ukrainian military tested a Javelin, which it received in October that year as part of annual military aid from the U.S., to hit a tank at a 1.5 km distance. The Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine said in a Facebook post in December, 2021: “Despite the fact that the soldiers fired this weapon for the first time, the task was completed successfully – the target was hit.”

According to the U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center, which is part of the Office of the Assistant Secretary





of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology, “Javelin is highly effective against a variety of targets at extended ranges during day or night operations, and under battlefield obscurants, adverse weather and multiple countermeasure conditions.” In 2017, an article in The Wall Street Journal described Javelin as “America’s most effective portable anti-tank weapon.”

Nazism is rampant in Ukrainian politics and society, supported by the authorities in Kyiv.

THE FACTS: Radical far-right groups do exist in Ukraine and, according to a [2018 Freedom House](#) report, they represent a “threat to the democratic development of Ukraine.” However, the report also stated that far-right extremists have poor political representation in Ukraine and no plausible path to power. Indeed, in the 2014 parliamentary [elections](#), the far-right nationalist party Svoboda received 4.7 percent of the vote. In the 2019 presidential election, the Svoboda candidate, Ruslan Koshulynsky, won just 1.6 percent of the vote, and in the parliamentary elections, Svoboda won 2.2 percent of the vote. Svoboda currently holds one parliamentary seat.

This myth goes hand-in-hand with false claims of widespread anti-Semitism in Ukraine. In 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin [said](#) there was a “rampage” of “anti-Semitic forces” in certain parts of Ukraine, a statement that was contradicted by representatives of Ukraine’s Jewish community. Jewish community leaders signed an [open letter](#) to Putin stating that his assertions about the rise of anti-Semitism did not match “the actual facts.” Additionally, a 2018 [report](#) by the National Minority Rights Monitoring Group, an NGO which monitors anti-Semitism and xenophobia in Ukraine, said that the number of anti-Semitic incidents has been *declining* in Ukraine in recent years.

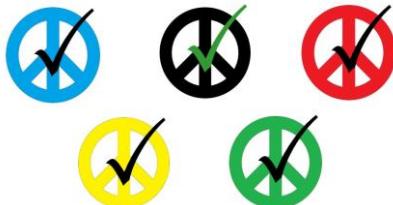
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who is Jewish, addressed the Russian public in a Feb. 24, 2022, [speech](#), saying that these claims do not reflect the “real” Ukraine. “You are told we are Nazis. But could people who lost more than 8 million lives in the battle against Nazism support Nazism?”

The West staged a coup to overthrow the pro-Russia Ukrainian government in 2014.

THE FACTS: There is no evidence supporting the idea that the 2014 Maidan revolution in Ukraine that led to the ouster of then-president Viktor Yanukovych was a coup orchestrated by Western countries.

It is true that the U.S. supported the Maidan revolution. In December 2013, U.S. Senator John McCain travelled to Kyiv, where he told protestors, “We are here to support your just cause, the sovereign right of Ukraine to determine its own destiny freely and independently.” Between 1992 and 2013, the U.S. government gave approximately \$5 billion to support democracy-building programs in Ukraine. U.S. aid to Ukraine in 2013, the year the protests started, went to a wide variety of activities, including nuclear non-





proliferation efforts, a program to reduce unwanted pregnancies by encouraging the use of contraception, and an initiative to improve standardized testing. However, there is no evidence that the West orchestrated the revolution.

Indeed, it had all the markings of a popular uprising, not a coup.

In November 2013, thousands of Ukrainians flocked to Kyiv's Independence Square ("Maidan Nezalezhnosti") to protest then-President Victor Yanukovych's decision to suspend preparations for the signing of an association and free-trade agreement with the European Union, scheduled for the following week. Over the following months, the protests, often referred to as "Euromaidan" after the square where they took place, grew in size. Negotiations between the Ukrainian government and the pro-European Union opposition, mediated by the foreign ministers of France, Germany, and Poland, led to an agreement signed on Feb. 21, 2014, giving more power to Ukraine's parliament and planning for a presidential election by the end of the year.

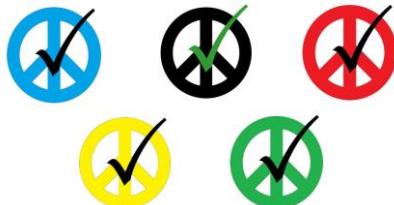
However, angry protesters demanded Yanukovych's immediate resignation, and hundreds of police officers guarding government buildings abandoned their posts. Yanukovych fled the same day the agreement was signed, and protesters took control of several government buildings the next day. The Ukrainian parliament then voted 328-0 to remove Yanukovych from office and scheduled early presidential elections the following May, the BBC reported. These events, often collectively referred to as the "Maidan revolution," were extensively covered by international media organizations with correspondents in Ukraine, including [the BBC](#), the [Associated Press](#), and [The New York Times](#).

Russian-speaking residents in Donbas have been subjected to genocide.

THE FACTS: The International Criminal Court, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe have all said they have found no evidence of genocide in Donbas, the eastern Ukrainian region partly occupied by Russian-backed separatists since 2014. The U.S. mission to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe called the genocide claim a "reprehensible falsehood" in a Feb. 16 2022 [post](#) on its official Twitter account. It said that the mission "has complete access to the government-controlled areas of Ukraine and HAS NEVER reported anything remotely resembling Russia's claims."

A 2021 Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [report](#) blamed the authorities of the separatist Donetsk and Luhansk republics for various abuses, including severe restrictions on the freedom of movement, forcing people to adopt Russian citizenship, and arbitrary arrests. At the same time, the UN reported three cases of arbitrary detention and ill-treatment carried out by Ukraine's SBU (secret service), and 13 such cases in the self-proclaimed republics, which the UN said were "usually" carried out by the "ministry of state security" officers, known as MGB.





A 2016 [report](#) by the International Criminal Court found that the acts of violence allegedly committed by the Ukrainian authorities in 2013 and 2014 could constitute an “attack directed against a civilian population.” However, it also said that “The information available did not provide a reasonable basis to believe that the attack was systematic or widespread.”

Deutsche Welle reported that German police arrested a Ukrainian refugee for blackmailing women

On June 16, 2022, a Japanese-language [Twitter account](#) posted a video purportedly from public-service German broadcaster Deutsche Welle about the arrest of Ukrainian refugee Petro Savchenko in Germany for allegedly blackmailing women.

“According to TV, refugee Savchenko threatened the girl for several months,” the June 16, 2022, [Twitter post](#) says. “He used a hidden camera to capture intimacy with women who were easily fooled, and then shook money from the women in exchange for a guarantee that they wouldn’t post records on social media.”

The accompanying video states that “Savchenko met women at bars all around Germany. Savchenko filmed intimacy with his victims on a hidden camera. He tracked down the girls on Facebook a few days later and demanded money in exchange for a promise not to share the recordings online.” The video carries the Deutsche Welle logo and a link to its website, and features alleged photos of Savchenko and security camera footage that supposedly shows him talking to women.

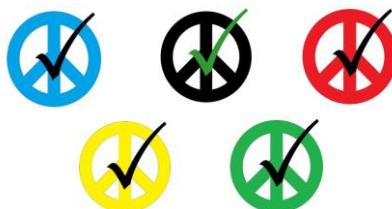
In fact, the video is a fabrication. [Deutsche Welle](#) said in a July 8, 2022, article, “Fake news and content targets international media,” that the video was not created by the broadcaster. Moreover, a German police spokesperson told Deutsche Welle the police were not aware of any case similar to the one described in the video, and there have been no legitimate news articles about such a case.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church canonized nationalist leader Stepan Bandera

On June 20, 2022, four months after Russia invaded Ukraine, various pro-Russian social media accounts and news sites, including EADaily.com and Yudsn.ru, posted a photo of a fabricated decree allegedly released by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The decree purported to announce a decision by the church to canonize Ukrainian nationalist Stepan Bandera, recognizing him as a saint.

During World War II, Bandera led a radical wing of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, which fought alongside Germans in the Nazi invasion of Soviet Ukraine before attempting to claim the Nazi-occupied Lviv region as an independent Ukrainian state, according to [historical accounts](#). While Bandera was revered by many in Western Ukraine, many in Eastern Ukraine decried his association with the Nazis.





The Russian government attempted to justify its invasion of Ukraine by claiming, among other things, a need to “de-nazify” the country and purge it of Bandera’s ideology.

However, the decree announcing that Bandera was canonized by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is a fake, according to a church spokesperson. “A crude montage was used to create this picture, and its content is absurd and illiterate from the point of view of canonization language and church traditions,” the spokesperson told Ukrainian fact-checking organization [StopFake](#). “The content of the document and its style of writing, directly indicate it is a fake.”

The church spokesperson also told StopFake that as a Greek Catholic by faith, Bandera is not even eligible for canonization by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The Red Cross in Ukraine is involved in children's organ trafficking

Nearly a week after Russia declared victory in its battle to capture the Ukrainian city of Mariupol in May 2022, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation announced on [Telegram](#) that it would investigate a video, [posted](#) to Telegram by Vladimir Taraneiko, who heads “People’s Squad,” a civic organization in the Donetsk People’s Republic, purporting to show hundreds of medical records on children’s healthy organs at the Red Cross’ premises in Mariupol. The post stated that the footage would be studied “within the framework of the criminal cases already being investigated in the department about the crimes of the Kyiv regime” and given “a criminal legal assessment.”

Pro-Russian media outlets, including [Tsargrad](#), owned by Russian oligarch Konstantin Malofeev, cited Taraneiko’s video and the committee’s statement in May 2022 to accuse the Ukrainian Red Cross Society of organ trafficking. However, the video does not provide any evidence to support the claim, which was denied by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

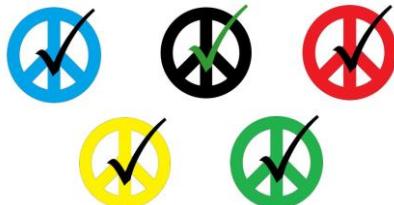
“The ICRC has not collected any such records,” the ICRC said in a May 2022 [statement](#), calling the claim “another unequivocally false allegation.” Earlier, in March 2022, the ICRC issued a statement [saying](#) that all Red Cross staff members had left the warehouse in Mariupol “and we don’t know how it’s been used since.”

Separately, the Red Cross Society of Ukraine [told StopFake](#), a Ukrainian fact-checking organization, that none of their volunteers have collected medical data on children, nor have they been involved in organ transplantation.

Prominent Ukrainian medic Yuliia Paievska [told](#) The Associated Press in July 2022 that organ trafficking accusations are “invented, a huge fabrication.” She added: “Seized organs on the battlefield. Do you have any idea how complicated this operation is?”

Unproven [allegations](#) of Ukraine being involved in organ trafficking have [persisted](#) online ever since the 2014 invasion of Crimea. Joel Newman, a senior communications strategist at the United Network for Organ





Sharing, [told](#) fact-checking website Polygraph.info in 2019 that false illegal organ harvesting accusations typically surface in war zones, but that “the reality of using organs from deceased persons [illicitly] is small.”

A Russian strike on a munitions depot led to a fire at a defunct mall in Kremenchuk, Ukraine

The Russian government declared that the Amstor mall in the central Ukrainian city of Kremenchuk was set ablaze on June 27, 2022, as a result of a Russian strike on a nearby vehicle factory, KredMash, which the government said contained Western weapons. The Kremlin also asserted that the mall was not open for business at the time of the attack.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said on June 28, 2022: “On June 27, the Russian Aerospace Forces delivered a strike by air-launched high-precision weapons against hangars of weapons and ammunition from the United States and European countries in the area of the Kremenchug road machinery factory in the city of Kremenchug in the Poltava Region.... The detonation of stored ammunition for Western weapons caused a fire in a non-functioning shopping center located near the territory of the plant.”

Vitaly Kiselyev, assistant to the head of the Russian-backed Lugansk People’s Republic, said on June 28, 2022, that local troops “stored their ammunition” at the mall, and used it as a place for “training territorial defense units,” implying it was a military facility.

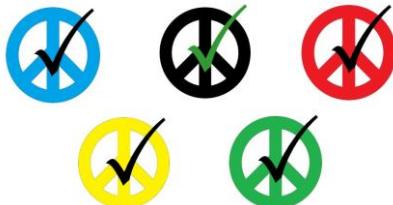
The claims that the Amstor shopping mall was not operational and destroyed by an explosion erupting from the nearby factory are baseless.

Investigative news outlet Bellingcat [analyzed](#) the location seen in CCTV footage posted to Twitter on June 29, 2022, by Mikhailo Podolya, an advisor to the Ukrainian president, showing a missile approaching the mall and exploding on impact. Bellingcat concluded that “the mall appears to have taken a direct hit given there is no clear or significant impact site anywhere in the area around it, which would seemingly undermine Russian MOD [Ministry of Defense’s] claims that a fire spread from the factory area.”

Refuting the claim by Lugansk People’s Republic politician Kiselyev that the mall was being used to store weapons, Bellingcat wrote that “the fact that multiple explosions could not be observed after the initial impact likely suggests that ... munitions were not kept at the Amstor building.” Bellingcat added: “Although one report in 2014 stated that the factory had been used to repair three military vehicles, this in itself does not prove that it was a storage site for US and European weapons and ammunition eight years later, as Russia has claimed.”

Additionally, witness testimony confirms that the mall was indeed operational at the time. The





BBC [reported](#) that “a woman who lives in a nearby village and regularly goes shopping in Kremenchuk, told the BBC that the shopping center had been ‘constantly open’ and her family had visited it at least once a week.” The team pointed to a [YouTube video](#) by a Ukrainian family that had apparently been recorded the day before the attack and showed the mall open with dozens of people inside.

The Ukrainian army seized a United Nations office in Kramatorsk, Ukraine

In early June 2022, the Russian-backed separatist Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR) posted a statement on Telegram claiming that the Ukrainian Armed Forces had seized a United Nations office and three UN vehicles in the Kyiv-controlled Kyiv-controlled city of Kramatorsk, in the eastern Ukrainian region of Donetsk.

The [DPR post stated](#) that “Representatives of the international organization lost their office and 3 official cars with diplomatic plates. The [Ukrainian army] does not allow mission staff to enter their property, and also prohibits them to take photos and videos to report to higher management.”

This claim was amplified by Russian state media outlets, including [TASS](#), [RIA-Novosti](#), and [AIF](#), among other Russian sites.

However, [Krzysztof Janowski](#), a spokesman for the UN Crisis Coordinator’s office, told Ukrainian fact-checking group StopFake in June 2022 that [the UN did not occupy](#) any facilities in Kramatorsk. As for the claim that three official cars with diplomatic license plates were stolen, Janowski said, “All our cars are registered and accounted for.”

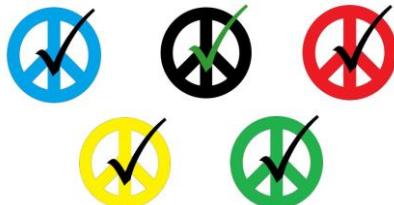
The UN did previously have an office [in Kramatorsk](#), which was used by staff from the UN’s [Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine](#) and the [UN Development Programme](#), among others. However, in February 2022, the UN staff left the office due to security concerns, Janowski said.

Ukraine asked Poland to deport Ukrainian men of military age for them to join the frontlines

In June 2022, pro-Russian news sites, Telegram channels, and social media posts shared a photo of a letter purportedly sent by Dmitry Kuleba, Ukraine’s Foreign Affairs Minister, to Zbigniew Rau, Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, requesting that Poland deport all male Ukrainian citizens between the ages of 18 and 60.

The letter is a fabrication. A spokesperson for the Head of Poland’s National Security Department, Stanislav Zaryn, [said](#) in a June 17, 2022, Twitter thread that “A #fake letter from the Head of the MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] of Ukraine to the MFA of Poland was produced as part of disinformation activities.” Zaryn continued: “The fake document suggests that Poland will look for Ukrainians and send them back home.”





This is yet another disinformation action calculated to destabilize relations between Poles and Ukrainians."

In June 2022, social media posts and pro-Russian news sites published [other fake letters](#) purportedly from Polish government officials, announcing the deportation of Ukrainian men of military age to join the frontlines in Ukraine.

A video showed a Ukrainian girl injured by a Russian missile singing the national anthem

In June 2022, multiple news sites and social media posts shared a heart-tugging video of a young Ukrainian girl singing the Ukrainian national anthem while her left foot was being bandaged in the hospital. The video was accompanied by the claim that she was injured by shrapnel from a Russian missile strike in Mykolaiv on June 29, 2022.

The video appeared in Ukrainian and English-language news sites, as well as in posts on Twitter and Telegram. Censor.net, a Ukrainian website, posted the video on June 29, 2022, stating, "This little Ukrainian girl is from Mykolaiv. She suffered from the morning shelling of the city by Russian invaders. The child is being treated for her wounds, and she sings the anthem of her country."

In fact, the video shows a girl receiving medical treatment for an injury sustained in a bicycle accident, not in a Russian missile strike. According to [Reuters](#), the video was traced to the now-private Instagram account of the girl's mother, Romana Komarevich. Komarevich told the news agency that her four-year-old daughter, Elizaveta, was injured on a bicycle, and that claims about her being wounded due to shelling were false.

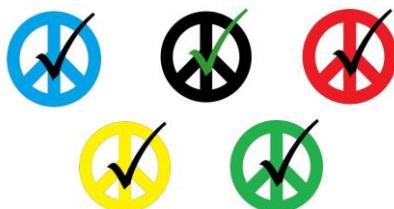
Moreover, Komarevich and her daughter live in Ternopil Oblast, which is 500 miles away from Mykolaiv, Reuters reported.

Ukraine's Azov Battalion used explosives to blow up the Mariupol Drama Theater

The Russian Defense Ministry falsely declared that Ukraine's Azov Battalion, an infantry military unit, which is part of Ukraine's National Guard, was responsible for the March 16, 2022, bombing of the Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theater in Mariupol, in southern Ukraine. The Russian Defense Ministry said "militants of the Azov nationalist battalion carried out another bloody provocation by blowing up the theater building they had mined." The Ministry continued: "Previously, refugees that escaped Mariupol, informed that Nazis from the Azov battalion could have held civilians hostage in the theater building, using the upper floors as emplacements."

Reports on the matter by [The Associated Press](#), [The Organization for Security and Co-operation in](#)





[Europe](#) and [Human Rights Watch](#) all concluded that Russia was responsible for the bombing.

The AP said that none of the 23 witnesses it interviewed, including survivors and rescuers, saw Ukrainian soldiers in the theater. The AP said that its findings “refute Russian claims that the theater was demolished by Ukrainian forces or served as a Ukrainian military base. None of the witnesses saw Ukrainian soldiers operating inside the building.”

Moreover, two munitions experts interviewed by the AP said that the scope of the destruction caused by the attack “points to a 500-kilogram bomb from a Russian warplane,” the AP reported. “It’s much too much for an artillery shell,” Mark Cancian, an explosives analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a former artillery officer, told the AP.

Zelensky used a green screen to fake appearances in Ukraine

In June 2022, a photo of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky standing in front of a green screen spread on some news sites and [social media networks](#), along with the claim that Zelensky was not actually in Ukraine. For example, a June 17, 2022, post on [Toutiao](#), a Chinese news site, included the Zelensky photo, with a caption stating in Chinese: “This confirms that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is often absent in Ukraine, especially when the war in Ukraine is tense, not at all in Ukraine.”

In fact, the photo shows Zelensky in Kyiv, Ukraine, on June 14, 2022, filming a hologram message that was delivered to technology festivals in Amsterdam, London, Paris, and Stockholm, according to [The Associated Press](#) and [the Guardian](#). “I directed the piece and was in the room,” the director of the holographic message, Martin Williams, told the AP, confirming Zelensky’s presence in Kyiv. “We built the green screen studio ... for an AR [augmented reality] hologram,” he said.

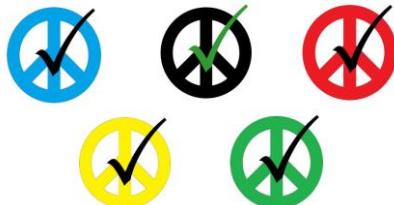
The AP also reported that the same photo was published on June 16, 2022, as part of a [press release](#) about the technology used to produce the film. Zelensky used the hologram technology in a bid to solicit donations to Ukraine from tech companies, according to a report in the Guardian.

Innumerable news reports and interviews have placed Zelensky inside Ukraine throughout the war. Moreover, there is no evidence that Zelensky has ever left Ukraine during the Russian invasion, which began on Feb. 24, 2022. His last major official trip was on Feb. 19, 2022, [to attend a security conference](#) in Munich, Germany. The U. S. offered to evacuate Zelensky shortly after the invasion, but he declined, [The Associated Press](#) reported.

Ukraine is requiring women to register for military service

In June 2022, pro-Kremlin Telegram channels including WarJournal [Z] [circulated](#) a fabricated military order that supposedly claimed that women in Ukraine will be drafted into military service. The document, which





was purportedly signed by Ukrainian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Sergei Shaptala, stated that military recruitment centers have until the end of June 2022 to carry out the mobilization measures and to organize the registration of women aged 18 to 60.

The document is a fabrication. As of June 2022, Ukraine had not announced the mobilization of women, according to Ukraine's Ministry of Defense. "We are not currently considering the question of mobilizing women," Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar [told](#) Ukrainian non-profit news broadcasting service, Hromadske Radio, in June 2022. "At present, it is impossible to predict how the mobilization will be carried out in the future, everything will depend on the situation at the front."

In a March 18, 2022, opinion [column](#) published on Ukrainian website NV, Maylar wrote that women could one day be mobilized, but that "there is no such need." She added that, "no woman has been called up for military service during the mobilization without her consent."

The document itself contains inaccuracies indicating that it was forged, according to [StopFake](#), a Ukrainian fact-checking organization. For example, the purported order claims that military registration must be completed by June 31, 2022, when June only has 30 days.

Moreover, a side-by-side comparison of the fake order and a legitimate document from the Armed Forces of Ukraine, [published](#) by the Washington, D.C.-based think-tank the Atlantic Council, shows that the formatting of the fabricated document is inconsistent with authentic Ukrainian orders. The dates and numbers on the legitimate document use a different font, and include a footer with blue text, according to the Atlantic Council.

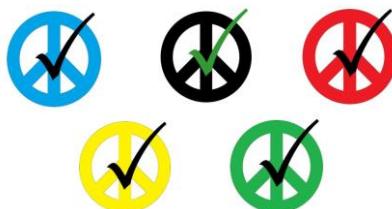
In December 2021, the Defense Ministry issued an [order](#) requiring women from 100 professions to register for possible national service by the end of 2022. However, according to the [Kyiv Independent](#), "in case of a war they [women] can be required to participate in civil defense efforts, possibly using their professional skills. It doesn't mean they will be fighting." At an international conference in June 2022, Ukrainian first lady Olena Zelenska [said](#) that 37,000 women currently serve in the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

Ukrainian refugees burned down a house in Germany where they were staying while attempting to burn the Russian flag

In mid-May 2022, several [pro-Kremlin news sites](#) and [social media accounts](#) began sharing a fake video made to look like a news segment from the website of German tabloid Bild. The fake segment reported that Ukrainian refugees had burned down a house in Germany after setting fire to a Russian flag with a Tesla coil, an electromagnetic generator. The fabricated report did not specify where in Germany the incident supposedly took place.

A May 19, 2022, article [in Tsargrad TV](#), a pro-Kremlin media outlet owned by Russian oligarch Konstantin Malofeev, stated: "In Germany, Ukrainian refugees tried to destroy the Russian flag with fire, but burned





down the house in which they were sheltered by a German family. The incident was reported by BILD.” The article continued: “We add that the Europeans very quickly came to their senses after the avalanche of Ukrainian migrants that hit them. The warm welcome was replaced by disappointment and fatigue.”

The 30-second video, which featured the Bild logo, contains three clips that show a tesla coil and Russian flag burning, smoke emerging from a house that is engulfed in flames, and a woman, who is identified as Natalie Michalski, speaking in tears from a burnt-out room.

In fact, Bild did not report that Ukrainian refugees burned down a house in Germany. Bild’s Chief Editor Timo Wokoschat [said on Twitter](#) on May 17, 2022, “The truth is: BILD never wrote this report. A complete fake.”

Indeed, the three clips used in the video have nothing to do with the claim in question. The first clip, which shows the Russian flag burning, was created by a Czech Technical University student named [Marek Novotny](#) in March 2022 to show support for Ukraine, he [told the Agence France-Presse](#) in May 2022.

The second clip, which shows a house fire, is from 2013. Using a reverse image search, AFP reported that the video [was posted on YouTube](#) on July 18, 2013, with the caption, “House burning in Walluf, Germany.” NewsGuard confirmed this as well.

The last clip, which shows a woman identified as Natalie Michalski crying, is from [a Jan. 27, 2021, news clip](#) about a house fire that Bild posted on YouTube. The video caption said, “Family drama in Lower Saxony: House burns down.”

Hunter Biden helped finance a bioweapons research program in Ukraine

A month after Russia invaded Ukraine, Russian officials falsely claimed that Hunter Biden’s Rosemont Seneca investment fund financed the Pentagon’s military biological program in Ukraine.

Igor Kirillov, head of the radiation, chemical and biological defense forces of the Russian Armed Forces, said during a March 24, 2022, [briefing](#) that, “The Rosemont Seneca investment fund of Hunter Biden, the son of U.S. President Joe Biden, financed the Pentagon’s military biological program in Ukraine.”

Kirillov also said that companies affiliated with Hunter Biden and the U.S. Department of Defense were involved in implementing the program. “There is a close connection of the fund [Rosemont Seneca] with the main contractors of the US military department, including Metabiota, which, along with Black & Veatch, is the main supplier of equipment for Pentagon biolaboratories around the world.”

Kirillov’s statements contain false claims. First, there is no evidence that the U.S. is developing biological weapons in Ukrainian labs (see our fact-check into this myth [here](#)). Second, there is no evidence that





Metabiota, a U.S.-based biotech firm, supplied equipment for purported biolaboratories run by the Pentagon in Ukraine or elsewhere.

The U.S. has been providing aid to Ukrainian laboratories since 2005, when the Ukrainian Ministry of Health and the Pentagon signed an agreement intended to limit the threat of bioterrorism. The agreement was part of the U.S. Department of Defense's Biological Threat Reduction Program, which collaborates with partner countries to reduce the threat of outbreaks of dangerous infectious diseases, according to the [U.S. Embassy in Ukraine's website](#).

To that end, the Pentagon hired various companies to work in Ukraine, including the Kansas-based engineering firm Black & Veatch, which, in 2013, subcontracted Metabiota. Andrea Chaney, a Public Affairs Affairs Officer at the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, which implements the Biological Threat Reduction Program told NewsGuard in May 2022 that Metabiota's work in Ukraine was focused on endemic disease research, along with the training of Ukrainian personnel.

Third, Hunter Biden and Rosemont Seneca Partners, the Washington, D.C., based investment firm that he co-founded in 2009, were not involved in funding a military biological program in Ukraine. It is true that Metabiota received investments from an equity firm called Rosemont Seneca Technology Partners (RSTP), which at one time was affiliated with Hunter Biden and his Rosemont Seneca Partners fund. However, a Metabiota employee told NewsGuard in May 2022 that the firm's investments had nothing to do with biolabs in Ukraine and were focused on "leveraging data and analytics to model epidemic risk to try to make it more predictable."

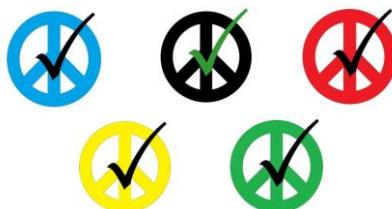
A former RSTP investor also [told](#) The Washington Post that the investments were unrelated to any military biolabs. Additionally, a 2014 [Metabiota memo](#), which The Post obtained and published, said that Metabiota had an office in Ukraine and that it planned to "implement a research project in Ukraine aimed at understanding the threat of tularemia and anthrax" and "develop and implement a public awareness campaign to mitigate the threat of African swine fever." NewsGuard's review of the memo found that it made no mention of a military biological program in Ukraine.

Additionally, The Post reported that "Hunter Biden was barely involved in the RSTP deal." Although Hunter Biden was a partner in RSTP through his stake in Rosemont Seneca Partners, "he was not on the committee making decisions on investments," an investor at the time [told](#) The Post.

Kateryna Prokopenko, the wife of Ukraine's Azov Regiment commander, is a neo-Nazi.

In May 2022, [multiple pro-Russian](#) websites accused Kateryna Prokopenko, the wife of the Ukrainian commander of the Azov regiment Denys Prokopenko, of being a neo-Nazi. They cited as evidence





several [social media posts](#) that purported to show photographs of Prokopenko in Nazi regalia giving the Nazi salute.

However, four of the photos that circulated online depict a well-known Ukrainian neo-Nazi militant named Vita Zaverukha, not Prokopenko. The Ukrainian newspaper Vesti published [one of the photos](#) of Zaverukha holding a Nazi flag in a 2016 article, and the Daily Mail released the [three other photos](#) in 2015.

Another photo that purported to show Prokopenko giving the Nazi salute with two other people first appeared on Polish websites as early as February 2010, with no known links to Prokopenko, according to the Italian fact-checking organization [Open](#). On May 13, 2022, Prokopenko [shared](#) the Open fact-check on her Twitter account, adding in the tweet: “GUYS I'M NOT THIS GIRL!”

According to multiple news organizations, including French newspaper [Libération](#) and [France 24](#), Prokopenko has never publicly expressed support for far-right or neo-Nazi groups.

The false allegations surfaced online after Prokopenko and Yuliya Fedosiuk, the wife of another member of the Azov Regiment, met with Pope Francis at the Vatican on May 11, 2022. For example, Russian news site TVZvezda.ru reported, “The wives of the fighters of the Azov nationalist battalion, who were received by Pope Francis, themselves sympathize with the ideas of Nazism and have called for murders on social networks.” The women asked the pope for assistance in rescuing their husbands, who were at the time defending the besieged Azovstal steel plant, the last pocket of Ukrainian resistance in the Donbas city of Mariupol. Fedosiuk [said](#) after the meeting that the pope “told us he will pray for us.”

In mid-May 2022, according to [Reuters](#), hundreds of fighters at the steel plant surrendered to Russian armed forces and were taken into custody.

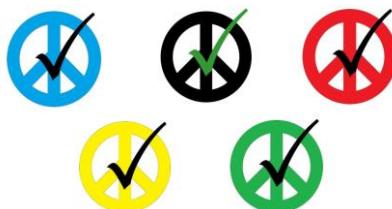
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is Russian and therefore is an illegitimate president

THE FACTS: In April 2022, Ilya Kiva, a pro-Russian former Ukrainian politician, [shared](#) an image on Telegram purporting to show Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's Russian passport. Kiva claimed that Zelensky was an illegitimate president because Ukraine does not allow dual citizens to run for president. The story was quickly picked up by Russian news sites, including [Gazeta.ru](#) and [Ura.ru](#).

In fact, there is no evidence that Zelensky is a Russian citizen. A May 2022 [fact-check](#) by German news agency Deutsche Presse-Agentur found that the image shared by Kiva was apparently fabricated using RF Screateo, an editing software that allows users to generate fake Russian passports using an online template. Deutsche Presse-Agentur found that virtually identical passport photos that were created using the same software have circulated online for years.

The image also contains several inconsistencies. For example, according to news organization [Bellingcat](#), the third and fourth digits of a Russian passport number reveal the year that it was issued. In the purported





Zelensky document, those digits are 0 and 3, which would mean that his passport was issued in 2003. This is contradicted by the title page of the document, which states that the passport was issued in 2001.

Also, the black and white image of Zelensky in the document is not an authentic passport photo. Fact-checkers have noted that it was cropped from a full-size image of Zelensky that has appeared in color in numerous Ukrainian news [articles](#). And the signature that appears on the supposed passport does not match Zelensky's verified signature, according to a side-by-side comparison by fact-checking site [Lead Stories](#).

The U.S. is recruiting ISIS mercenaries to fight in Ukraine.

THE FACTS: In May 2022, Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) issued a [statement](#) claiming that the U.S. was recruiting members of international terrorist organizations, including ISIS, to fight in Ukraine. The SVR alleged that approximately 60 ISIS militants, aged 20 to 25, were released from prisons in Syria and transferred to an American military base at Al-Tanf, in southern Syria.

SVR's claim was repeated by Russian state media, including [Sputnik News](#) and [RT](#), as well as by China state-affiliated media such as [People's Daily](#) and [Xinhua](#). Iranian news outlets [published](#) similar reports.

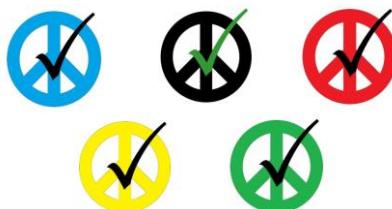
The SVR and the other outlets did not provide any evidence for this claim, which was denied by the Pentagon in a statement to NewsGuard. "This report is completely false," the Pentagon said in an unsigned statement issued to NewsGuard, referring to the SVR claim that the U.S. recruited ISIS militants to fight in Ukraine.

Indeed, news reports, U.S. defense officials, and analysts have said that it is the Kremlin, not the U.S., that is recruiting Syrian and other foreign fighters to participate in the war against Ukraine.

The U.S. base in Al-Tanf, located in Syria near the Iraqi and Jordanian borders, was established in 2016 to train Syrian opposition forces to counter Islamic State militants, according to the [International Crisis Group](#), a non-governmental organization that says it aims to "prevent wars and shape policies that will build a more peaceful world." Approximately 200 U.S. forces are stationed at Al-Tanf, according to a May 2022 [report](#) by the Pentagon's Inspector General.

There is no evidence that the base was turned into a "terrorist hub" to train ISIS militants during the Russia-Ukraine war, as some pro-Russian sites have claimed. "I have seen no evidence or even reputable claim that the U.S. is recruiting members of international terrorist organizations to fight in Ukraine," Martha Crenshaw, a senior fellow at Stanford's Center for International Security and Cooperation, told NewsGuard





in a May 2022 email. "I do not know about Russia, although I have also seen reports of recruitment."

On March 6, 2022, The Wall Street Journal [reported](#) that Moscow was recruiting Syrian fighters experienced in urban combat to help capture Ukraine's capital, Kyiv.

In April 2022, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a U.K.-based war monitoring group, [reported](#) that 40,000 Syrians signed up to join Russian forces in Ukraine. The group reported that 22,000 Syrians registered with the Russian military and that 18,000 signed up with the Wagner Group, a Russian military contractor.

Residents of the city of Tampere, Finland, filmed a Finnish train transporting hundreds of tanks and military equipment to its eastern border with Russia in May 2022, following the country's move toward NATO membership.

THE FACTS: Amid weeks of rising tensions between Finland and Russia caused by the Finnish government's announcement that it would apply for membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a May 3, 2022, [video](#) on the pro-government, Belarussian Telegram account BelVestnik claimed that Finland was sending tanks to the Russian border.

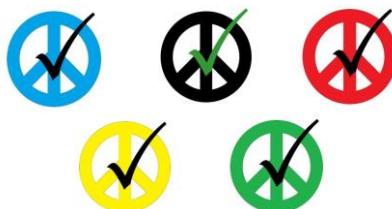
In fact, the train seen in the video was heading in the opposite direction from the Finland-Russia border, a NewsGuard [analysis](#) of Google Maps satellite imagery showed. The Finnish military strongly denied the claim and also explained that the train was moving away from Russia.

"Residents of Tampere (Finland) record the transfer of military equipment to the eastern border" with Russia, the caption of the video posted on Telegram stated. Tampere is a city in southwestern Finland, nearly 200 miles from Russia. The 50-second clip, which had accumulated over 10,000 views by May 16, 2022, shows a cargo train carrying dozens of tanks and armored vehicles across a bridge in a seemingly-residential area of Finland. The video was later reposted on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

On the video, the train can be seen traveling toward the [Nässineula observation tower](#) in the background, and on its left is a red brick red tower. NewsGuard's analysis of [Google Maps satellite imagery](#) of these Tampere landmarks, in relation to the train's location, shows that it was heading toward western Finland, not toward the Russian border to the east.

On May 4, 2022, the Finnish Defence Forces dismissed the claim that Finland was deploying military equipment to its eastern border. The military said [in a tweet](#) that the cargo seen in the video was being transported to the Finnish towns of Niinisalo and Säkylä for a military training exercise called Arrow 22. "A video has been circulating online claiming to show tanks being moved to Finland's border," The Finnish Defence Forces tweet stated. "This is not true. The tanks were being moved to the army mechanised exercise Arrow 22. The exercise takes place in Niinisalo and Säkylä."





Niinisalo and Säkylä are west of the city of Tampere, near the Gulf of Bothnia that separates Finland and Sweden — approximately 250 miles away from the Russian border.

The objective of [Arrow 22](#) is [to develop](#) “the competence and capability of Army units for the purposes of national defence and to create and sustain international interoperability and connectivity,” according to a Finnish Army press release about the exercise.

Putin used a green screen to record a fake TV appearance.

THE FACTS: On March 5, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin traveled to an Aeroflot aviation training facility outside Moscow and met with the airline’s employees. In the hours following his visit, widely shared social media [posts](#) and Ukrainian news [articles](#) claimed that a video clip from the Aeroflot meeting proved that Putin was not at the event, but instead was photoshopped into the video with the use of a green screen. Many posts [stated](#) that at one point, Putin’s hand appeared to pass through a microphone.

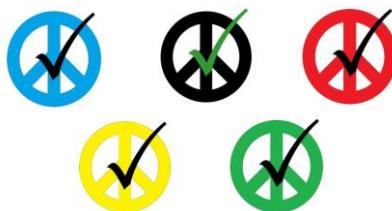
While Russia has a track record of pushing manipulated content for propaganda purposes, the video of Putin is authentic, and evidence shows he was not using a green screen. Users and websites that shared the claim [cited](#) poor-quality videos and screenshots as evidence, but the microphone moment does not appear in higher quality versions of the footage.

As fact-checking organization [Snopes](#) and several [news outlets](#) noted, the image of Putin’s hand passing through the microphone was a technical glitch caused by a low-quality rendering of the video and not the result of visual effects or a green screen. A higher-resolution video of the meeting, posted to YouTube by [NBC News](#) and U.K. newspapers [The Telegraph](#) and [The Independent](#), does not show his hand moving through the microphone. Moreover, images of Putin attending the meeting were [captured](#) by Sputnik photographer Mikhail Klimentyev and [republished](#) by The Associated Press on March 5, 2022.

The video gained traction after it was uploaded to [Reddit](#) on March 5, 2022, captioned: “Green screen detected! Today’s ‘meeting’ with ‘Aeroflot’ workers.” Some Twitter users falsely suggested that Putin faked his appearance at the meeting in response to criticism from the Western media for his taking strict measures to isolate himself during the COVID-19 pandemic — such as using a long table to communicate with his aides.

The clip was also promoted on Twitter by anti-Putin politicians, including Russian opposition leader [Lyubov Sobol](#). Ukrainian diplomat Alexander Scherba claimed in a March 6, 2022, [tweet](#) that Putin was mocked for his “photoshopped videos.” Ukrainian news outlet NV wrote about the video in a March 6, 2022, [article](#) in Russian and Ukrainian titled: “He put his hand through objects? The latest video of Putin turned out to be a mediocre fake.” NV cited the Center for Counteracting Disinformation, under the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, which falsely claimed in a [Facebook post](#) that the video of Putin was digitally





created by combining two or more frames into one.

Poland is preparing to invade Western Ukraine.

THE FACTS: In early May, multiple social media posts [shared](#) a fake BBC News clip announcing that Poland was preparing to invade Ukraine. The one-minute video, which the BBC never aired, was shared online in a number of languages, including Russian, French, Italian, Polish, Czech, and Turkish.

In fact, the video was fabricated to look like a BBC news report. Shayan Sardarizadeh, a BBC journalist reporting on misinformation, shared a screenshot of the clip in a May 5, 2022 [Twitter post](#), with the comment: “Another fake video with the logo and branding of BBC News is making the rounds... The BBC has made no such video and Poland is not about to get involved in the war.” There has been no evidence that Poland, a member of NATO and the European Union, was preparing to invade Ukraine.

The video opens with the BBC news logo and footage of a military helicopter landing. The text, which is written in the same font used by the BBC, read, “Polish commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces ordered the army to prepare for an invasion of Ukraine,” with footage of troops in the background. The video also said, “Poland is going to send in troops under the pretext of ‘protection from Russia.’ This will be done with the endorsement of Washington, but the North Atlantic Alliance will officially stand aside.”

The clip also featured a fabricated military order. The clip said, “General Jaroslaw Mika signed an order to put the Polish army unit in full combat readiness.” A photo of the fake order was used in [posts](#) on social media and in [articles](#) on pro-Russian news sites, including Pravda.ru.

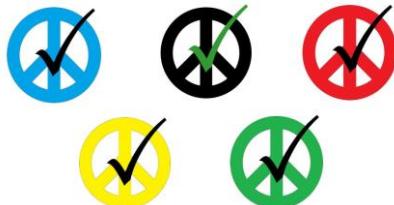
In a May 3, 2022, [post](#) on Twitter, the Polish General Command of the Armed Forces wrote: “This is a false order of the Polish General Staff. The whole document is FAKE! We observe more and more such counterfeit military documents in Polish mass media. Please, DO NOT share this FAKE NEWS.”

Ukraine is selling surplus weapons to African countries.

THE FACTS: On April 19, 2022, the [Kremlin](#)-linked Telegram channel [Rezident](#) published a fake document from Ukraine’s Defense Ministry, dated March 29, 2022, which purportedly showed that Ukraine was selling surplus weapons to African countries. The false claim was shared by pro-Kremlin Telegram channels, including Denazification UA (“Denatsifikatsii UA”) and news sites such as News-Front.info.

[According](#) to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, a Sweden-based defense think-tank, Ukraine exported a “significant volume” of major conventional weapons to sub-Saharan Africa from 2005 to 2009, including surplus aircraft, artillery, and armored vehicles. However, there is no evidence that the deal outlined by the Rezident channel was real or that Ukraine is currently selling weapons to African countries.





The Rezident Telegram post claimed that among the weapons sold to African countries were “armored vehicles, tanks, submachine guns, rifles, grenades and even body armor.” It said that the sale amounted to a “cunning scheme of enrichment,” adding that, “While the Ukrainian military is dying from a shortage of weapons and ammunition, Defense Ministry officials are selling it to African countries under the guise of ‘surplus.’”

The fake document shared by the Rezident channel cites Amendment Number 1919 from the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, introduced in 2001, which allows the ministry to sell surplus weapons to other nations. The document also claimed that [NVK Techimpex](#), a private manufacturer of military equipment and weapons in Ukraine, was selling the surplus weapons, citing an alleged 970-page report that outlines the deal.

That document contains obvious signs of forgery. While the letterhead mirrors the official Defense Ministry documents, the alleged signature of Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov differs from his usual [signature](#). Additionally, the document was signed with “A.YU. Reznikov,” which is the Russian spelling of the minister’s name. The Ukrainian spelling, which the [minister uses](#) in official documents, is “O.YU. Reznikov.” The document does not include a barcode or an address after the name of a People’s Deputy of Ukraine, which does not comply with the Ministry of Defense’s [rules](#) of document circulation.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has an estimated net worth of \$850 million. He accumulated his wealth after he was elected.

THE FACTS: On April 25, 2022, the far-right Forum for Democracy party in the Netherlands [claimed](#) without evidence on Telegram and Twitter: “Zelensky owns a fortune: Various estimates put it at around 850 million. He didn’t get most of this until after he took office as president.” Shortly after these postings, a flurry of social media [posts](#) and Russian-state news sites including [Sputnik News](#) and [RIA-Novosti](#) amplified the allegation, citing as a source the Forum for Democracy party, whose leader Thierry Baudet is [reported](#) to have close ties to the Kremlin.

Other [articles](#) published in April 2022, including a story headlined “In the Netherlands, they are interested in the origin of Zelensky’s \$850 million income” on the Russian-language channel of state-owned RT, referenced an April 2022 segment from Fox News host Tucker Carlson, in which he [suggested](#) Zelensky’s finances be audited. Other social media [posts](#) claimed Zelensky was worth \$1.4 billion.

The figures referenced in these claims are unfounded and not supported by credible estimates of Zelensky’s fortune. In fact, news reports and financial disclosures suggest that he was worth between \$20 million and





\$30 million, as of April 2022.

According to reporting by [Forbes Ukraine](#), Zelensky “never was a billionaire” and he is worth approximately \$20 million. Additional [reporting](#) by Forbes U.S. puts that number at less than \$30 million, with his main asset being a 25 percent stake in Kvartal 95, a comedy studio he co-founded in 2003. Most of his net worth derived from his past career as an entertainer and comedian.

Zelensky transferred his stake in Kvartal 95 to his business partners before winning Ukraine’s presidential election, Forbes U.S. reported, valuing his stake in the company at \$11 million. Forbes estimated that his real estate portfolio is worth \$4 million. Forbes U.S. and Forbes Ukraine both estimated that he and his wife Olena Zelenska hold roughly \$2 million in a joint bank account, and that their other assets, including cars and jewelry, are worth \$1 million at most.

Zelensky’s most recent financial disclosures similarly do not show that his net worth is in the hundreds of millions. He reported a family income of roughly \$751,388 (22,748 million hryvnias) for 2020, according to a press [statement](#) and his asset [declaration](#) in the National Agency on Corruption Prevention. His financial disclosure shows that he received \$11,000 (336,000 hryvnias) in salary, \$152,000 (4.6 million hryvnias) in royalties, and \$442,000 (13.4 million hryvnias) from real estate sales that year. That puts his total income for 2020 at roughly \$605,000.

Google Maps revealed uncensored satellite images of Russian military sites in April 2022 during the Russia-Ukraine war, which were previously blurred. The change was meant to help Russia's enemies better assess the Russian military's capabilities and advances.

THE FACTS: On April 17, 2022, Ukraine-based defense news website Defense Express published [an article](#) that falsely claimed that Google Maps had unveiled “high-quality” satellite images of several Russian military bases and “strategic points.” Defense Express said that the move by Google presented an opportunity to assess the Russian military’s progress and resources, including aircraft carriers and ammunition storages. The article included photos of several purported Russian military facilities.

The next day, an unverified and now-deleted account for the Ukrainian Armed Forces (@ArmedForcesUkr) [tweeted](#) that Google Maps had “opened access” to Russia’s military facilities, allowing people to see for the first time “a variety of Russian launchers, intercontinental ballistic missile mines, command posts and secret landfills with a resolution of about 0.5 meters per pixel.”

In fact, Google has not changed its publicly available satellite imagery in Russia. On April 18, 2022, Google Maps’ official Twitter account [stated](#) “please note that we haven’t made any blurring changes to our satellite





imagery in Russia."

Google Maps has occasionally blurred satellite imagery for sensitive military areas, such as the French military's Air Base 705, which has been [pixelated](#) since 2014. The BBC [reported](#) in 2018 that European countries including Germany and Belgium have asked Google Maps to blur its military sites. However, there is no evidence that Google previously blurred images of military sites at the request of Russia. In fact, a NewsGuard analysis found that for years, Google has provided detailed satellite images of the Russian locations mentioned in @ArmedForcesUkr's tweet.

For example, the first image featured in the Ukrainian forces' tweet shows several aircraft stationed at an outdoor field in the [Kursk-Khalino airbase](#) — home to about [two dozen fighter jets](#) in 2021. Google Earth's Historical Imagery feature, which allows users to access [past versions](#) of Google Maps' satellite imagery, shows that Google has provided unblurred, detailed imagery of the base since at least 2003. (Google Maps and Google Earth share the [same satellite images](#).)

Another image shows a large red ship and at least four submarines [in Krasheninnikov Bay](#) in the Pacific Ocean. The port is near a ballistic nuclear submarine base in the Kamchatka Peninsula that [housed](#) submarines with nuclear capabilities during the Cold War. Google Earth has provided clear satellite images of the site since at least 2013.

Commenting on the claim that Google Maps recently unblurred these images, [Rob Lee](#), a senior fellow of the Eurasia program at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, [tweeted](#) on April 18, 2022, that he's "always been able to look at Russian military facilities with Google Maps, including its most elite special operations units' bases ..."

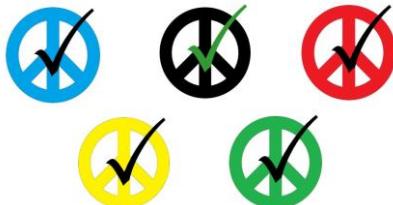
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky urged Ukrainians to surrender.

THE FACTS: On March 16, 2022, Ukrainian TV channel Ukraine 24 broadcast a video purporting to show Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky ordering Ukrainians to surrender to Russia. In the [video](#), Zelensky appeared to say, "My advice to you is to lay down arms and return to your families. It is not worth it dying in this war. My advice to you is to live. I am going to do the same." The clip was posted to YouTube, Telegram, Facebook and Russian social network Vkontakte.

In fact, the video was a "deepfake," which is a visual or audible manipulation of a person or object saying and doing something that is fabricated. Zelensky did not call on Ukrainians to surrender. Shortly after the deepfake was published, Ukraine's Defense Ministry published on Twitter a [video](#) of the real Zelensky, who called the clip a "childish provocation" and said: "We are not going to lay down any weapons until our victory."

Nina Schick, a tech expert and author of "Deepfakes: The Coming Infocalypse" said that the video looked like "an absolutely terrible faceswap," referring to programs that digitally paste one person's face onto





another's body, Reuters [reported](#) on March 17, 2022. The video showed discrepancies between the skin tone of Zelensky's neck and face, and pixelation around his head, which was disproportionately large. His voice was also deeper than his usual tone.

Nathaniel Gleicher, the head of security policy at Facebook parent Meta, said that the company removed the clip for violating its policy against misleading manipulated media. In a March 16, 2022, Twitter [post](#), Gleicher wrote that "our teams identified and removed a deepfake video claiming to show President Zelensky issuing a statement he never did."

Ukraine 24 said in a March 16, 2022, Facebook [post](#) that the video was broadcast by "enemy hackers" and was "FAKE!". The video also briefly appeared on Ukraine 24's website.

NATO military advisors are hiding out in a subterranean NATO bioweapons laboratory called PIT-404, which is financed by Metabiota, a company affiliated with Hunter Biden. The lab is located underneath the Azovstal Iron and Steel Works in Mariupol, Ukraine.

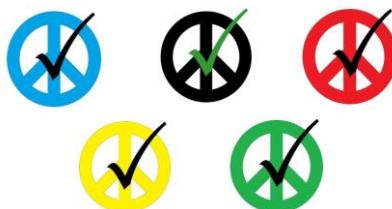
THE FACTS: In early April 2022, numerous [blogs](#), [websites](#) known to promote Russian disinformation, and [social media users](#) spread stories claiming that a secret NATO bioweapons lab is located underneath the Azovstal Iron and Steel Works in Mariupol, Ukraine. Many claimed that NATO military advisers were hiding in the lab, often called "PIT-404." Some also claimed that the lab was financed by Metabiota, a company with connections to Hunter Biden. This claim has been made in several languages, including [Russian](#), [English](#), [Italian](#), and [French](#).

The Azovstal Iron and Steel Works became the last stronghold of Ukrainian forces during the siege of the city, which began in late February 2022. However, there is no evidence that there is a NATO bioweapons lab sheltering NATO military advisers underneath the steel plant. The social media users and websites that made this claim did not provide any credible evidence to support it. Ukraine is [not a member](#) of NATO, and the organization says that it does not have any [military bases](#) in Ukrainian territory.

Azovstal Director General [Enver Tskitishvili](#) issued a denial about the claims in an April 12, 2022, [Facebook post](#). "There are no secret tunnels with biochemical laboratories in Azovstal," he wrote. "The plant did not have and does not have anything to do with the development or storage of any weapons, including biochemical ones. Our company has never researched or manufactured anything like this."

A Metabiota spokesperson told [The Washington Post](#) in March 2022 that the company no longer operates in Ukraine, saying, "Metabiota worked in Ukraine until 2020, providing training to help improve local capacity to detect and respond to health threats." Metabiota and Hunter Biden have had no association since 2015, [The Washington Post reported](#). Biden was on the management team of one of Metabiota's investors, Rosemont Seneca Technology Partners (now called Pilot Equity Group), but was pushed out of the firm in 2015 after being discharged from the Navy Reserve for cocaine use the previous year.





There is also no evidence of a business relationship between Metabiota, an American company that advises governments and businesses on epidemics, and the Azovstal Iron and Steel Works.

The claim that there is a NATO bioweapons lab beneath Azovstal follows similar claims made by Russian officials and Russian state-owned media outlets about U.S. bioweapons labs in Ukraine going back to at least 2018, for which there is also no credible evidence.

A secret document called the “Chancellor’s File” proves that NATO planned a war against Russia decades ago.

THE FACTS: On March 24, 2022, German author and filmmaker Ralph T. Niemeyer shared on his [Telegram channel](#) and Facebook account a photo of a letter, claiming that it proved that “NATO planned the war against Russia long in advance and forced Chancellor Scholz to approve it in January. Long before President Putin invaded anywhere.” The post claimed that this information could be found “in the Chancellor’s File.” The claim has been widely shared by [pro-Russian](#) and [QAnon Telegram](#) channels, accumulating more than 250,000 views on the messaging service as of April 2022. Similar posts appeared on other social network platforms, including Facebook.

The claim that NATO planned a war against Russia long before the Russian invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, is baseless.

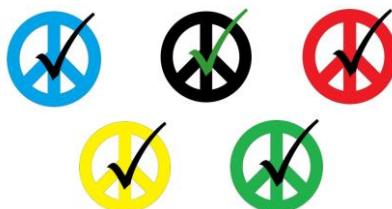
German fact-checking organization Mimikama [reported](#) in April 2022 that the document posted by Niemeyer on Telegram was falsified. According to Mimikama, the letter first appeared on the website of the far-right magazine Unabhängige Nachrichten in 1999, supposedly addressed to Germany’s Federal Intelligence Service and purporting to be from “Minister of State Dr. Rickermann.” In fact, Germany never had a Minister of State named Rickermann. (Unabhängige Nachrichten described the letter as a “teaser” — or excerpt — for a book written by somebody named “James Shirley.” Such a book never made it to print.)

Ten years after the publication of the book’s teaser, Unabhängige Nachrichten published another [article](#) on the subject. This time, the publication reported that it “could not prove the authenticity of the information. All inquiries about a certain Dr. James Shirley, who is supposed to have reported on this in a book, were unsuccessful...”

The letter claimed that Germany had signed a secret treaty with the Western allies after World War II that supposedly required every German chancellor to sign an agreement called the “Chancellor’s File.”

On Nov. 19, 2007, in response to a question about whether then-German Chancellor Angela Merkel “had to sign the Chancellor’s File,” the Press and Information Office of the Federal Government [issued a statement](#) saying: “The ‘secret state treaty’ you mention belongs to the realm of legends. This state treaty does not exist. And the Chancellor, of course, did not have to sign a so-called ‘Chancellor’s File’ by order





of the Allies before taking her oath of office.”

According to Mimikama, the letter that some contend proves that NATO has long planned a war against Russia contains several spelling mistakes and other errors. The letterhead seems to indicate that it comes from the German Federal Intelligence Service, but Mimikama noted that in 1992, the agency was not yet using that letterhead. Moreover, as noted above, Germany has never had a Minister of State named “Rickermann.”

As for the war in Ukraine, NATO has helped fund Ukraine’s armed forces, and some of its member countries began sending weapons to Ukraine in mid-January 2022, ahead of Russia’s invasion. NATO itself has not engaged militarily, because Ukraine is not a member of the alliance.

Russia does not use the type of missile that was employed to attack the Kramatorsk train station.

THE FACTS: On April 8, 2022, missiles struck a railway station in Kramatorsk, a city in eastern Ukraine. At least 50 people were killed, according to Ukrainian officials. The UN said on April 8, 2022, that the attack “killed and injured scores of civilians.”

Russia and Ukraine both said that Tochka-U, a short-range ballistic missile, was used in the attack, but they blamed each other.

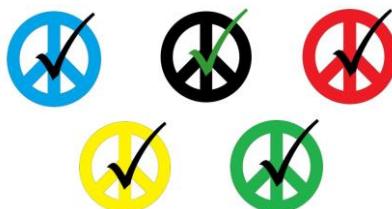
Russia claimed that only Ukrainian forces use Tochka-U missiles. The Russian Defense Ministry [said](#) in an April 8, 2022, statement posted on Telegram: “All statements by representatives of the Kyiv nationalist regime about the ‘rocket attack’ allegedly carried out by Russia on April 8 at the railway station in the city of Kramatorsk are a provocation and are absolutely untrue.” The statement continued, “We emphasize that Tochka-U tactical missiles, fragments of which were found near the Kramatorsk railway station and published by eyewitnesses, are used only by the Ukrainian armed forces.”

It is true that Ukraine uses Tochka-U missiles, but so does Russia, according to experts. Patrick Wilcken, an arms control researcher at Amnesty International, told NewsGuard in an email interview that “both Ukraine and Russia have the Tochka.” He added, “We have seen Russia deploying the [Tochka] system in Ukraine and documented an indiscriminate attack by Russia near a hospital building in Vuhledar, in Donetsk involving a 9M79 Tochka ballistic missile.”

On March 29, 2022, the [Belarusky Hayun](#), an activist group that monitors military activity in Belarus, posted a video showing a column of Tochka missiles marked with the letter V, moving north of Kyiv. According to the Ukrainian fact-checking group [StopFake](#), V and Z are the two Latin script letters used to indicate that equipment belongs to the Russian army.

The Russian state news agency RIA-Novosti and other pro-Russia media that claimed that Ukraine struck Kramatorsk cited the similarity between a serial number on a Tochka-U missile found at the train station





and other missiles launched by Ukraine in previous years. They obtained the serial number from a still of a video on the Italian TV channel TG-LA 7.

An April 9, 2022, article by [RIA-Novosti](#) quoted a Telegram post by the Donetsk TV channel Z Union, which said: “The serial number of the Tochka-U rocket that fell on the train station in Kramatorsk the day before appeared on the Web. Rocket 9M79-1, serial number Ш91579. Previously, Ukrainian militants used rockets from the same series.” The article shared the Z Union’s post, which listed missiles carrying a similar serial number, allegedly used by the Ukrainian army in 2015.

In fact, the serial number does not prove that the missiles used in Kramatorsk belonged to the Ukrainian army. StopFake wrote on April 10, 2022: “This serial number – Ш91579 – is a factory marking and does not in any way identify the missile as belonging to the Ukrainian military.”

Wilcken of Amnesty International told NewsGuard that he agreed with this assessment. “A factory production number says nothing about which military these missiles originate from, it just tells you which factory manufactured the missile,” he said. “Only through analysis of the blast site to determine direction/trajecory of the missile and a mapping of the positions of different forces in relation to the assumed trajectory could one be absolutely certain of who fired this missile, but Russian provenance seems likely.”

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) helped carry out forced evacuations of Ukrainians to Russia.

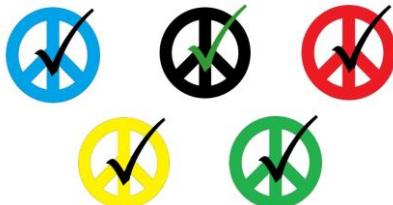
THE FACTS: On March 24, 2022, the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Peter Maurer, met with Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow. The Turkish Anadolu Agency [reported](#) the same day that Maurer had asked Lavrov for permission to open an office in the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don, near Ukraine’s eastern border, and social media [posts](#) and online commentary began accusing the ICRC of supporting or participating in the forced transportation of Ukrainians to Russia.

There is no credible evidence that the ICRC helped organize forced evacuations of Ukrainians to Russia. The ICRC has repeatedly denied this charge, publishing a [press release](#) on March 26, 2022, on its website stating that “The ICRC does not ever help organize or carry out forced evacuations.”

Twitter users have issued posts claiming to show evidence of ICRC assistance in the deportation of Ukrainians to Russia. One March 26, 2022, [post](#) containing a link to a YouTube video claimed to show that “Mariupol residents fleeing west are stopped by Russian troops, forced onto Red Cross buses to Russia.” The video showed a traffic jam with people standing around outside of cars and buses displaying the Red Cross symbol, but did not actually show Russian soldiers forcing people onto buses.

In fact, the video was originally published on Twitter earlier the same day by the governor of the Donetsk





administrative region, [Pavlo Kirilenko](#), who made no mention of anyone being forced onto Red Cross buses to Russia. The only buses he mentioned were “evacuation buses that transport people from Berdyansk to Zaporizhia,” a city under Ukrainian control.

Other [Twitter users](#) posted screenshots of a report on Russian Red Cross activity titled “Evacuation of people from Donbas area to Russia” that was briefly published and then deleted from the website of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), suggesting that the report showed ICRC participation in the evacuation of Ukrainians to Russia. One [post](#) suggested that a screenshot showing the phrase “Assisted by RCRC Movement: 9,000” was proof of this. Other screenshots showed descriptions of arrangements made to accommodate displaced persons arriving in Russia from Ukraine, but did not indicate that the Russian Red Cross had participated in the transportation of Ukrainians to Russia.

The IFRC denied that either it or the Russian Red Cross participated in the transport of Ukrainians to Russia on its stating on its [website](#): “Neither the IFRC nor the Russian Red Cross have ever been engaged in any movement of people from Ukraine into Russia.” In an April 2022 email to NewsGuard, the IFRC’s interim communications director, Benoît Carpentier, stated: “Regarding the 9,000 people assisted, this refers to the number of people who have crossed the border between Ukraine and Russia and received assistance from the Russian Red Cross. Neither the IFRC nor the Russian Red Cross are involved in people’s transportation.”

The report was deleted because it “referred to parts of Ukraine in a manner not aligned with our neutrality and impartiality,” the IFRC explained on its site, alluding to the report’s use of the terms “Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics,” the chosen names of the two breakaway regions in eastern Ukraine recognized only by Russia as of April 2022.

Classified documents show Ukraine was preparing an offensive operation against the Donbas.

THE FACTS: On March 9, 2022, the [Russian government](#) falsely claimed that classified documents obtained by the Russian Defense Ministry showed that Ukraine was preparing an attack on Donbas in March 2022. A March 9, 2022, post on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) by the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry shared photos of the documents in Ukrainian with the comment, “Classified documents (order by the Commander National Guard of Ukraine) acquired by @mod_russia confirm without a shadow of a doubt: the Kyiv regime was covertly preparing an offensive operation against #Donbass, scheduled for March 2022.” Twitter added a label to the post, warning users that “This media is presented out of context.”

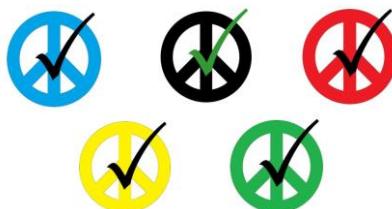
These claims were repeated uncritically by various news sites, including the Russian state news

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Crowdsearcher Olympics 2022: War Dataset



<http://bit.ly/intolympics>



agency [Tass](#). A March 10, 2022, article in Einreich.de, a pro-Russian German site that NewsGuard has found to have repeatedly published false content, claimed that Russia prevented Ukraine's planned attack on the Donbas region in March 2022.

In fact, [according to](#) StopFake, a Ukrainian fact-checking organization, the document is not classified and contains no mention of a planned offensive. The Ukrainian National Guard (NSU) told StopFake that the document is not secret, and that it has nothing to do with Donbas. "This is a standard order for regular joint training camps of the AFU [Armed Forces of Ukraine] and NSU [National Guard of Ukraine] in Starychyi (Lviv Region). Such orders are issued regularly every year. This document is about organizing a training camp" in Lviv, the NSU told StopFake. Lviv is located in Western Ukraine — on the opposite side of the country from Donbas.

Christo Grozev, the executive director of Bellingcat, an online investigative journalism organization, told PolitiFact that while the Donbas region was mentioned in the document, it was neither "a prominent part of the document nor stated in an offensive context, both of which were alleged in the misleading Russian presentation."

The massacre of civilians in Bucha, Ukraine, was staged.

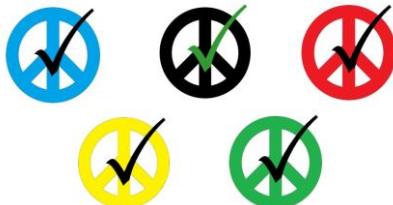
THE FACTS: In early April, 2022, multiple news organizations, including Reuters, The Associated Press, and AFP, documented the killing of civilians in Bucha, a city near the capital Kyiv, that had been under Russian occupation for about a month, beginning on Feb. 27, 2022. Various news organizations spoke with residents in Bucha after the Russian army left. They all said that Russians were responsible for the killings of civilians.

The Russian government disputed these accounts. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs [said](#) in an April 3, 2022, statement, "not a single local resident has suffered from any violent action." On April 3, 2022, the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry shared on Telegram a statement by the Russian Defense Ministry, which [claimed](#) that "the photos and video footage from Bucha are another hoax, a staged production and provocation by the Kyiv regime for the Western media."

On April 3, 2022, the Russian Ministry of Defense [shared](#) on Telegram a slowed-down version of a video that was originally published by Ukrainian TV channel, Espresso.tv. The Telegram post claimed that one body was seen raising its arm and another was seen sitting down, proving that they were alive. "The video of the bodies is confusing: here at the 12th second the 'corpse' on the right is moving his arm. At 30th second in the rear view mirror the 'corpse' sits down," the post stated. "The bodies in the video seem to have been deliberately laid out to create a more dramatic picture."

In fact, the video did not show one of the corpses raising its arm. Shayan Sardarizadeh, a BBC journalist who covers online disinformation, [published](#) an even more slowed-down version of the video on Twitter,





provided by international fact-checking group Aurora Intel. Sardarizadeh noted that the video, which was reviewed by NewsGuard, showed that a mark or a raindrop on the screen had created the false impression of the body moving in low-resolution clips.

The video also did not show a corpse “sitting down,” as Russian officials claimed. According to Sardarizadeh, the “slowed down version shows the buildings in the background being distorted by a rearview mirror. Add social media compression and the video gives the impression the body is moving.” This same phenomenon was also [demonstrated](#) by Finnish fact-checker Janne Ahlberg.

An April 4, 2022, [review](#) of videos and satellite imagery conducted by The New York Times showed that many of the dead civilians lying on the streets of Bucha were killed in mid-March 2022, when Russia, by its own account, was in control of Bucha. One video filmed by a local council member on April 1, 2022, showed multiple dead bodies strewn along Yablonska Street in Bucha, according to the Times. Satellite images provided to the newspaper by Maxar Technologies, a Colorado-based space technology company, showed that at least 11 of the bodies appeared on the streets of Bucha between March 9 and 11, 2022, and therefore were likely killed during that time period.

Additionally, residents in Bucha [told](#) Human Rights Watch that civilians were killed by Russians in March 2022. In an April 3 2022 report, the international human rights organization stated that Russian forces in Bucha rounded up five men and summarily executed one of them on March 4, 2022.

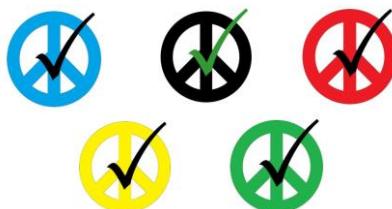
On May 19, 2022, The New York Times published an in-depth report based on eyewitness testimonies and three videos, which detailed the execution of eight Ukrainian men by Russian paratroopers, who were occupying Bucha on March 4, 2022. The newspaper obtained a video, which was taken by a witness, showing captives being marched in a single file at gunpoint, flanked by Russian troops. It then shows troops forcing captives to the ground, including one man who is wearing a bright blue hooded sweatshirt. “The video ends,” The Times said, “But eight witnesses recounted to The Times what happened next. Soldiers took the men behind a nearby office building that the Russians had taken over and turned into a makeshift base. There were gunshots. The captives didn’t return.”

The Times said that it also obtained a drone video, which was filmed on March 5, 2022, showing the dead bodies on Yablonska Street as two Russian soldiers stood beside them. The Times reported: “Among the bodies, a flash of bright blue was visible — the captive in the blue sweatshirt.” The Times said that the videos were the “clearest evidence yet” that Ukrainian men were in the “custody of Russian troops minutes before being executed.”

The U.S. is developing bioweapons designed to target ethnic Russians.

THE FACTS: Shortly after the start of the Russian invasion, Russian officials made multiple public allegations that military biological programs run by the U.S. and its NATO allies in Ukraine were using





dangerous pathogens to create bioweapons that could only infect “ethnic Slavs.”

Igor Kirillov, head of the radiation, chemical, and biological defense department of the Russian Armed Forces, said during a [briefing](#) on March 10, 2022, that labs in Ukraine were working on dangerous pathogens custom-designed to target Russians and other ethnic Slavs.

“The available documents confirm numerous cases of the transfer of biological samples of Ukrainian citizens abroad. We can say with a high probability that one of the goals of the United States and its allies is the creation of bioagents capable of selectively infecting various ethnic groups,” Kirillov [said](#), citing as an example a report that researchers in Ukraine had sent blood serum samples to the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity, a medical research facility in Australia.

In response to the Kremlin’s allegations, a Peter Doherty Institute spokeswoman told the [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#) that it had received about 300 serum samples from Ukraine in 2019, to be used in measles research. The spokeswoman explained that receiving samples from other labs was “routine practice for the success of this public health initiative.” There is no evidence that the institute was ever involved in biological weapons research.

There is also no evidence that the U.S. is developing biological weapons in Ukrainian labs (see our fact-check into this myth [here](#)). A State Department spokesperson told [Newsweek](#) in March 2022 that claims about ethno-specific biological weapons in particular were completely false.

Moreover, experts say that biological agents are simply not capable of targeting specific groups based on their ethnicity. In a [comment](#) to the U.K.-based Science Media Centre, Oliver Jones, head of biosciences and food technology at RMIT University in Melbourne Australia, said: “This claim belongs purely in the realm of science fiction! Humans are just too genetically similar to find something that would affect only certain some people and not others.... There is no way to make any sort of agent, biological or otherwise, that could affect one ethnic group and not others. It is just not going to happen.”

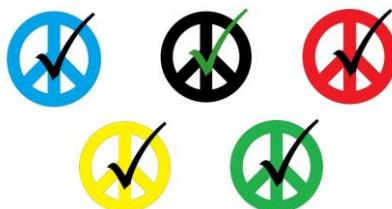
In March 2022, U.S. news site [The Intercept](#) reported that a group of Russian-speaking biologists looked at the Russian claims and concluded that creating “a ‘military’ bacterium specific only for a certain nationality and especially for Russians is absolutely evolutionarily impossible.”

Photos show Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky fighting in combat after Russia invaded Ukraine.

THE FACTS: Social media posts and some news sites have shared old images of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky wearing camouflage, a bulletproof vest and helmet, falsely claiming that they show the president fighting after Russia invaded Ukraine. The claim has appeared in multiple languages since February 2022, including Spanish, French, Arabic, and Hebrew.

Hananya Naftali, an Israeli social media influencer with more than 1.2 million Facebook





followers, [shared](#) one of the images in a Feb. 25, 2022, Facebook post, the day after Russia invaded Ukraine. He wrote: “This is the President of Ukraine Zelensky. He took off his clothes and put on a military uniform to join the troops in fighting to protect the Ukrainian homeland. He is a true leader.” The post was shared more than 70,000 times. Facebook added a label to the post, warning users that “independent fact-checkers say this information could mislead people.”

A Feb 25, 2022, Twitter post shared the image, with the comment “Ukraine’s President is on the front lines fighting for his people. President Zelensky has taken up arms and joined the troops to repel Russian invasion.” The photo is not new and does not show Zelensky on the frontlines in 2022. It was taken during Zelensky’s [December 2021 visit](#) to the front line positions of the Ukrainian army in Donbas, in eastern Ukraine. A reverse image search by NewsGuard found that the [original photo](#) first appeared on Getty Images, a global photo agency. The original photo’s caption reads: “Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky visits the front-line positions of Ukrainian military in Donbas, Ukraine on December 06, 2021.”

Other photos of Zelensky taken during Feb, April and October, 2021, trips in east Ukraine, were also shared on social media after the invasion to claim that the president was visiting the front lines.

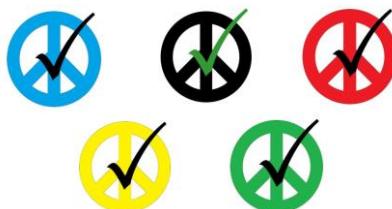
Videos show the “Ghost of Kyiv” shooting down Russian planes.

THE FACTS: On February 24, 2022, the commander-in-chief of Ukraine’s Armed Forces, Valerii Zaluzhnyi, wrote in a [post](#) on Facebook that at least six Russian planes and two helicopters had been destroyed on the first day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The following day, a video began appearing on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) purportedly showing a Ukrainian MiG-29 shooting down a Russian Su-35 fighter jet. The video was subsequently retweeted by the Ukrainian [Ministry of Defense](#). Some users [claimed](#) that this video showed “the Ghost of Kyiv,” an unidentified Ukrainian pilot said to have shot down several Russian planes.

The above-mentioned video of a Ukrainian MiG-29 shooting down a Russian Su-35 is not real-life footage, but was actually made using the videogame [Digital Combat Simulator](#) (abbreviated “DCS”) and then miscaptioned by social media users. The video posted on Twitter and Facebook was first uploaded to [YouTube](#) with the title “GHOST OF KIEV KILL” and its description read, “This footage is from DCS, but is nevertheless made out of respect for ‘The Ghost of Kiev.’”

The Ghost of Kyiv has not been identified or proven to exist. While the [General Staff](#) of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and former president [Petro Poroshenko](#) have made references to the Ghost of Kyiv on social media and [The Times](#) reported that “a Ukrainian military source” had said that the pilot was real, attempts by fact-checking organizations including PolitiFact and Deutsche Welle to confirm the Ghost of Kyiv’s





existence have gone unanswered by the Ukrainian government.

Ukraine threatened Russia with invasion.

THE FACTS: On March 7, 2022, [Russian state-owned news sites](#) claimed that Ukraine's Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council Oleksiy Danilov threatened Russia with a Ukrainian invasion, citing a March 7, 2022, [Facebook post](#) by Danilov. An article by Russian-state owned news agency [RIA-Novosti](#), titled "The Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council threatened Russia with an invasion," quoted the following part of Danilov's post as evidence: "We remember everyone and everything, we will never forget anyone. You will not hide anywhere: neither behind the fences of your houses, nor in villas in Miami, nor on a yacht in Seychelles or in a bunker in the Urals... You came to our land and to our families – we will come to you."

The article misrepresented Danilov's statement. Danilov did not threaten to invade Russia. In the Facebook [post](#), he asserted his view that Russia will not escape justice for its invasion of Ukraine, alluding to the International Criminal Court's [investigation](#) into possible war crimes carried out by Russia in Ukraine, launched on March 3, 2022. He wrote: "I am convinced that the future tribunal on Russian criminals will be significant for the whole world and for Russia itself, as the war with Ukraine, among other things, has launched a process of liquidation of the Putin regime itself." Addressing the Russian government, he added, "Your crimes are documented, and the memory of them is hot iron in the hearts. Both those who gave orders and those who carried them out aiming for a missile strike on our peaceful cities are on our list. You have come to our land and our families – we will come to you."

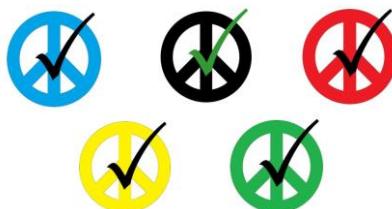
U.S. paratroopers landed in Ukraine.

THE FACTS: A March 7, 2022, [Facebook video](#), posted from the account "Current News Update," shows U.S. paratroopers and falsely claimed that they were "American soldiers in Ukraine Sky." The video had been viewed more than 7.6 million times, as of March 16, 2022. It spread to India, Pakistan, Brazil, the Philippines, and Ghana on Facebook, and was shared on other social media platforms.

The video is not new and does not show U.S. paratroopers landing in Ukraine in 2022. A reverse image search using the [Amnesty International YouTube Data Viewer tool](#) showed that the original video was first posted to YouTube in 2016 by the account "AiirSource Military," which says it covers "military events and missions" from the US military. The account has not posted videos in three years. The video shows paratroopers from the 82nd and 101st Airborne Division performing parachute drills in Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

The U.S. was not directly involved in the 2022 war in Ukraine, although it did provide weapons and aid to





the country. In mid-February 2022, about two weeks before Russia invaded Ukraine, U.S. soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division, which was seen in the video, were deployed to a base near Przemysl, Poland, about 6 kilometres (3.7 miles) from the Ukrainian border, “to reassure our NATO allies, deter any potential aggression against NATO’s eastern flank,” a U.S. senior defense official said, [according](#) to The Washington Post.

Russian missiles hit a nuclear waste facility in Kyiv.

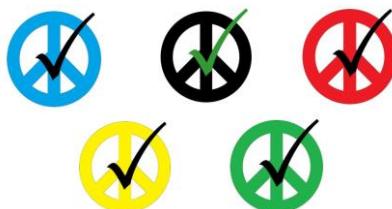
THE FACTS: On [Feb. 27](#), 2022, [multiple](#) news sites published articles in Ukrainian, [Russian](#) and [English](#), claiming that Russian missiles hit a nuclear storage facility of the Kyiv branch of “Radon,” a state-owned enterprise. The articles cited a [post](#) on the official Facebook page of the Ukrainian Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which said: “As of February 27, 2022, at 1:20 Kyiv time, as a result of the mass bombing of Kyiv with all types of anti-aircraft and missile weapons available in the Russian Federation, shells got into the radioactive waste disposal of the Kyiv branch of Radon Association.” The post also stated that, “According to the preliminary assessment of the State Regulation, there is no threat to the population outside the sanitary and protective zone.” According to the Ukrainian fact-checking site, StopFake, the commission was [relying](#) on “information received by telephone from facility staff who called from a bomb shelter.”

However, on Feb. 27, 2022, the State Emergency Service of Ukraine [posted](#) a statement on its official Facebook page, saying that they visited the site of the attack to examine the damage and found that debris from nearby explosions fell close to the facility, but had not damaged any of its buildings. The post said: “At the scene, we determined that as a result of the shelling, an unknown object struck near the building and did not hit any important objects.” As of March 15, 2022, multiple articles had not included the update from the State Emergency Service of Ukraine.

Ukrainian “nationalists” seized about 20 OSCE vehicles in eastern Ukraine.

THE FACTS: On March 1, 2022, several Russian state media organizations including [TASS](#), [RIA Novosti](#), [Sputnik News](#), and [RT](#) published stories claiming that Ukrainian “nationalist forces” had captured about 20 vehicles belonging to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission in Kramatorsk, a Ukrainian city near the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic (DPR). The articles said that the “Ukrainian nationalists” planned to use the vehicles to carry out “provocations” against OSCE employees that would be blamed on the DPR militia, and that the fate of the OSCE employees previously in possession of those vehicles remained unknown. (The OSCE is a [regional security organization](#) that has had a Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine since 2014 to report in an





impartial way on the situation in Ukraine and to facilitate dialogue among all parties.)

There is no evidence that OSCE Special Monitoring Mission vehicles in Kramatorsk were stolen in late February or early March 2022, and the OSCE denied that any vehicles had been stolen from Kramatorsk. On March 1, 2022, the organization [tweeted](#), “All OSCE vehicles in Kramatorsk are accounted for. Reports that @OSCE_SMM vehicles were stolen from our compound there are false.” Representatives of the OSCE also denied that its vehicles had been stolen when contacted by the French fact-checking site [FactAndFurious.com](#) and the Ukrainian fact-checking site [StopFake.org](#).

The OSCE’s Special Monitoring Mission’s daily reports from [Feb. 28, 2022](#), and [March 1, 2022](#), made no mention of any vehicles or personnel being captured, and the Feb. 28 report indicated that there were no OSCE personnel remaining in Kramatorsk at that time. “The Mission completed the evacuation activities of most international mission members following the 25 February decision,” the organization said. “The evacuation of the Monitoring Teams located in Lviv, Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Dnipro, Odessa, Kyiv and Kyiv Head Office, as well as the Monitoring Teams from the Sievierodonetsk, Mariupol and Kramatorsk Patrol Hubs is complete.”

Ukraine staged the attack on the hospital in Mariupol.

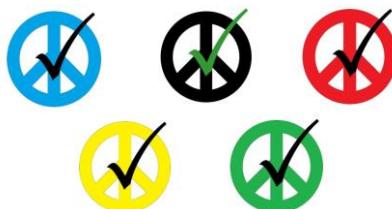
THE FACTS: [Russian officials](#), the [Russian state-owned media](#) and pro-Kremlin [news sites](#) falsely claimed that the March 9, 2022, airstrike on a [maternity hospital](#) in Mariupol in southern Ukraine, which injured 17 people, [according](#) to the WHO, was staged by crisis actors and that the hospital was a base for the Ukrainian army and radicals.

The Russian Embassy in the U.K. said in a March 10, 2022, Twitter post that images of two injured women taken by The [Associated Press](#) at the scene of the attack, were fake. The embassy claimed that a beauty blogger, Marianna Podgurskaya, “played the roles” of the two women; a pregnant woman being carried on a stretcher and a pregnant woman in polka dot pyjamas descending the stairs of the hospital.

This claim is false. The pregnant woman pictured in polka dots pyjamas was indeed a beauty blogger; however, her name is Marianna Vishegorskaya. As evident in the photos, she is not the same person as the woman being carried on a stretcher, who later died along with her baby, [according](#) to a March 15, 2022, report by The Associated Press. Bellingcat, an investigative news outlet, using a facial verification tool, [found](#) that there was a zero percent likelihood that the two faces in the photos belonged to the same person. The Associated Press [said](#) it was unable to determine the identity of the woman on the stretcher.

[Russian officials](#) and state-owned media also claimed that the hospital was being used as a base for the Azov battalion, a Ukrainian far-right militia that is part of Ukraine’s National Guard, according to [Reuters](#), and emptied of staff and patients. During a March 10, 2022, press conference, Russia’s Foreign Minister





Sergei Lavrov [said](#) that the hospital had “long been taken over by the Azov battalion and other radicals and that all the women in labor, all the nurses and in general all the staff had been told to leave it. It was a base of the ultra-radical Azov battalion.”

Echoing Lavrov’s statement, a March 9, 2022, Twitter [post](#) from the official account of the Russian embassy in Israel shared an image that purportedly showed tanks in front of the empty maternity hospital, with the comment: “The truth is that the maternity hospital has not worked since the beginning of Russia’s special operation in Ukraine. The doctors were dispersed by militants of the Azov nationalist battalion. [#StopFakeNews](#).”

In fact, the image used in the embassy’s Twitter post was not of the maternity hospital in Mariupol. According to [Bellingcat](#), on March 11, 2022, geolocation data showed that the building in the photo was actually located 10 kilometres (6.2 miles) from the hospital.

Additionally, photographer Yevgeny Maloletka, who took some of the photos of the Mariupol hospital attack for The Associated Press, [told](#) Latvia-based news site The Insider on March 10, 2022, “We photographed what was happening. There was an airstrike, and the hospital was full of people. People were coming out of the basement and the building — and we recorded it. The Azov Battalion wasn’t there.”

European universities are expelling Russian students.

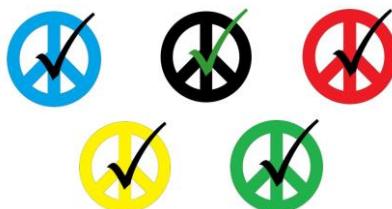
THE FACTS: As of March 2022, there was no evidence that European universities expelled or threatened to expel Russian students in retaliation for the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These allegations appear to have started after Russia’s human rights ombudsman, Tatiana Moskalkova, wrote in a since deleted, Feb. 28, 2022, [Instagram post](#) that she and the Russian Minister of Science and Higher Education Valery Falkov were “taking unprecedented measures to protect the rights of Russian students who have been expelled from universities in France, the Czech Republic, Belgium, and other European states due to the situation in Ukraine.”

Moskalkova did not provide evidence to support her claim, but social media accounts and prominent Russian websites supportive of Russian President Vladimir Putin soon began repeating the allegation. State-run news agency [RIA Novosti](#) reported that Russian students expelled from European universities would be able to study for free at Russian universities, such as the Higher School of Economics, Moscow State University, and Saint Petersburg State University.

The claim spread throughout European campuses and social media. More than a dozen universities, including schools in France, the Czech Republic, and Belgium issued statements in March 2022 stating that Russian students were not at risk of expulsion.

In a [tweet](#) posted on March 1, 2022, the European University Association (EUA), which includes about 850 universities across more than 40 countries, said that “Various rumors have emerged that European





#universities have been expelling Russian students since the aggression on Ukraine... It is untrue and EUA hasn't received any report of potential expulsions by any of its members."

Luc Sels, the rector of KU Leuven, a university in Belgium, [tweeted](#) about the rumor on March 2, 2022, that "nothing could be further from the truth. We support all students at #kuleuven and welcome new ones, in a spirit of peace & solidarity." Michel Deneken, president of the University of Strasbourg in France, told [French radio broadcaster Radio France](#) in March 2022 that Russian students enrolled at his university took the news as fact. "The fact that we had responses from Russian students saying, 'thank you for reassuring us', shows that they were worried about this fake news," Deneken said.

The French Ministry of Higher Learning also denied the rumor, and said in a February 2022 meeting with university officials that the approximately 5,000 Russian students and researchers studying in France would be allowed to continue their studies in the country, [Radio France reported](#).

A man named “Bernie Gores” was the first American casualty of the Ukraine crisis.

THE FACTS: A [Twitter](#) post from an account masquerading as CNN falsely announced on Feb 23, 2022, that a man named Bernie Gores was the “first American casualty of the Ukraine crisis.” The post, from the unverified and [now suspended](#) account @CNNUKR, showed a photo of Gores saying, “Thoughts and prayers with the family of activist Bernie Gores who passed away this morning after a mine planted by Russian backed separatists exploded.”

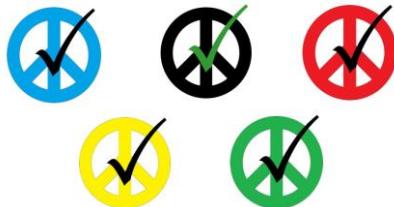
A similar Twitter post on Aug. 16, 2021, from an unverified and [since suspended](#) account @CNNAfghan, shared an image of the same man. The post said: “#CNN Journalist ‘Bernie Gores’ executed in #Kabul by #Taliban soldiers.”

Some social media users shared the Twitter posts side by side, with allegations that CNN was producing misinformation. A Feb 25, 2022, [Facebook post](#) said: “See how CNN Blatantly LIES to the public!” Another [Facebook post](#), on Feb. 26, 2022, said “CNN is the enemy of the people.”

The claims are false. The photos allegedly showing “Bernie Gores” are actually of a YouTuber and gamer called Jordie Jordan. As stated above, these Twitter posts came from unverified accounts and were not shared by CNN. In a March 2022 fact-check, CNN said of the false reports about Gores: “Both tweets about a ‘Bernie Gores’ being killed are fabrications not connected to CNN. The ‘CNN Ukraine’ and ‘CNN Afghanistan’ accounts behind the tweets are both phonies that have been suspended by Twitter for violating its policy against impersonation.”

A reverse Google Image search by NewsGuard showed that the image used in the Twitter posts was published on Jordie Jordan’s profile on [Wikitubia](#), a Wikipedia-type site of gamers. Jordie Jordan is alive, as shown by his last [YouTube video](#), which was March 16, 2022.



**Ukraine is training child soldiers.**

THE FACTS: In February 2022 and March 2022, multiple social media posts shared photos of Ukrainian children wearing military uniforms and brandishing weapons, with captions falsely claiming that children were training to fight after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022.

The photos appeared in a March 8, 2022, [post](#) in the Telegram channel of a conspiracy group, Outreach Worldwide, which claimed that “child soldiers” are being trained in “the model of ISIS” and that Ukraine is violating human rights law as a result.

A Feb. 25, 2022, Facebook [post](#) in Sinhala, the most widely spoken language in Sri Lanka, shared the photos under the caption, “War is a curse. Children take up arms to save their motherland. Child soldiers of Ukraine.” In fact, the photos were taken by The Associated Press as part of an [essay](#) titled “Ukraine Groomed to Fight,” in July 2017, three years into the conflict between the Ukrainian army and Russian-backed separatists. The original caption of one photo read, “In this photo taken on Saturday, 8 July 2017, students at a paramilitary camp for children hit their fists onto their hearts during an evening ceremony outside Kyiv, Ukraine. As the deadly conflict in eastern Ukraine entered its third year, some parents in Ukraine are anxious to make sure their children are ready to fight it, instead of swimming and playing volleyball.”

Other photos that claimed to show Ukrainian child soldiers in 2022 were actually taken by the European Press photo Agency in August 2015. The caption of one photo in part [reads](#), “Children hold mock weapons as they attend training in the youth military-patriotic summer camp ‘Azovets’ in the outskirts of Kyiv, Ukraine, 12 August 2015.” There have been no reports or other evidence indicating that children are fighting in the war between Russia and Ukraine.

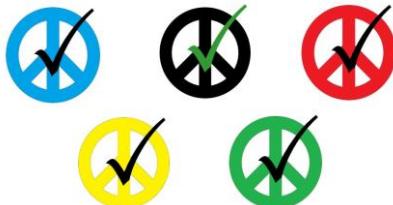
The war in Ukraine is a hoax.

THE FACTS: In March 2022, social media users spread false claims that the war in Ukraine was a hoax, staged by crisis actors and orchestrated by the Western media.

A [video](#) of a news reporter in front of dozens of people lying on the ground covered in what looks like body bags went viral on several major social networks. Seconds into the clip, a person in a bag moves around conspicuously. A March 1, 2022, [post](#) on Twitter miscaptioned the video, “Miracle! Death (dead) Ukrainians coming to life after dying on social media but caught on live camera.”

In fact, the video clip is not new and does not show crisis actors in Ukraine in 2022. The video was posted by Austrian news channel OE24 to [YouTube](#) on Feb. 4, 2022, with the caption: “Vienna: Demo against climate policy.” It shows a climate change protest in Austria, which took place on Feb. 1, 2022, more than three weeks before Russia invaded Ukraine, [according to the Austrian newspaper Oesterreich](#). The protest was organized by climate activists of the youth movement “Friday for Future” and the use of body bags





aimed to highlight the threat of carbon emissions.

A more sophisticated manipulated video used an Austrian news report, and replaced the audio with an English-language [NBC News report](#) shot from Lviv in western Ukraine, in which correspondent Cal Perry spoke about casualties on the first day of the war. This fake also replaced the Austrian outlet's original on-screen banner, with the English text that appeared on NBC, reading "UKRAINIAN HEALTH MINISTRY: 57 DEAD, 169 HURT ACROSS UKRAINE AS RUSSIA LAUNCHES ATTACK." The video was [shared](#) on Twitter on March 2, 2022, by Lee Stranahan, a self-described Russia supporter, who hosts a show on Russian-state owned Radio Sputnik, with the caption "How to lose your job as a crisis actor..." The fake video generated more than one million views on Twitter alone, before it was taken down by the platform on March 7, 2022.

In late February, social media users falsely claimed that a photo of a wounded woman in Ukraine was taken in 2018, not in 2022, and that the woman was a crisis actor. For example, a Feb 26, 2022, TikTok [video](#) wrongly said that the photo was used in a July 2018 news article about a gas leak. The TikTok video garnered more than 473,000 views and 22,000 likes as of March 15, 2022, and was reposted to [Facebook](#). One Feb. 26, 2022, Facebook post shared the video with the comment "Crisis actors at there [sic] best..." .

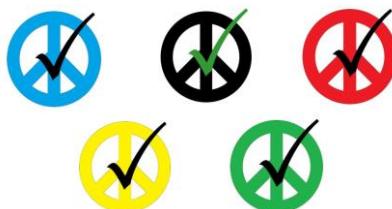
In fact, the photo was taken by photographer Wolfgang Schwan on Feb. 24, 2022, the first day of Russia's invasion in Ukraine, and shows a woman, who was injured in a shelling attack on a residential building in Chuhuiv, Ukraine. A reverse image search by NewsGuard did not find the photo published anywhere else before Feb. 24, 2022.

The U.S. has a network of bioweapons labs in Eastern Europe.

THE FACTS: On Feb. 24, 2022, a thread by the Twitter account @WarClandestine suggesting that the Russian invasion of Ukraine was actually targeting U.S. bioweapons laboratories in Ukraine was widely shared on social media using the hashtag #USBiolabs. The thread cited claims by Russian officials that the U.S. maintains a network of bioweapons labs near Russia's borders in Eastern Europe. Russian state-owned media outlets have been making similar claims since at least 2016.

These claims are typically based on a misrepresentation of the U.S. Department of Defense's Biological Threat Reduction Program, which collaborates with partner countries to reduce the threat of outbreaks of dangerous infectious diseases by helping partners to secure dangerous pathogens and to quickly detect outbreaks, according to the [U.S. Embassy in Ukraine's website](#). The U.S. has been providing aid to Ukrainian laboratories since 2005, when the Ukrainian Ministry of Health and U.S. Department of Defense signed an [agreement](#) intended to limit the threat of bioterrorism by implementing safeguards on deadly pathogens from Soviet-era biological weapons programs. The Biological Threat Reduction Program has





since helped to construct and modernize Ukrainian laboratories. The labs themselves are run and primarily financed by the Ukrainian government. The [Security Service of Ukraine](#) (SBU) noted in response to claims about the presence of U.S. military biological laboratories in a May 2020 [statement](#) that “no foreign biological laboratories operate in Ukraine.”

Russia was not using cluster munitions during its military operation in Ukraine.

THE FACTS: Russia insisted that its armed forces were only using high-precision weapons during its war with Ukraine in 2022 and denied reports that its army was using cluster munitions, which can inflict more damage on civilians. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on March 1, 2022, that such reports are “undoubtedly fake news,” according to Reuters. Peskov said that Russian operations are focused on military targets, not civilian ones, Reuters reported.

Cluster munitions are notoriously dangerous for civilians because they produce undetonated bombs that effectively act like land mines. As a result, a [2008 United Nations](#) treaty signed by 108 countries, excluding Russia, Ukraine, the U.S. and other countries, banned its use.

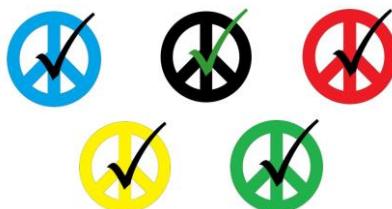
Human Rights Watch [said](#) on March 4, 2022, that on Feb. 28, 2022, Russia used cluster munitions in at least three residential areas in Kharkiv, Ukraine’s second largest city, which killed at least three civilians. Human Rights Watch said, “Interviews with 2 witnesses and an analysis of 40 videos and photographs reveal the use of submunitions delivered by Russian-made 9M55K Smerch cluster munition rockets.”

The investigative journalism site, Bellingcat, [said](#) that evidence appears to show Russia inflicting civilian harm, including through the use of cluster bombs in civilian areas, based on credible videos and photos. Bellingcat wrote in a Feb. 27, 2022, report, that Russia appears to have been firing cluster bombs from multiple launch rocket systems, BM 27 and BM 30. It said, “We can tell this by the distinctive munitions used by each system and the direction from which they appear to have travelled before impact.”

A March 4, 2022, [BBC investigation](#) analyzed footage of a Feb. 28, 2022, attack in Kharkiv and drew insights from weapons experts. The BBC concluded: “The evidence points clearly to the attack in question being carried out by Russian forces. Other images shared online show Russian sub-munitions dropped in the same neighbourhood on the day of the attack.”

During a March 4, 2022, meeting in Brussels, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg confirmed that Russia attacked Ukraine with cluster bombs, according to reports by [Reuters](#) and [The New York Times](#). “We have seen the use of cluster bombs and we have seen reports of use of other types of weapons, which would be in violation of international law,” Stoltenberg said.



**NATO has a military base in Odessa.**

THE FACTS: In December 2021, various pro-Russia news sites claimed that NATO established a naval base in Odessa, a southern port city in Ukraine.

NATO ships have been increasing their presence on the Black Sea since Russia's annexation of Crimea 2014, according to the [news section](#) on NATO's official website in July 2021. The Alliance states that "NATO ships routinely operate in the Black Sea, consistent with international law, usually patrolling the waters for around two-thirds of the year."

In fact, foreign military bases are not permitted in Ukraine, according to article 17 of the country's [constitution](#), and there is no evidence of such a base. [NATO's interactive map](#), which shows where surveillance systems and Alliance training centers are located, shows no NATO base or center or any other military facility in Ukraine. On a page of its website last updated in January 2022, NATO [wrote](#) that "Outside NATO territory, the Alliance only has a military presence in Kosovo and Iraq."

Russia did not target civilian infrastructure in Ukraine.

THE FACTS: As Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, the Russian government claimed that the Russian army was using precision-guided weapons aimed only at military targets, not civilian infrastructure. These claims have been repeated uncritically by various Russian-state news sites.

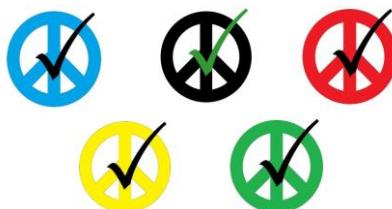
In fact, [Amnesty International](#) has documented multiple attacks by the Russian army against civilian targets in Ukraine. One day after the invasion, Amnesty International said that Russia was carrying out "indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas and strikes on protected objects such as hospitals," after documenting three incidents in the cities of Vuhledar, Kharkiv, and Uman, that it believes to have killed at least six civilians and injured at least 12 more. Agnès Callamard, the group's Secretary General, [said](#) the Russian military used "ballistic missiles and other explosive weapons with wide-area effects in densely-populated areas," adding that some of these attacks may constitute war crimes.

Modern Ukraine was entirely created by communist Russia.

THE FACTS: In Feb. 21, 2022, just three days before Russia launched a full invasion of Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin [said](#) "Modern Ukraine was entirely created by Russia, more precisely, Bolshevik, communist Russia," Putin said, lamenting that the communists "gave these republics the right to leave the (Soviet) union without any terms and conditions."

It is true that today's Russia and Ukraine, both former Soviet states, share long periods of history. However, they have spent considerably more time apart than together. Russia and Ukraine's shared heritage dates





back more than 1,000 years, when Kyiv was the center of the first Slavic state, Kievan Rus, a medieval empire founded by Vikings in the 9th century and the birthplace of Ukraine and Russia. The historical reality of Ukraine is a complicated 10-century history of [shifting borders](#) and conquest by multiple, competing powers. While parts of modern-day Ukraine existed within the Russian empire for centuries, other parts in the west [fell](#) to the control of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Poland, or Lithuania.

Contrary to Putin's claim that "the Bolsheviks invented Ukraine," Ukraine had fought for, and gained, independence in 1918 — a status that lasted only a few years. In [1922](#), Russian Bolsheviks defeated Ukraine's national government and established the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Ukraine would spend the next 69 years as part of the Union.

Putin's claim that Moscow "gave" Ukraine the right to become independent of the Soviet Union "without any terms and conditions," is incorrect because it was the Ukrainians who chose independence in a democratic referendum. In 1991, as the Soviet Union was dissolving, 84 percent of eligible voters in Ukraine went to the [polls](#), and more than 92 percent voted to leave the Soviet Union. Moscow even vowed to respect Ukraine's sovereignty as a condition of Ukraine's giving up its nuclear weapons — which was memorialized in 1994, in an [agreement](#) known as the [Budapest Memorandum](#).

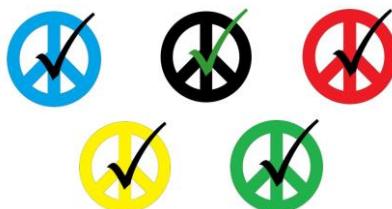
Crimea joined Russia legally.

THE FACTS: At the end of February 2014, troops operating without national insignia seized government facilities and checkpoints in the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea, including the parliament building in Simferopol. In an April 2014 [press conference](#), Russian President Putin admitted that Russian troops had been deployed to Crimea to support local defense forces, having [insisted](#) a month earlier that the armed men were local defense forces. In March 2014, the newly installed Russian separatist prime minister, Sergei Aksyonov, held a referendum on the status of Crimea, the results of which were overwhelmingly in favor of the peninsula joining Russia. The Russian government has falsely [claimed](#) that Crimea legally joined Russia because the referendum was held in compliance with international law.

In fact, the referendum was not legitimate and, as a result, most countries do not recognize Crimea as a part of Russia. The [UN Assembly](#) and the [Venice Commission](#), an advisory body of the Council of Europe consisting of legal experts, declared the referendum and its outcome illegitimate for a number of reasons. First, the referendum did not give all of Ukraine's citizens the right to vote on Crimea's status, violating Ukraine's constitution, which requires that any changes to the territory of Ukraine be approved by a referendum of all eligible voters in Ukraine. Moreover, the options on the ballot excluded the possibility for Crimea to maintain the status quo and remain part of Ukraine. The [two options](#) were: Join Russia, or return to the 1992 constitution, which gave the peninsula significant autonomy.

In addition, international law does not recognize a referendum held under armed aggression. As Marc





Weller, Professor of International Law at the University of Cambridge, wrote [for the BBC](#) in March 2014, "Crimea cannot proceed with a possible secession or even incorporation into Russia while Moscow holds sway on the ground." Igor Strelkov, a leading Russian commander in Crimea in 2014, who is also known as Igor Girkin, said during a 2015 [interview](#) on the Russian program "Polit-Ring" that militants under his command "forced" lawmakers to vote in the referendum. "Members of parliament were gathered by the militants and forced into the hall [parliament chamber] to make them vote," he said.

Ukrainian forces bombed a kindergarten in Lugansk on Feb. 17, 2022.

THE FACTS: Russian news sites claimed that the Ukrainian army bombed a kindergarten in the village Novaya Kondrashovka, which they said was located in the Russian separatist-controlled Lugansk republic in eastern Ukraine. However, analysts at Bellingcat [reported](#) that both the location of the kindergarten and evidence from the scene indicate that the shelling came from the south, where Russian-separatist frontlines are located. Correctly placing the kindergarten in the Ukrainian village of Novaya Kondrashovka, a few kilometres north of the frontline with the Russia-backed separatists, and analysis of a crater next to the site, shows that "the shell clearly came from the south" according to Bellingcat's Director of Training and Research, Aric Toler.

The U.S. and U.K. sent outdated and obsolete weapons to Ukraine.

THE FACTS: The U.K. and the U.S. began sending weapons to Ukraine in mid-January 2022 as fears mounted over a possible Russian invasion of the country. The U.K. supplied Ukraine with short-range anti-tank NLAW missiles while the U.S. has sent 300 Javelin missiles and other supplies, as part of a \$200 million security package for Ukraine.

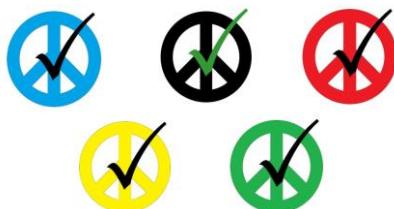
The Russian-state media and pro-Russian news sites claimed that the weaponry was outdated, obsolete, and ineffective. Such claims were used to suggest that the arms would not bolster the Ukrainian army's capabilities in the event of a war and that the West is not actually interested in helping Ukraine.

In January 2022 the Russian news site, Vesti, wrote that the shelf life of the U.K.'s NLAW is "coming to an end" and that Ukraine was becoming a "convenient landfill for the West."

In fact, NLAW is not becoming obsolete. The shelf life of NLAW anti-tank missiles is 20 years, according to Saab, a Swedish aerospace and defense company, which manufactured the weapon. NLAW came into service in 2009 and was procured by the U.K. the same year. Therefore, the weapon will not expire until 2029.

Vesti also suggested that Javelin anti-tank missiles from the U.S. were not effective. The site quoted Ruslan Pukhov, Director of the Moscow-based Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, saying





"these will not strengthen the Ukrainian army."

U.S. Javelins have been used in 5,000 combat firings with a 94 percent engagement success rate, according to manufacturer Lockheed Martin. Javelins have also proven to be effective in Ukraine. In December 2021, the Ukrainian military tested a Javelin, which it received in October that year as part of annual military aid from the U.S., to hit a tank at a 1.5 km distance. The Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine said in a Facebook post in December, 2021: "Despite the fact that the soldiers fired this weapon for the first time, the task was completed successfully – the target was hit."

According to the U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center, which is part of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology, "Javelin is highly effective against a variety of targets at extended ranges during day or night operations, and under battlefield obscurants, adverse weather and multiple countermeasure conditions." In 2017, an article in The Wall Street Journal described Javelin as "America's most effective portable anti-tank weapon."

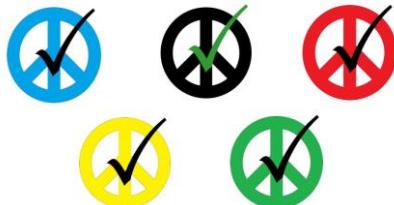
Nazism is rampant in Ukrainian politics and society, supported by the authorities in Kyiv.

THE FACTS: Radical far-right groups do exist in Ukraine and, according to a [2018 Freedom House](#) report, they represent a "threat to the democratic development of Ukraine." However, the report also stated that far-right extremists have poor political representation in Ukraine and no plausible path to power. Indeed, in the 2014 parliamentary [elections](#), the far-right nationalist party Svoboda received 4.7 percent of the vote. In the 2019 presidential election, the Svoboda candidate, Ruslan Koshulynsky, won just 1.6 percent of the vote, and in the parliamentary elections, Svoboda won 2.2 percent of the vote. Svoboda currently holds one parliamentary seat.

This myth goes hand-in-hand with false claims of widespread anti-Semitism in Ukraine. In 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin [said](#) there was a "rampage" of "anti-Semitic forces" in certain parts of Ukraine, a statement that was contradicted by representatives of Ukraine's Jewish community. Jewish community leaders signed an [open letter](#) to Putin stating that his assertions about the rise of anti-Semitism did not match "the actual facts." Additionally, a 2018 [report](#) by the National Minority Rights Monitoring Group, an NGO which monitors anti-Semitism and xenophobia in Ukraine, said that the number of anti-Semitic incidents has been *declining* in Ukraine in recent years.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who is Jewish, addressed the Russian public in a Feb. 24, 2022, [speech](#), saying that these claims do not reflect the "real" Ukraine. "You are told we are Nazis. But could people who lost more than 8 million lives in the battle against Nazism support Nazism?"





The West staged a coup to overthrow the pro-Russia Ukrainian government in 2014.

THE FACTS: There is no evidence supporting the idea that the 2014 Maidan revolution in Ukraine that led to the ouster of then-president Viktor Yanukovych was a coup orchestrated by Western countries.

It is true that the U.S. supported the Maidan revolution. In December 2013, U.S. Senator John McCain travelled to Kyiv, where he told protestors, “We are here to support your just cause, the sovereign right of Ukraine to determine its own destiny freely and independently.” Between 1992 and 2013, the U.S. government gave approximately \$5 billion to support democracy-building programs in Ukraine. U.S. aid to Ukraine in 2013, the year the protests started, went to a wide variety of activities, including nuclear non-proliferation efforts, a program to reduce unwanted pregnancies by encouraging the use of contraception, and an initiative to improve standardized testing. However, there is no evidence that the West orchestrated the revolution.

Indeed, it had all the markings of a popular uprising, not a coup.

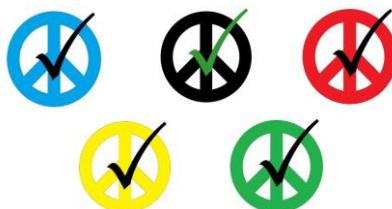
In November 2013, thousands of Ukrainians flocked to Kyiv’s Independence Square (“Maidan Nezalezhnosti”) to protest then-President Victor Yanukovych’s decision to suspend preparations for the signing of an association and free-trade agreement with the European Union, scheduled for the following week. Over the following months, the protests, often referred to as “Euromaidan” after the square where they took place, grew in size. Negotiations between the Ukrainian government and the pro-European Union opposition, mediated by the foreign ministers of France, Germany, and Poland, led to an agreement signed on Feb. 21, 2014, giving more power to Ukraine’s parliament and planning for a presidential election by the end of the year.

However, angry protesters demanded Yanukovych’s immediate resignation, and hundreds of police officers guarding government buildings abandoned their posts. Yanukovych fled the same day the agreement was signed, and protesters took control of several government buildings the next day. The Ukrainian parliament then voted 328-0 to remove Yanukovych from office and scheduled early presidential elections the following May, the BBC reported. These events, often collectively referred to as the “Maidan revolution,” were extensively covered by international media organizations with correspondents in Ukraine, including [the BBC](#), [the Associated Press](#), and [The New York Times](#).

Russian-speaking residents in Donbas have been subjected to genocide.

THE FACTS: The International Criminal Court, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe have all said they have found no evidence of





genocide in Donbas, the eastern Ukrainian region partly occupied by Russian-backed separatists since 2014. The U.S. mission to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe called the genocide claim a “reprehensible falsehood” in a Feb. 16 2022 [post](#) on its official Twitter account. It said that the mission “has complete access to the government-controlled areas of Ukraine and HAS NEVER reported anything remotely resembling Russia’s claims.”

A 2021 Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [report](#) blamed the authorities of the separatist Donetsk and Luhansk republics for various abuses, including severe restrictions on the freedom of movement, forcing people to adopt Russian citizenship, and arbitrary arrests. At the same time, the UN reported three cases of arbitrary detainment and ill-treatment carried out by Ukraine’s SBU (secret service), and 13 such cases in the self-proclaimed republics, which the UN said were “usually” carried out by the “ministry of state security” officers, known as MGB.

A 2016 [report](#) by the International Criminal Court found that the acts of violence allegedly committed by the Ukrainian authorities in 2013 and 2014 could constitute an “attack directed against a civilian population.” However, it also said that “The information available did not provide a reasonable basis to believe that the attack was systematic or widespread.”

Correction: An earlier version of this tracker inaccurately referred to Mimikama as a German fact-checking organization. In fact, Mimikama is Austrian. NewsGuard apologizes for the error.

SOURCE Russia-Ukraine Disinformation Tracking Center: 250 Websites Spreading War Disinformation And The Top Myths They Publish

<https://www.newsguardtech.com/special-reports/russian-disinformation-tracking-center/>

