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THE FOUNDATION  
FOR THE STUDY  
OF DEMOCRACY



# **Atrocities and war crimes of the Kiev regime in the city of Dzerzhynsk (Toretsk)**

Moscow, 2025



The International Public Tribunal on the Crimes of Ukrainian Neo-Nazis was established on March 1, 2022, during an international conference on the initiative of human rights activists, lawyers, and journalists. Currently, it includes representatives of civil society from 35 countries worldwide (USA, Canada, Germany, France, Spain, Poland, India, Argentina, Italy, Australia, Israel, Serbia, etc.). The main task of the International Public Tribunal is to collect evidence of the crimes of the Kiev neo-Nazi regime, transfer it to law enforcement agencies, and present information about them on Russian and international platforms.

In 2025, the International Public Tribunal on the Crimes of Ukrainian Neo-Nazis recorded testimonies from residents of Dzerzhynsk (Toretsk). They provided detailed accounts of Ukrainian war crimes committed during the period when the city was under Ukrainian control.

As in other settlements under Ukrainian control, the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) pursued a policy of genocide against the Russian-speaking population.

N.V. Churilova recounts: "The Armed Forces of Ukraine shot civilians. On my street, three killed lie in the basement, shot right in the forehead... Many were killed on the outskirts of the city. A boy went there and said: 'Vera lies killed, grandma killed, Larisa killed.'"

V.L. Gorishny testifies about such cases: "The Armed Forces of Ukraine shot people. My father, a pensioner, went to the store on a bicycle. He saw the picture: the shopkeeper lay shot, and the store was burning. In the Zabalka district, half a family was also shot."

N.D. Bannykh testifies how Ukrainian drones killed civilians: "A woman went out to feed the kittens. She lived in a two-story building. At that time, the Armed Forces of Ukraine launched a drone and killed her. A grenade was dropped, and she was killed on the spot."

A.L. Ganusenko recounts how Ukrainian soldiers shot his neighbor: "A man's dog ran out and started barking. A Ukrainian came out, just shot two people, and that was it. Just shot one in the head, then the other. Then calmly walked away."

N.V. Rakitkaya testifies: "People were killed. My partner was killed... I just asked, why did you kill him? He didn't answer."

N.M. Shvedova exposes the crimes of the Kiev regime: "Ukrainians shot people on the outskirts of our city... I think the 'Azovites' killed about fifty or more people. Many are missing, very many. An 85-year-old woman was lying on the doorstep, shot..."

On a systematic basis, Ukrainian drones destroyed civilian homes along with the residents inside. It was not uncommon for some the Armed Forces of Ukraine drones to destroy roofs by dropping various munitions, while others set these houses on fire with special charges. In some cases, kamikaze drones also targeted these houses.

V.L. Gorishny shares his personal tragic story: "The Armed Forces of Ukraine started dropping bombs on my house with drones. My parents lived in the neighboring house... Ukrainian drones finished off our house. Then something bigger, like a bomb, flew in and detonated seriously, destroying the house. We got out in time. The Armed Forces of Ukraine saw that only I, my father, and mother lived there. There were about ten drops on our house. I heard them; they were heavy. Then they dropped something incendiary."

O.V. Aksenova recounts what happened to her: "That night, 'Baba Yaga' flew in six times. It hit around us. Then it flew away, and a small Ukrainian drone followed, circling... When 'Baba Yaga' shelled us, the Ukrainians knew perfectly well that only civilians lived in that house. No one else was there."

L.N. Simonova speaks about the ubiquity of such Ukrainian practices: "Ukrainians burned all the houses with drones. Not a single house is left intact. Not one. There are many wounded."

N.N. Vasis recounts: "Russian troops were not even close yet. First, the Ukrainians shelled the yard, then the shed, and then one day we saw they started throwing mines and bombs at the house. I told my brother, let's run, otherwise they'll kill us today, day or night... Three grenades were dropped on me. And one on my brother, I think. He saw we had no weapons, nothing. We weren't in uniform. We were in jackets... Whose drones were flying? Ukrainian drones."

As in other settlements, the Kiev regime particularly actively killed peaceful Russian-speaking residents during attempts to evacuate toward Russia.

I.V. Doronin testifies: "When we were evacuating, the Armed Forces of Ukraine dropped bombs on us. They sent a kamikaze drone to search for us, then 'Baba Yaga.' I received six shrapnel wounds... Halfway there, a Ukrainian drone spotted us and dropped a bomb. My father and grandmother died."

N.V. Bannykh recounts: "When we were evacuating, we went out onto Lenin Street... Right across from me, a drone dropped a shell. Of course, it saw that the line was all civilians."

Residents of Dzerzhynsk report that Ukrainian troops shelled the city and surrounding areas with civilians long before the arrival of Russian troops.

L.G. Ostrikova testifies: "When there were no Russian troops yet, there were strikes on our village. I'm not a military person, but I clearly heard the shot. One, two, three – and the strike. I don't know the distance, but it was very close."

In Dzerzhynsk, the Ukrainian practice of killing civilians for bloody footage to accuse Russia was also widespread.

E.M. Ostrikov recounts: "They killed a lot of people just because the Ukrainians needed a picture. Everyone hated the press... 'Press' means the city will be shelled. Characteristically, after a strike, the mayor, police, press, and foreign journalists would immediately appear there, filming everything." His father, M.S. Ostrikov, confirms this: "When the press came to the city, you could expect shelling. And that's what happened. As soon as they arrived, after a while, strikes came from Ukraine."

A.A. Zbitnev recounts: "In 2022, when I was still working, they kept saying journalists were coming. A strike hit the neighborhood, and immediately, in 5 minutes, 3 minutes, journalists were there, reporting that it flew over the center."

N.D. Bannykh testifies that this was standard Ukrainian practice: "The Armed Forces of Ukraine shelled Dzerzhynsk. In 2021, they shelled a nine-story building. A young family died in that building. Young people. Before that, journalists were there, of course, then they shelled the house, soldiers rushed in, blocked it, and quickly started clearing the debris. Cleaning up."

Once, journalists were at the Palace of Culture. The journalists had just left when they started shelling people. There were wounded. After a while, journalists ran back, started filming, and said, 'Look, the Russians are shelling you.' Although we knew perfectly well it wasn't the Russians. Usually, everything came from the Armed Forces of Ukraine, from Konstantinovka."

Like other settlements, residents of Dzerzhynsk have no doubt that the main motive for the Kiev regime's genocide of civilians was its hatred of Russian-speaking residents of Donbas.

The witness testimonies presented in this report fully expose the Kiev regime in systematic and deliberate killings of Russian-speaking residents of the city, including women and the elderly, with firearms and lethal unmanned aerial vehicles – using both kamikaze drones and drops of various explosive devices from drones – as well as the intentional destruction of civilian homes and the city's civilian infrastructure, which constitutes war crimes with no statute of limitations.

The following data consists of verbatim and unedited testimonies from residents of Dzerzhynsk.



**1 Ilya Vladimirovich Doronin (20 years old),  
victim of the Armed Forces of Ukraine crimes in Dzerzhynsk (Toretsk)**



"The Armed Forces of Ukraine shot families. My acquaintance's friend died there. She wasn't even 40. Around September 2023. Quite a few were shot.

They said the Armed Forces of Ukraine threw grenades into basements through windows and chimneys. Then they entered the basements and shot everyone. Mostly, this was done by the 'Lyut' brigade. Former policemen, brutal.

When we evacuated, the Armed Forces of Ukraine dropped bombs on us, mines fell. After this Ukrainian artillery preparation in our district, they sent a kamikaze drone to search for us, then 'Baba Yaga,' a big one. I got six shrapnel wounds. There was a huge warehouse for trucks there. We sat there for about an hour. They gave me painkillers. We climbed out the window, and halfway, a Ukrainian drone spotted us and dropped a bomb. My father and grandmother died. Twelve of us were evacuating. All civilians. The Ukrainian charge fell at my grandmother's feet and slightly behind my father. Grandma fell immediately.

Father's bone and femoral artery were shattered. We tried to use a tourniquet, but it was too much. I got multiple shrapnel wounds in my legs, both thighs, side, shoulder, and lower back. The Armed Forces of Ukraine didn't want to let us go; we were heading toward our side. About five mines fell, then it got quiet, and we ran. They figured it out and decided to take revenge."

**2 Natalya Vladimirovna Churilova,  
victim of Armed Forces of Ukraine crimes in Dzerzhynsk (Toretsk)**



"I was at home in the living room when Armed Forces of Ukraine soldiers ran past. They ran through my garden, broke the fence. Started shouting, shooting heavily. Then they shot at the window. Three bullets, three holes in the window. After that, they shouted: 'Russians, come out of the basement.' Then the Armed Forces of Ukraine left. This was around August 2024. Russian troops weren't there yet. After this, there was silence for about a week, maybe two. Then the first strikes began, the Armed Forces of Ukraine burned a row of houses, hit them. Then they started on the second row. The next street, higher up. They burned a neighbor's house. It caught fire immediately. My house was hit on September 4. Grandma lived in the shed; they had nowhere else to live. She said the Armed Forces of Ukraine threw four incendiary devices until the house caught fire. They shot at the house, in the middle, to set it on fire. Ukrainian drones.

Early in the morning, when our house was hit, we heard it hit the neighbor's house and flew on. I said, let's go to the cellar, because we're next. My daughter is disabled; we hid her. Grandma said,

'I'm not leaving the house. Whatever happens, happens.' Grandma is old, 83. We hid, and the drone hovered over us. It buzzed loudly. It was 'Baba Yaga,' it buzzes loudly, it's big. Then it returned in about 20 minutes and destroyed our roof. My husband shouted: 'We're on fire!' On the 5th, at 4:30, we left, barely got out of that cellar. The dog burned there; we couldn't save it.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine shot civilians. On my street, three killed lie in the basement, shot in the forehead. This was in Dzerzhynsk on Komarov Street. On the outskirts, they say many were killed. A woman was killed. A boy went there and said: 'Vera lies killed, grandma killed, Larisa killed.' Around September 11–14, this started on our streets, killings here and there. About fourteen or fifteen people we knew were killed.

And who knows how many others, not just in our area, people say it happened everywhere. A guy who delivered groceries stopped and said, 'A woman jumped from the second floor, run, they're shooting.' He took her to Konstantinovka. Because they were killing. We didn't believe the Armed Forces of Ukraine were killing. Russian troops weren't there yet, not a single one.

The same on Severnaya. Rumors say people were killed there too. The Armed Forces of Ukraine called us 'waiters.' Those who didn't leave, who stayed.

They asked me too why we didn't leave. I told them my daughter is sick. We didn't want to go there. But you can't say that to their faces. You wouldn't live to see another day. So they called us 'waiters.'"

### 3 Vladislav Leonidovich Gorishny, victim of Armed Forces of Ukraine crimes in Dzerzhynsk (Toretsk)



"The Armed Forces of Ukraine shot people. A man worked in a store; he brought groceries from Konstantinovka to his store. My father, a pensioner, went to the store on a bicycle. He saw the scene: the shopkeeper lay shot, and the store was burning. The Ukrainian army shot him and blew up the store.

We evacuated on February 4 this year, in 2025. Me, my father, and mother. The Armed Forces of Ukraine started dropping bombs on my house with drones. My parents lived in the neighboring house. When the drops stopped, I took two backpacks and went to their house. We quickly started moving toward Horlivka through the city. Ukrainian drones finished off our house.

Then something bigger, like a bomb, flew in and detonated seriously, destroying the house. We got out in time. The Armed Forces of Ukraine saw that only I, my father, and mother lived there.

There were about ten heavy drops on our house. Then they dropped something incendiary.

In the Zabalka district, half a family was also shot. They lived in basements; the Ukrainian soldiers probably wanted to settle there too, so they went wild. A guy lives here; he's a witness, his hand was shot too.

The Ukrainian authorities – they don't care about people. The Ukrainian authorities and military just wanted to destroy Donbas. They came and treated people and their property inhumanely. I don't know what to call them."

**4** **Anatoly Nikolaevich Barda (60 years old),**  
**victim of Armed Forces of Ukraine crimes in Dzerzhynsk (Toretsk)**



"On January 12, 2025, I turned 60, and we were living in cellars. Six of us lived in one cellar. This was on the outskirts, near 12 PMZ. Before that, we changed houses four times because Ukrainian troops kept dropping bombs from drones on houses where civilians were. They targeted civilians with drones. First, they'd break through the roofs, then drop incendiary drones.

Into houses, in the private sector. We lived in the private sector. When we realized this, a woman took us in, and six of us lived in her basement. Then my wife's older brother and I moved to a neighboring basement to avoid drawing the drones' attention. To make us less visible from the drones.

They tracked us and dropped bombs right into our basement, where my wife's brother and I lived. When the rubble started burying us, a rail snapped, and we decided to get out because there was no exit. We crawled out and started moving through the ruins, leading them away. We knew from experience they couldn't hit under tall trees or fly into windows if there were branches.

We found a shed and hid there together. Waited for them to stop flying. Since it couldn't reach us, a mine came. One mine flew in, and three minutes later, another. I was concussed. Came to and turned to Sergei, my wife's brother. He was buried. I could only dig out his head.

I ran to the house. Said Sergei was gone. In the morning, luckily, there was fog, and we got out. Dug up Sergei, saw a penetrating wound to his back, heart. Covered him with stones so dogs wouldn't drag him away. He was the same age as me. My birthday is the 12th, his is January 20. He would've been 61. Sergei Alekseevich Lutsk.

We decided to head toward Horlivka. Luckily, there was fog. No drones flew. Before reaching the central factory building, at the intersection – machine-gun fire. Six of us were walking. I'm a third-group disabled and lagged behind. They were 70 meters ahead. They reached the intersection. The machine gun was behind a ruined building. One fell on the roadside.

My wife leaned over him. Then the Armed Forces of Ukraine shouted: 'Civilians, civilians,' but kept shooting. I rolled back to a poplar tree because there was a two-story building there. They killed my wife, Natalya Alekseevna Barda, my son, Alexander Anatolyevich Barda, his wife, Sergei, and Lena Tkachenko. Sergei, wounded, crawled out. Three bodies remained. His wife Lena, my wife, and son. Why did the Ukrainians shoot civilians? I think a fascist is a fascist."

**5** **Andrey Gennadievich Ganusenko,**  
**victim of Armed Forces of Ukraine crimes in Dzerzhynsk (Toretsk)**

"We lived in fear. And we avoided any encounters with the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Because meeting them meant questions like: 'Are you waiting for the "Russian world"? Are you "waiters"? They were programmed only for such questions. I tried not to cross paths with them at all. In mid-summer, there were cases of Ukrainian soldiers killing civilians. Word spread quickly through the city.

And around mid-October 2024, one day, a man who ordered water had it delivered. While they stood near the entrance, his dog ran out and started barking.





Ukrainian soldiers were sitting in the next entrance. A neighbor saw it happen. A Ukrainian came out, shot two people, and walked away. Just shot one in the head, then the other. Calmly walked away. One was Alexander Migal, over 50, the other Alexey, around 40. Exit wounds in their heads. They were buried behind the house.

I was afraid to leave the entrance for a long time. And so were the other neighbors, of course. We didn't believe it until it happened before our eyes. The neighbor started screaming, his wife, we ran out and saw two corpses. Maybe the Ukrainian got scared of something, the dog. Fine, you're scared of the dog, shoot the dog. But you see it's a civilian. It's beyond comprehension.

People didn't want to leave, or they were evicted from their homes or apartments. And they just shot them.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine wounded me in the arm. We were sitting in a basement room with my wife and wanted to get out. I was afraid Ukrainian soldiers would start shooting, and we'd get caught in it. I decided to run with my family to a farther room. Before that, I wanted to ask Ukrainian soldiers, who were right outside the door, for permission to run there. Started opening the door. It was locked from the other side. Tried to open it, pushing with my right hand, and at that moment, three shots. My wife later said she heard three bangs, and one of those shots hit my arm through the door. They came to us several times, almost all of them, looked in, saw it was a dead-end room, and we were alone there.

You couldn't enter our room from outside. They locked us in. But we didn't know. We were scared, sat like mice. Luckily, we had water. We didn't go out at all, didn't bother them. They tried to take our child many times. Came, first talked normally, then rudely. Came to my wife's work, threatened to fire her, take away parental rights. They pressured us morally in every possible way. Came home, of course, we didn't open, hid from them. Every car passing by made us wary. And we hid the child all this time. I saw no other options.

Everyone was so scared for their children that even some neighbors, we live next door, didn't know there was a child in the apartment. Understand? We had to hide it so well no one knew. Because they could snitch, hear something. They could come any moment. We hid mine for a long time, but when it became impossible because they surrounded us, we had to take him to another city, Konstantinovka, to register him there. So the services, 'angels' and guardians, would think he was in another city, not Dzerzhynsk. And they stopped coming to us. We managed to take him out, register him, but couldn't return to the city because at checkpoints they weren't letting children in for a long time. We had to resort to tricks, make up plans.

We brought him back in two cars. Planned it like a special operation to bring the child into the city. It's beyond comprehension how we came to this. One car went ahead as reconnaissance, the other with the child. Through back roads, fields, and villages. We managed to bring him back early in the morning. Hid him until now, he's with us now. And he left the city with us.

When we left, we were lucky: it was windy, few drones flew, and we got through. But on the way, Ukrainian drones dropped many bombs. We were lucky, we made it. Others weren't so lucky. Drones dropped bombs on them. For example, eight people left, two didn't make it. Because a drone dropped a bomb, wounded people, bleeding. You can't save them in the field with drones flying overhead. The Ukrainians don't let people go just like that."



## 6 Bogdan, victim of Armed Forces of Ukraine crimes in Dzerzhynsk (Toretsk)



"The Armed Forces of Ukraine behaved inappropriately from the start, even before the SMO. There was constant terror against civilians, provocations. There were rapes, thefts. They took whole bags of stuff. Washing machines, refrigerators. Looting. Marauders take from empty apartments. But here they just took from people living there. Came in, took furniture, valuables they could carry. Sometimes they killed people, sometimes evicted them, sometimes let them stay. Depended on who came, their mood. Many factors. Maybe drunk, maybe not.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine killed even before the SMO, in the Yuzhnoye village. A couple of cases where the Armed Forces of Ukraine just entered a house, and when taking cars or other valuables, people resisted, argued, and they just shot them and took what they wanted. After the SMO started, it got much worse

because the Ukrainian military knew everyone left in the city were 'waiters,' as they called us, waiting for Russian rule. From the start of the SMO, there were constant rapes, beatings. My mother worked in a hospital, I had other acquaintances in the military commissariat and police. It happened so often people stopped paying attention. Like, it happens. My father-in-law's brother went missing here in Dzerzhynsk. They lived near the second zone, hid in a basement. Sooner or later, soldiers came, took several men with them. Beat them for a week, shot over their heads. People who were later released told this. They were brought back to that basement, already beaten. A month later, we learned this man was missing. Not even his body was found, just disappeared. He was my father-in-law's brother.

In late 2024, a Ukrainian drone operator living in our house told us that in late summer, they got an order for Dzerzhynsk. Ukrainian soldiers were paid for killing civilians. If it was filmed, they got paid. He said directly they were ordered to shoot all civilians. The order was given to two brigades. One was 'Azov.' The other, I don't remember, was around the Toretskaya mine. They were ordered to shoot all civilians. Didn't matter, men or women. Kill all civilians. I only know seven people killed by Ukrainian drones. A Ukrainian officer told us this. Not his unit, his was reconnaissance. The neighboring house had a combat unit dropping bombs. He said they spotted civilians, children, elderly, seven people total, and killed all seven. He said the Armed Forces of Ukraine had priorities. For example, if a civilian was evacuating toward Russia or a Russian soldier was coming, kill the civilian first, then the soldier. Because we're traitors to them.

One case, an old man, 77, Anatoly, lived in our basement. He had an apartment in the next house, first floor, soldiers knew he went there often. Other Ukrainian soldiers found out and set up a tripwire. Later we wanted to retrieve his body, at least bury him, so he wouldn't lie there. In early December, when drone operators left and Ukrainian assault groups came, they told us that when these groups retreated, they'd shoot us all. We were outside, getting firewood for the basement stove. They passed by, an officer among them. Well-dressed, latest military gear. The Ukrainians told me directly, 'We're retreating, we'll shoot you, so do what you want. Evacuate to Ukraine now, or it'll be too late.' But none of us wanted to evacuate.

Then around December 5–10, SBU came, took a young guy and his mother from the basements. Don't know why. Never found out. Only know they were beaten in Kiev for days. Relatives contacted SBU to stop the beatings. SBU demanded 10,000 for the guy and his mother. Paid, then 10,000 for the guy and his mother. Paid, then 1,500 monthly to leave them alone. No one said why they were detained. Just came, grabbed them, took them.

On January 5, we decided to leave. Running out of water, food. Decided to leave early on the 6th. It resolved itself because on the 6th around 7 a.m., heavy shelling blew all basement doors open. Before, doors at least delayed Ukrainian soldiers, they sometimes passed if closed. There were cases where they just entered, shot everyone. I know people who later passed basements, called for civilians to leave together, but everyone inside was already shot. Shot by Ukrainians, no Russians there yet. During retreat, Ukrainian troops killed civilians. As one drone officer told me, he asked, 'What are you doing here, waiting for someone?' I said, 'No, nowhere to go, that's why I'm here.' He said, 'Good, we don't like traitors.' Meaning, everyone left in the city, who didn't leave, are traitors. And you know what they do with traitors."

## 7 **Demyan Alexandrovich Belov (62 years old), victim of Armed Forces of Ukraine crimes in Dzerzhynsk (Toretsk)**



"Because of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, I lost my home, everything. They burned all our houses in a row. Incendiaries, phosphorus, everything. Killed a whole street. The house collapsed. A mine hit – it collapsed. I moved across to neighbors. Lived there about a month – another hit. Barely got out. My things were packed, all burned. Nothing left, nothing alive.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine told us: 'If we leave, we'll burn you.' And so it was. Houses too. A whole house stands – they hit it. House burns, people run out. Finished them off, targeted civilians. At Andrey's, we hid in a basement about a month because we had nowhere else. His house was hit, the neighbor's too. We lived in the basement. Lived on one street, a hit, the Armed Forces of Ukraine found us. We burned too, one place, another. Phosphorus too. They're savages. Just horror – everything burned. Only pipes left. I also heard the Armed Forces of Ukraine enter houses, basements, pretend to be Russian. Then – 'you're waiters,' and shoot, then dogs drag the bodies. This was when Russian troops weren't close yet. Terrible."

## 8 **Alexey Anatolyevich Lager, victim of Armed Forces of Ukraine crimes in Dzerzhynsk (Toretsk)**

"I remember Ukrainian soldiers leading a man with tied hands. Saw it on the street. Young guys, the man was about my age, maybe older, strong. They took him somewhere, we didn't follow, too dangerous. Later found him under a house. Saw them leading him. Why kill him? Unexplainable.

Ukrainian drones. I saw where they took off, landed. Ukrainian territory. No Russian troops then. Saw them take off, land. About 200 meters away. Saw it. Then – bang, wounded a mother and son, mother over 60, son over 40. Another guy wounded, ran 5 meters, fell. Just fell. While





protecting Vasily, we were attacked 10–11 times. By these Ukrainian drones. Destroyed the house. Just destroyed.

Of course, they destroyed the roof on the extension. It caught fire. Targeted. The drone has a bottle with incendiary mix, can't put it out. Saw it, it burned. Carried Vasily, three of us. Two yards, brought him to his house, and five minutes later, the first drone hit the roof. A hole.

The second drone flew in, set it on fire. We were there five minutes. Moved to a third house, stayed there.

Still had to run, and as we ran – Armed Forces of Ukraine drones hit. All targeted. Just targeted.

I was at a friend's, visited, had tea. A neighbor ran in, said, 'Lyokha, you're burning.' Ran home, two streets over. Got there, the whole street burned. The bread factory district, the whole street burned. Can't burn on its own. About 18–20 houses on our street. Can't all burn at once.

Moved to Vasily's. September 17, 2024. Vasily went to his mother. A drone fell near his car. Meant for a civilian car, but didn't explode.

He tried to move it, it exploded. Shredded his legs, severed an artery. Brought him inside, started treating wounds, stitching. Stitched with a regular needle. While stitching, 8–10 of us were at the house. They started bombing us. Again, drones...

Drops. Summer was hot, everything burned. Put it out, the shed caught fire. Ran to the shed. Saw a drone, about 120–150 meters up.

Saw it hovering, coming straight at us. Hid under the shed. Concussed a woman, another guy. It definitely saw we were civilians. Summer, T-shirts, sneakers. Women."

## 9 **Sergey Igorevich Trubnikov,** victim of Armed Forces of Ukraine crimes in Dzerzhynsk (Toretsk)



"I remember Alexander Aksenov. He was two or three years younger than me. Don't know if he's alive now. He lived with us on Vladimirska Street.

Sometime in early September, the Armed Forces of Ukraine shot him in the hand – don't know why – his palm was pierced. Around late September or early October, he asked for a spot in the basement.

We gave him the key, he went down. On his way back, someone shot him through the door.

Definitely Ukrainian soldiers – they were stationed there at the time. They shot at a civilian, probably trying to kill him.

He was in plain clothes, no military gear, no camouflage, nothing. He'd gone empty-handed to unlock the basement but couldn't.

As he walked back, he heard a shot from behind. The bullet pierced his earlobe, went through his neck, and exited."



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**Igor Nikolaevich (71 years old),  
victim of Armed Forces of Ukraine crimes in Dzerzhynsk (Toretsk)**



“How did we usually determine danger? Well, you look – if there's no the Armed Forces of Ukraine near the store, better not go to the store. That means there'll be shelling.

They also fired at stores with a grenade launcher. Our girls worked in those stores as shop assistants. The grenade launcher blew the doors off.

Some kind of their leader, a battalion commander, got offended – they didn't give him something. He drove away, there was a double road there, turned around, stopped at a bus stop, pulled out a grenade launcher and took a shot at the store. We got lucky – the grenade didn't explode. It pierced through the wall and got stuck inside the store.

They even went as far as gathering groups, saying, 'We'll evacuate you. Don't take anything unnecessary. Just take money, valuables, and documents.' They rounded people up, and afterward, we never saw them again. We don't know where they disappeared to.

As soon as it got dark, vehicles with mortars would appear at the intersection where the apartment buildings end. They'd fire five shells, then change positions. They'd lay down 30–40 rounds across the village, grid by grid, until houses started burning. Then they'd leave. Fires broke out. At first, we could still put them out – we ran around helping each other. But later, it got much worse.

Then Ukrainian drones appeared, and it became impossible. When drones are flying and bombing, it's better not to stick your head out. Six people lived three houses down from us.

They didn't have their own house; they moved into a garden shed. An incendiary was dropped on them from above. Those who ran out – six people – were hit by a mine that tore them to pieces.

We have acquaintances on the Ukrainian side, and some of their people serve in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. They told us: 'Those who stayed are "waiters" – they're not people, they must be destroyed.' So we hid from the drones. If a drone was flying, it meant either a bomb was about to drop or mortar fire would start.

My wife went to the neighbors. As they were walking, they heard mortar rounds flying. Luckily, they made it to the basement and hid.

'Baba Yaga' flew overhead, dropping anti-tank mines on houses. You'd sit in the basement and hear them getting closer and closer.

Thankfully, our basement wasn't under the house but off to the side. But later, just before we left, I noticed craters appearing around us. They had located us by our heat signature. We had a stove in the basement, but we only lit it during the day.

The last time they hit us, I went outside and found an FPV drone lying unexploded on the stairs. Fully armed. Of course, everything was destroyed. The first drones blew off the roof, and the rest tried to fly inside. But the wires and debris got in their way. We could hear their propellers catching on things. We waited 15–20 minutes, and then there was an explosion."

11

**Nina Dmitrievna Bannykh (66 years old),  
victim of Armed Forces of Ukraine crimes in Dzerzhynsk (Toretsk)**



"The Armed Forces of Ukraine occupied houses near us. They took over two houses nearby, set up grenade launchers there, and fired from them. They treated civilians poorly. They claim they helped us, but no one helped us. They kept saying we were pro-Russia, calling us names, telling us to leave.

They shot a man who was walking home. We found him dead in the morning. He was killed near the Khimkolonka district. A neighbor came and said we needed to bury him because he'd been killed. He was around 40, maybe a little older. This happened around November.

A woman went out to feed some kittens. She lived in a two-story building. At that moment, the Armed Forces of Ukraine launched a drone and killed her. A grenade was dropped, killing her instantly. Only Ukrainian drones were flying at that time – we hardly ever saw

Russian drones.

Mostly, the Ukrainian 'Baba Yaga' and kamikaze drones flew over us. They shelled us personally. We were bombed by 'Baba Yaga.' We were lying against a wall in the house, in the kitchen. From 4 p.m., 'Baba Yaga' started bombing us. They destroyed our house, burned it down. They knew civilians were there. They bombed us because we supported Russia, because we didn't leave for Ukraine. They told us outright: 'We'll wipe you off the face of the earth.'

They set our house on fire. There were 10 of us inside when they dropped a bomb. They clearly saw me in the morning – I went out to walk the dog. A drone hovered overhead. I went back inside, and at 8 a.m., they started bombing us.

They destroyed our roof, dropped an incendiary. I told everyone: 'Get up, we have to leave now.' Drones swooped in and completely burned down the kitchen. We lost everything. We lived in the basement, and the Armed Forces of Ukraine saw civilians were there.

A neighbor was walking with his mother. The Armed Forces of Ukraine started shelling them with drones. They were heading to our basement, crossing the road – they lived right across from us. They entered our yard, and just before they reached the garage, a drone dropped a bomb right on them.

The Ukrainian drone saw an elderly woman walking. There were four of them – two women. They hid behind a shed, but the neighbor led his mother straight to the garage. Before they reached it, the drone dropped a bomb in front of them. Then it dropped another on the women. The drone saw they were civilians.

When we evacuated, we walked along Lenin Street, turned a corner, and spread out. Right across from me, a drone dropped a shell. It deafened me – thank God, that was all. It clearly saw the entire line of people were civilians.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine shelled Dzerzhynsk. In 2021, they hit a nine-story building. A young family died there. Young people. Before that, journalists were there – of course – then they shelled the house, soldiers rushed in, blocked it off, and quickly started cleaning up the debris.

Because nothing was coming from Russia. Ukraine itself started destroying the city. They shelled everything. My godmother told me that in the Nikitovsky state farm, Ukrainian and Polish soldiers were stationed. They shelled the power station to cut off people's electricity. A woman from Nikitovsky came to sell at our market. One morning, she arrived in a different car. I asked, 'Olya, what happened?' She said, 'I drove home, and a drone dropped a bomb right on my car. I barely survived.' A Ukrainian drone. They were literally hunting people, targeting cars and civilians.

Once, journalists were at the Palace of Culture. They had just left when the shelling of civilians started. People were wounded. Later, journalists ran back, started filming, and said, 'Look, the Russians are shelling you.' But we knew perfectly well it wasn't the Russians. It was always from the Armed Forces of Ukraine side, from Konstantinovka."

## **12 Tamara Borisovna Stepanchenko (71 years old), victim of Armed Forces of Ukraine crimes in Dzerzhynsk (Toretsk)**



"The Armed Forces of Ukraine destroyed our house, so we moved to another one. Their self-propelled artillery fired while we were hiding in the basement, even shooting through the roof. The awnings flipped over. It was the Ukrainians firing. The Russians hadn't even entered the area yet – they weren't close. But the Ukrainians were in every house. They settled in, evicted people. I was told they kicked out and killed a woman about my age – Lyuba, I don't know her last name. The Ukrainians killed her, yes.

My husband went there. He told me, 'Lyuba was killed.' They shot at us from those drones, you understand? Ukrainian drones. They were always flying, and at night, they'd shell us. We gathered to leave, but then they shot at us, shelled us. My back and arms don't work well. We kissed goodbye – this was near the TsOF, Lenin Square. Next to the TsOF is the Dzerzhynsky mine. It's in Toretsk.

Opposite is a church and some garages. We thought we'd go over the garages to escape. But we saw tripwires and empty vodka bottles set up there.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine shot at us. Shells landed right near us. I thought I wouldn't make it. The drops were from Ukrainian drones. They were exterminating us. Just the other day – I don't remember which – they shot civilians heading this way. The Armed Forces of Ukraine killed a child, a woman – a daughter and her mother. The Armed Forces of Ukraine started shooting everyone. Back then, stores were still operating in Konstantinovka, and a neighbor went there to shop. She said there were so many mercenaries. Later, she said she saw executed civilians on the road. Not soldiers – just people. Then they became even more brutal. They shot anyone they came across."

## **13 Aksyonova Olga Vladimirovna, victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)**

"On January 8, 2024, the Ukrainian 'Baba Yaga' started dropping bombs around houses at night. I often don't even understand what their goal is with these drops. Anyway, on the 8th, the Ukrainians started dropping bombs around houses. People panicked and ran out of the house, heading to our





basement. Among them were Aunt Tanya, Aunt Natasha, Uncle Pasha's wife – there were four of them. Aunt Natasha, Uncle Pasha, Aunt Tanya, and Grandma Nina, 97 and a half years old. They managed to run into the yard, hide in the garage, and Uncle Pasha followed, holding Grandma Nina – she walked quite slowly. It turns out it wasn't the 'Baba Yaga' that dropped the bomb, but a smaller one. And Grandma Nina fell – no scratches, but Uncle Pasha – his leg was pierced, the bone. They ran to another garage, then made it to us. Apparently, the Ukrainians spotted them running to us. We had a basement under the house. A little box like this. Nearby was a shed. They came down to us. We managed to bandage Uncle Pasha. First, we had to stop the bleeding. And then, half an hour later, we thought this creature wouldn't fly in daylight. But it was already 8 a.m., already light. And then the 'Baba Yaga' came and dropped a

bomb. Thankfully, it dropped on the other side, not in the center. It just blew up our little house and blocked the entrance with boards. Luckily, it only took out the brick wall.

When the 'Baba Yaga' shelled us the first time, the Ukrainians knew perfectly well that only peaceful people lived in that house. No one else was there. And then they burned us in the basement. Everything burned. And they kept flying around; we stopped trying to put it out and left. Aunt Natasha went to her little house, and we moved to my brother's summer kitchen. We boarded up the windows with plywood from the inside. We threw a mattress on the floor, and a shell landed under the house. We stayed down, not moving, because right after the shell, we could hear the drone. I don't understand why the Ukrainians were shooting. It was a terrifying night. That night, the 'Baba Yaga' came six times. Thankfully, it was hitting around us. Then it flew away, and a small Ukrainian drone came, circled. After some time, it came again. And we spent the whole night in one position, not moving, as if we weren't there or were already dead.

The Ukrainians must have known there were civilians there. They couldn't not know. They knew perfectly well there were peaceful people. We lived at Aunt Natasha's. Also a little house, divided into two small rooms. Anyway, in the morning, they started dropping small Ukrainian drones on us, those screeching 'kamikaze' ones. Six of them. They kept dropping until they broke through the roof; the sixth one dropped an incendiary bomb. This bottle with liquid. Then we quickly gathered and ran to Kolya's house. On the 28th, Grandma Nina died. Of natural causes. It must have been too much for her – her house was burned. Not just damaged, but completely burned. We had just moved out; ten minutes later, they dropped a second incendiary bomb, and everything burned. On the 28th, she was gone. We buried her in a crater left by the 'Baba Yaga.' A huge hole. The Ukrainians saw perfectly well that we were civilians."

14

**Tishkova Tatyana Yevgenyevna,**  
**victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)**

"Since 2015, we've been shelled once—a Ukrainian tank shot at our house. This was in 2015. We were there with the family. My husband, me, and two underage girls. In 2024, a Ukrainian rocket also hit our house. Destroyed it. Our house was completely destroyed. They did this on purpose. They were driving us out of our homes. They set up mortar positions and deliberately shelled our



houses. They dropped shells from drones that later ignited. In just one day – our entire neighborhood was completely destroyed in about two hours. Zabalka, near Silhouet. Completely burned.

The Ukrainian rocket hit our house when we weren't there. My husband always kept his finger on the pulse, so to speak. And when he saw Ukrainian soldiers starting to move around our houses, he said, 'Alright, girls, pack up, let's get out of here.' And we left. And literally the next day, the rocket hit.

We spent the night at someone else's place. And when we came back in the evening to check on our house, Ukrainian soldiers pointed their guns at us. 'What are you doing here?' Well, they said it all in Ukrainian.

They asked, 'Why aren't you evacuating?' And we had this conversation at gunpoint. Well, we made up that my very old grandmother was bedridden, and no one was taking us. Somehow, he softened and let us go. Gave us back our passports and let us go. Like, 'Let them go.'

But they shot our neighbor. Natasha. They went to get water, and Ukrainian soldiers were hiding in the other half and shot her. They shot her right in the heart, Natasha.

Uncle Igor was wounded in the leg, his bone was shattered, and he later died. And one woman, the third one, survived. This happened in Zabalka.

Around November. Grandpa Zhenya, a neighbor, also went to get water – he was badly wounded by gunfire.

They don't care that we're civilians. We're Russian. They need to destroy us. Because we're 'zhduny' to them. They hated us. So many died because of the Ukrainians. So many.

On Kulatsky Khutor, there were also elderly people, 86 years old, 80 years old – they just left about two weeks ago.

They'll tell you a lot of interesting things. They said Ukrainians came and shot people. People were just lying in the yards. So many.

We have a street called Sormovskaya, Zabalka too. There, they even killed a bedridden grandmother, paralyzed, in her bed. Just like that, poor thing, covering herself with her hands – that's how they found her, dead."

**15 Klavdia Dmitrievna Bunina (80 years old),  
victim of Armed Forces of Ukraine crimes in Dzerzhynsk (Toretsk)**



"I was hit by a Ukrainian shell. They are angry with us. And they hate us. That's for sure.

I was sitting in the kitchen, and suddenly – bang – their shell hit the house.

The kitchen window faced the house. Shrapnel tore a chunk of flesh from my arm and hit my chest. The Ukrainians hate us because they think we're separatists. When I go to get water with my cart, and the Armed Forces of Ukraine come for water, they immediately ask people why they didn't leave."



16

**Shvedova Nadezhda Mikhailovna (64 years old),  
victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)**



"The Ukrainians shot people on the outskirts of our city. So many people died. A woman came to live on our street, young, around 50, a medic. And she went to see her friend – his mother was bedridden. She went there, and when she got to this Seryozha, they found his mother shot in the forehead, dead. The locals themselves said the Ukrainians shot so many people. This medic was just looking after her. The woman was 85 years old. And when they came to their house, she was lying on the threshold, shot. This was in our so-called Zabalka. The men who stayed with us said it was the 'Azov' guys who came. They said the 'Azov' guys shot a lot at people running away. Killed them, just like that.

The Ukrainian Armed Forces shot so many, so very many people. And they shot Oleg and his wife right in their yard. And neighbors there – an old man and woman lived there – they shot them too. So many people were shot. Oleg was around our age. He worked as a loader at 'Yagodka.' His wife was the same. And one day their house caught fire. We knew them. We lived on Sormovskaya, where our houses burned.

Here, we lived downstairs, where my husband was shot. We lived in our son's house because he had a stove there. We had no gas for winter, no stoves in the house. So we came here to live with our son because there was a stove here. And that's where we got caught. They went to make a call, and he never came back. Vitya told me, 'Don't look for them, they were shot on the 13th of September. They're lying there, at the end of the street, in the summer kitchen.' On the 3rd, he left the house, and on the 13th, they shot him. And I went to that kitchen. There were two of them there. He was with his friend, Vanya. He was lying on his back, covered. And Vanya was sitting like this. Also shot. He was already swollen and covered in worms.

I think the 'Azov' guys killed at least fifty, maybe more people there. So many went missing. So many. They were shooting everyone. Oleg was shot, then that woman was shot, then the neighbor across the street was shot, then on our street, more were shot. Oh, it's terrifying, terrifying – God forbid, God forbid. So many people were shot.

There was one guy who walked around helping people in their gardens – he also disappeared, went missing. There were two of them, this Lyosha and this Vitya. And then I came home, waited for them – they never came back. Two neighbors. And they also disappeared. And another neighbor who lived on our street – he's gone too. Also disappeared. So many people were shot. I cried so much, so much – I thought, why? Why are you shooting us, Ukrainians? What did we ever do to you?"

17

**Shepetyak Viktor Anatolyevich,  
victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)**

"When it all started, in September, on the 4th, the Ukrainians began clearing out the last streets. They were killing peaceful people. Especially on the outskirts. These were the last streets leading from Zabalka. Whoever they came across, they shot. If there was a peaceful person in a house,





they'd shoot them. In one place, there was a neighbor – a doctor, a bedridden grandmother, and her son. The son managed to run away, but the doctor and her mother – the Ukrainians shot them. And he got away.

When September came, you'd just crawl out of the basement, and there'd be a drone over your head. They were exterminating us. I also caught a bullet when I climbed onto the attic to call my mom. The first time, I was lucky; the second time, I got hit. The Ukrainians were on the two-story buildings, and I was in the private houses. So, a two-story building, private houses, and a school. And from the two-story building, they started shooting at me. The Ukrainian Armed Forces saw I was a civilian. They hit me in the back; the bullet's still there.

Once, I went to the store, and there were two Ukrainian Nazis there. Drunk. One started shooting at my legs, at the ground, in the air. Right on the street. Then they started shooting dogs. Just walking around, showing off, shooting dogs. I was lucky – I ran through the store and got away. Then the Ukrainian soldiers shouted that I should spend the night at someone's place. Everyone ran away immediately. Well, if you let them in, they'll kill you right away. That's how they've killed people before."

**18** **Ostrikov Yevgeny Mikhailovich,**  
victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)



"The Ukrainian Armed Forces treated us Russians like 'zhduny,' and 'zhduny' are criminals by default. Well, you're all waiting for the Russian army. My parents hid me when the Ukrainian Armed Forces came to our house to check. We have an old grandmother, a disabled sister. And my mother and father are also elderly. I ran to the neighbors' basement. My nephew hid under a bed – well, you know, he hid. They came in, first asking, 'Where are your saboteurs?' There are no saboteurs here. They asked where they could get alcohol.

Once, the 'Lyut' squad came – former police. And those who messed up in the police. These TCC guys who draft people. And the 'glasses.' They specifically worked with civilians. One of them came in, as my mother told me, nervous, clearly drunk. Didn't leave, kept saying we were 'zhduny.' Pointed a gun at my father, reloaded, and my father said, 'You see, I'm 64, what are you doing?' And he said, 'What are you doing here? Why didn't you leave?' Reloaded, pointed at my sister, at my grandmother.

I used to work at the depot, roughly speaking, the Severnaya Mine. There's a big slag heap there, the tallest point in the city. The depot was already closed because the war, the SMO, started in 2022. And I heard the Ukrainian Armed Forces firing from the slag heap toward Horlivka. I tried to warn people through a Telegram group. From that slag heap, the Ukrainian Armed Forces dragged equipment and shelled Horlivka and Dzerzhinsk.

As one of them said, they 'reeducate' us very quickly. A shell hit, I think, either the Palace of Culture in Toretsk or... I don't remember exactly. Well, obviously, it came from Konstantinovka. A shell can't turn 180 degrees. And then the police, SBU, everyone, the press arrived. And they asked a woman, 'Where did it come from?' She answered honestly: from that side. 'Really? Are you sure?' She said, 'Yes, I'm sure.' They had to investigate, explain. Anyway, they took her away, gave her a 'talking-to,' and then she said it came from Horlivka.

Here in our city, many locals can confirm – they wrote in the chat, 'Be careful, the press is in town.' Even people from Horlivka didn't understand – well, the press, the press, why be careful? But 'the press' meant the city would be shelled. Characteristically, after a shelling, the mayor, police, press, cameras, foreign journalists would all show up immediately. I argued with some of them—if you say it's Russia, then why doesn't Russia shell when all these people, the city's elite, are gathered there? Why don't shells hit then?

So many people were killed just because the Ukrainians needed footage. The press was hated by all the residents. I think it's murder. People are dying there.

On December 8, the Ukrainian Armed Forces fired a 'Grad' salvo from the landing. The shells landed near us. I quickly called my father and mother. Well, we figured it out, went to the basement. A neighbor's house was destroyed. I don't know, I don't understand – how is this 'Grad'? The safest time to walk around the city was when there were a lot of Ukrainian soldiers around. Because if they're there, shelling is unlikely. But when they're gone – they're like rats, you know – expect a strike. If the Ukrainian soldiers aren't around, expect their shelling.

Ukrainian soldiers told us there were Poles in the city. Polish soldiers were stationed behind some Ukrainian fortifications. They just shelled the city. You could even see the trail, hear it coming from that side. There were many cases like that. Like when they shelled the central market. People heard the salvo from the slag heap of the Dzerzhinsky mine and how it hit the microdistrict then. My father's acquaintance died there. So many died from Ukrainian shelling.

One morning, we had breakfast. And then – a click, either from a 'Baba Yaga' or another drone – and a direct hit on a private house. There was already a hole straight through; we couldn't do anything. Well, that's it, we packed up. My father knew the way a bit. First, my mother. A drone dropped a bomb. And the bastard was still flying, watching. We started running out of the house. My mother knelt before the drone, crossing herself. 'Look, we're leaving, we're peaceful.' It danced in the sky above us. We all gathered – my disabled sister, a 90-year-old woman, also bedridden. We put them on a regular wheelchair. We made it to the microdistrict. The drone must have been tracking us. It was open there; you could see it was a column. Although we were told not to leave in columns. We walked because we wouldn't abandon the sick. We'd just entered the basement – shelling started."

**19**

**Kiselyov Konstantin Petrovich (60 years old),  
victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)**

"We changed residences three or four times. The Ukrainian Armed Forces would destroy one house – we'd move to another. Well, they were probably firing self-propelled artillery. The Ukrainians were shooting; only Ukrainian troops were there.

And our house was shelled from a 'Bogdan' vehicle. The house was on the corner. And they drove around from both sides, firing – with a grenade launcher and a heavy machine gun.





They dropped incendiary bombs on one house. Wife went out to help – a disabled man lived there. Well, the wife went out to ask if he needed help. He yelled, 'Get away from here, they'll kill you.' Well, Sergei died – he was nowhere to be found after that. And his wife was wounded.

A shell from a Ukrainian drone hit her. Wounded her in the leg. Russian troops weren't there yet. And they killed our neighbor. They say Lyuba lived in that house where we moved her. And, well, maybe she argued with them or something, I don't know. But the fact is, they killed her. Just shot her. There were cases where they didn't evict people but warned, 'We'll destroy your house anyway, better leave.' Then they destroyed it.

A Ukrainian mortar soldier told us himself. He asked us for water. We gave him two bottles. After that, we moved from that house to another. And the Ukrainian Armed Forces destroyed it. Burned it down."

20

**Ostrikov Mikhail Semyonovich (64 years old),**  
victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)



"Three women were sitting in the yard, talking. Well, nothing foreshadowed trouble, as they say. Then – bang, everything. We couldn't tell where it came from.

One woman managed – she must have heard it – and she dropped to the ground.

But one neighbor and my mother-in-law – well, my mother-in-law was already hard of hearing, an elderly woman – and the neighbor. They didn't have time to hit the ground.

The neighbor was shredded by shrapnel in the chest; some fragments were still there. My mother-in-law's right arm was hit by shrapnel.

From the Ukrainian side. I don't know what's in their heads, God knows. I only know one thing: when the press came to town, everyone knew – expect shelling, expect attacks, expect anything, anywhere. And that's what happened.

As soon as they arrived, after a certain time, shells started coming from the Ukrainian side. And they hit hard."

21

**Ostriкова Lyudmila Grigoryevna,**  
victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)

"There were so many unstable people in the Ukrainian Armed Forces; we were very afraid of them. So many were drunk. It was scary to even go outside. They settled in, tried to live near people, near civilians. We understood why they did this. They used us as cover. Many people couldn't take it and just left because of this.





When Russian troops weren't here yet, we had shells hitting our village. I'm not a military person, but I clearly heard the shot. One, two, three – and impact.

One, two, three – and impact. Well, I don't know the distance, but it was very close.

And Ukrainian soldiers lived in a Roma house. Not a single shell hit there.

Where the Ukrainians were, there were no hits. Where the civilians were, the Ukrainian Armed Forces tried to hit, to confuse people, to make them leave.

When a shell came from Russia, we knew Ukrainian troops were stationed there, and we rejoiced. Hurray, it's ours.

My daughter shouted, 'Hurray, it's ours.' They hit precisely, well done. Exactly on Ukrainian positions. These guys are great."

22

**Makhnenko Natalya Ivanovna (62 years old),**  
victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)



"We suffered terribly from the Ukrainian military. They burned down one of our houses. My husband and I moved to Grandma's. And we lived there quietly, bothering no one.

And the Ukrainians dropped these bombs from drones. They'd drop them around, around, around. Like a psychological attack.

Someone would run out. And once, my husband and Grandma, we ran out, started running. To the neighbors.

And a drone dropped a bomb, and it hit my husband's leg. They fell – Grandma too. We with the neighbor somehow stopped, hid a bit. The drone dropped, and it shattered his leg. I ran up, and he was screaming. Grandma was lying there. I thought she was gone. She was 98 – his mother.

And he yells, 'Run, get away.' I grabbed her into this garage. He was bleeding; I dragged him anyway. And just as I got him in, the door was blown off. The drone dropped another bomb.

And he was bleeding, and we made it to the neighbors to wait it out; they were in the basement there. And we ran there, and he saw drones flying, chasing us.

We ran into the basement, quickly went down; there was a shed above us.

And we heard them start dropping bombs on the sheds around us. And then the Ukrainian 'Baba Yaga' came. The 'Baba Yaga' is terrifying.

It buzzes like a jet. And it drops these bombs. And they started dropping them, breaking this shed, and they broke it.

There were ten of us there. We started bandaging him quickly, wrapping him up. The Ukrainian Armed Forces kept shelling until they set it on fire. Not just damaging it. No, until it burned. And the shed above us caught fire. We panicked. We were trapped. We started screaming.

There were two other men there. They started breaking something. And they made a small opening. And we started crawling out. It was burning all around. And we got out. Grandma got stuck. Her sleeve. I pulled her. It was burning. I was burned all over.

And I pulled her, couldn't do it, and my husband was still in the basement. And I panicked: 'Get out, get out.' How do I get out? I couldn't, it was panic. I yanked her, pulled her out. And then grabbed him by the hand, I pulled him by the hand. I didn't even feel that I was burning. Everything at the neighbors' burned down. And then we barely made it to our shack. Grandma – such stress, she's 98, she didn't understand where, what. And we barely got her to this little room. What else? Nowhere to live. Well, let's at least live here, in this shack.

We all lived there together. We'd heat it until three o'clock; we were afraid of thermal detection because at night, thermal imaging would show the Ukrainian Armed Forces where we were. We'd heat the stove until three, then stop, cook something, whatever. Well, somehow, we managed. And then the Ukrainian Armed Forces started dropping bombs there. We heard one land nearby, then they started hitting the sheds, the sheds started burning. Then the house – it was already damaged – they started hitting it. And they started dropping bombs on the roof. And then their drone dropped an incendiary bomb. We were lucky it didn't ignite right away. We ran out and ran. We didn't know where to go.

The neighbors also had a little house, like a summer kitchen. We started running there, and as we were running, the drone must have dropped another one. By the time we got there, it was already burning. We couldn't put it out with water or anything. They shelled peaceful people, maybe out of spite because we stayed. They called us separatists, 'you're waiting for the Russian world.' They asked why we didn't leave. Well, they decided we were traitors, so we had to be destroyed, we were probably unnecessary. Why would they need us in Ukraine?

My husband died from these shellings. From a drone. It happened on my birthday, January 8. And we treated him for a month and a half. We'd already moved to this shack, and they were there too. We lived like moles in the dark – we didn't turn on the lights, sat in the cold, freezing. And he was there. Well, what could we do? Bandaged him. And then Grandma, 98 years old, died – she couldn't take it. She just asked, 'What about the house?' I said, 'Nothing's left, everything's burned.' And she just gasped. I think that finished her. And she died on the 28th. And we buried her. And the Ukrainian drone flew over, saw we'd buried her, and started bombing our shack. And we sat there and said, 'We have to leave.' Because tomorrow, it might burn it down. That's it, we have nowhere else to live. Everything's burned. And we put my husband on a wheelchair – two neighbors, there were ten of us, women. And we left, waited for fog. We walked along the road. And the Ukrainian drone flew and dropped a bomb. You see us walking. We're peaceful. A man in a wheelchair. They killed my husband."

**23**

**Belousov Alexander Sergeyevich (20 years old),  
victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)**

"A Ukrainian drone was following us. When we left, Grandma knelt and started praying for the drone not to kill us.

There were cases where they killed, wounded. In 2023, my grandmother was sitting outside with her friend. And there was a loud shot, and suddenly – impact. A shot, and a second later, a shell landed. Wounded my grandmother and the neighbor.





My grandmother is 83 – Gorban' Nina Pavlovna. They were wounded in the chest and neck. The neighbor in the chest, Grandma in the arm. The neighbor was the same age – they're peers. The Ukrainian Armed Forces shelled the center very often. There were many wounded there. It was the Ukrainians shooting. We heard the shots, the salvos, very close. Russia was far away.

The Ukrainians wanted the residents to evacuate quickly from the city to Ukraine. And we told them, 'This is our home, we'll live here, we don't want to go anywhere.' They threatened us. The Ukrainian Armed Forces came and said, 'What are you doing here? Leave, we'll level your city to the ground.' Called us 'zhduny.' They threatened us. Even my neighbor – when she came back from the hospital, Grandma and the neighbors were sitting there, and Ukrainian soldiers came and said, 'Get out of here, we'll flatten your city.'"

24

**Rakitskaya Natalya Viktorovna,**  
victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)



"They killed people. They killed my cohabitant, Roman. He was born in 1981. So he was 40. This happened on December 25, 2023. I came home from work, and there he was, lying there. I ran to the police; they came, started checking how many shots there were, the walls. They found that Ukrainian soldier. They were nearby, living there. I just asked him, 'Why did you kill him? I want to ask you, why did you kill him?' He didn't answer.

The Ukrainian military destroyed the city. With drones, they destroyed and shot, things flew. Ukraine shelled the city. Burned everything. I went into my yard – the kitchen was gone, burned, you couldn't even tell it was there. No fence, no house, no roof. The whole street burned, all the houses."

25

**Cherkasova Natalya Sergeyevna (75 years old),**  
victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)



"Our khutor, the village of Druzhba, or the Ryzhkov farmstead – the homeland of Nikolai Ivanovich Ryzhkov. I'm actually his second cousin. They started shelling us around the end of June. When they reached my house, all three of my beloved houses were burning. My sister's house, Grandma's house, and my two-story house. It was terrifying. I lived in Grandma's house in the middle. When I was carrying things out, I decided to take the icons because they're very valuable, from the 17th-18th century. Passed down through generations. The burns were unbearable. The Ukrainian Armed Forces killed Kamykhin Sasha and Tutovoy Volodya, my brother I was with, with drones."





**Pashkova**  
**Nadezhda Konstantinovna**



**Simonova**  
**Lyubov Nikolayevna**



**Zbitnev**  
**Anton Anatolyevich**

**26 Pashkova Nadezhda Konstantinovna (78 years old),**  
**victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)**

"The Ukrainian Armed Forces completely destroyed our house. They say it was the Ukrainian Nazis shooting. Then they set it on fire. We crawled in the basement. It was so hot – 60 degrees, we were suffocating. There were 11 people in the basement; three died. They carried them to another staircase; it hadn't burned. They put the dead there. They died – the air was so bad during the fire. They were old grandmothers."

**27 Simonova Lyubov Nikolayevna (66 years old),**  
**victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)**

"The Ukrainians burned all the houses with drones. We don't have a single house left. Not one intact house. So many wounded.

Recently, before we left, so many small drones hit a house. A family lived there, and the house was destroyed. And Grandma ran to get something. Her leg was wounded.

They shot at peaceful people – if we stayed, it meant we were separatists, so they had to destroy us. Because we're on this side. Waiting for Russia. That's it. Just for that."

**28 Zbitnev Anton Anatolyevich,**  
**victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)**

"In 2022, when I was still working, they kept saying journalists were coming, journalists were coming. A shell hit the microdistrict, and immediately, in 5 minutes, 3 minutes—journalists, right away a report that it flew over the center.

And in mid-January 2025, artillery or mortar shelling started from the Ukrainian side—I don't really understand. And it happened so suddenly, I didn't expect it. A shell landed, and shrapnel flew, and I was hit in the leg at that moment."

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**Vasys Nikolay Nikolayevich (67 years old),**  
victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)



"We lived in the basement for six months, from summer. Houses burned closer and closer. Eventually, it would be our turn. Then the neighboring house was destroyed.

Ukrainian drones dropped bombs or mines. One house burned, then another, getting closer to us. Then either a 'Smerch' or 'Hurricane' hit. Well, destroyed it. And then my daughter's house nearby also burned. Oh, and earlier – the 'Baba Yaga.' We heard it hovering over the house. They drop anti-tank mines. We heard a thud – it dropped something. And in the morning, we went out – an anti-tank mine was lying by the doorstep. Must not have exploded because the roof was made of slate. Must've been a dud. Round, anti-tank.

Russia wasn't close yet. First, the Ukrainians shelled the yard, then the shed, then one day we saw they started dropping mines, bombs on the house. And I told my brother, 'Let's run, otherwise they'll kill us today, day or night.' Drones were constantly flying, day and night. You'd go out at night – buzzing, buzzing, not a minute without drones. And so, we had to run in broad daylight. We ran into the neighbor's house, and as we ran out, grabbed two bags, and then – boom – it hit that neighbor's house. While it flew off to reload, we ran across the street, stopped to catch our breath. But another Ukrainian drone followed us.

We dropped the bags, started running light. Well, it hovered over us. First, we hid under a tree; it hovered. They had an old tank dug in, a big emplacement. I fell in there, and it dropped one grenade on the house and one on me. I rolled away from it; it exploded. Three grenades dropped on me. And on my brother, I think, one. He saw we had no weapons, nothing. Not in uniform. We were in padded jackets. We slept in the field. We slept in padded jackets. Wearing three pairs of pants. To not freeze. That's how we ran. Didn't even change. Three grenades on me, right near me. Wounded in the chest. I thought that was it – they'd kill me. It must've dropped all its grenades, flew off to reload, and we jumped up and ran between the houses. Not houses – just burned-out walls and tree trunks. So many died because of the Ukrainians. Whose drones were flying? Ukrainian drones. A drone dropped a mine on my brother. Well, a small one. Constantly drones, drones, drones. We were afraid to go check if people were alive. Once, we ran halfway and turned back. Because they kept dropping and dropping. Now we don't know their fate. We hope we're alive, but chances are slim."

30

**Vasys Valery Nikolayevich,**  
victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)

"The Ukrainian military immediately started destroying our village near Dzerzhinsk. They pounded it with drones day and night. Not a single minute passed without their drone in the air. Once, a drone even chased me. I was just standing there, talking on the phone. It hovered over me. I hid in a shed. It dropped a small mine. Thank God, it didn't explode. The drone saw I was peaceful. Later, my brother and I lived in the basement. There were times when we couldn't even leave the





basement to use the bathroom. The yard was destroyed, full of craters. Once at night, the 'Baba Yaga' came and dropped an anti-tank mine. It hit where the awning was, one slate. It broke the slate, and there were rags there. We were lucky it didn't explode. I never saw Russian troops then—not even passing by on the street. On February 11, we got up, crawled out of the basement in the morning. Then a Ukrainian drone flew over and started hitting the house right in front of us. First, it dropped one small mine, then a second. The corner of the house collapsed. My brother said, 'Let's run, or they'll kill us.' We grabbed our bags, ran – I wanted to take the cat too – ran to the neighbor's house. The drone saw us run there and hit it.

Then, while the drone flew off to reload, we ran to another street and waited there. We looked for moments when there were at least 30-40 seconds without drones to run. We ran across the quarry, and a drone caught up with us. One drone hovered, probably observing, and then another came. We sat under a tree, and it descended so low, so low. I heard it click – I knew it dropped something. I ran, there was an explosion, and I played dead. That drone flew away, and another came, hovering low over me, watching, watching. I thought it wouldn't notice, but later I was told it's useless – it sees everything. Another drone came, hovered over me again, and I knew it would drop again. I got up, ran – I had the cat with me, lost it. And, well, ran through the bushes, ran, it dropped two more times, then switched to my brother. I ran into a house, hid, and my brother was wounded."

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**Pavlova Tatyana Aleksandrovna (66 years old),**  
victim of crimes by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Dzerzhinsk (Toretsk)



"On November 29, the Ukrainian drones invaded. First, they hit with drones, then started dropping incendiary mixtures. They burned the house to the foundation; nothing was left. The house and shed – just a corner remained. I was wounded, left the house, and neighbors helped me. Koksovaya, 43. My husband stayed, and I never saw him again.

I was outside near the basement, and shrapnel from a drop hit my legs – one leg and the other pierced through by shrapnel. If a whole 'kamikaze' drone had hit me, I wouldn't be here. I stayed with neighbors for two weeks, and after two weeks, their house was hit.

First, two strikes broke the roof; we went down to the basement, and at night they set fire to one house and then the other, hitting right where we were sitting in the basement. Everything burned.

I managed to grab my documents, but theirs burned. There were ten of us, and one more wounded by a drone. And we had a 98-year-old grandmother. We buried her and him. The Ukrainians shelled us because we were 'traitors,' 'vatniks,' 'separatists' to them. If we hadn't left for that side, they'd have killed us. They didn't consider us human. Openly, in conversations."





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