



CHAPTER 8

The Maidan Massacre Trial Verdict, and Cover-up, Stonewalling, and Evidence Tampering

The Maidan massacre trial verdict in Ukraine in October 2023 confirmed that many Maidan activists were killed and wounded and BBC and ARD TV journalists were shot at on February 20, 2014, not by Berkut or other law enforcement but by snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations, that this hotel was controlled by Maidan activists, including a far-right-linked Maidan company of snipers, that Russian agents were not involved in the massacre, that there were no massacre orders by President Yanukovich and his police and security chiefs, and that the EuroMaidan then was an armed rebellion, which involved the massacre of the Berkut and Internal Troops. The conviction of three Berkut officers in absentia for killings of 35 out of 49 and wounding of 52 out of 172 Maidan activists on February 20 was based a fraudulent forensic examination, which reversed some 40 forensic bullets examinations and contradicted synchronized videos, testimonies of most wounded protesters, and medical and ballistic examinations. The prosecution denied that snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings massacred activists, despite de facto acknowledgment by the investigation and the trial and that most Maidan activists were shot on February 20 from the Maidan-controlled locations. It did not use ballistic experts to determine locations of shooters of most protesters even after court order.

Key evidence disappeared. Nobody has been convicted with real prison sentence for killing of all 74 and wounding all 312 Maidan activists on February 18–20, 2014, and nobody is convicted for killing of all 13 and wounding of all 190 police and Internal Troops members on the Maidan.

8.1 THE MAIDAN MASSACRE TRIAL VERDICT¹

The content of the nearly 1,000,000-word Maidan massacre trial verdict, which was issued in October 2023 by the Ukrainian Sviatoshyn District Court in Kyiv, confirmed that many Maidan activists were killed and wounded and BBC and ARD TV journalists were shot at not by Berkut or other law enforcement but by snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations. It also confirmed that this hotel was “activists-controlled” and that there was a far-right-linked special armed Maidan company in this hotel and the Music Conservatory. The verdict stated there were no Russian snipers involved in the massacre and that there were no massacre orders by then President Yanukovich or his minister of Internal Affairs. The trial verdict stated that Maidan then was not a peaceful protest but “a rebellion” which involved the massacre of the Berkut and other police members (Katchanovski, 2024; Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023).

The verdict stated that “based, even only on the testimony of the victims themselves, there was enough data to make a categorical conclusion that on the morning of February 20, 2014, persons with weapons, from which the shots were fired, were in the premises of Hotel Ukraina.” The trial decision specified that 9 Maidan protesters were killed and 23 wounded by “unknown persons,” who were not “law enforcement officers” or that there is lack of evidence of the involvement of the Berkut police, whose five members were charged for their massacre, in their killing or wounding. It noted that they were baselessly charged with killing 13 and wounding 29 Maidan activists. (Katchanovski, 2024; Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023).

The trial decision stated that at least six specific protesters were killed and others wounded not by Berkut or other government forces but by shooters from Hotel Ukraina, the Music Conservatory, and other Maidan-controlled locations or from directions of these buildings and that

¹ A part of the content of this section is republished with permission from *Canadian Dimension* (Katchanovski, 2024).

this was “the territory that was not controlled by law enforcement agencies at that time.” The verdict references to shooting of these protesters from direction of these building also in essence mean that they were shot by the snipers shooting from these Maidan-controlled buildings since there were no snipers located in between these buildings and the protesters, who were shot.

The judges and the jury explicitly stated in the trial verdict that during the massacre of the protesters the building of Hotel Ukraina was “controlled by the activists,” that these Maidan activists in the hotel were armed with hunting rifles and a Kalashnikov-like assault rifle, and that the Maidan activists shot from the hotel in targeted shooting, in particular, at the BBC TV crew, and that at least 3 Maidan activists were deliberately killed from Hotel Ukraina (Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023).

The verdict confirms that a former member of the Ukrainian parliament and far-right activist was filmed by a French TV in Hotel Ukraina as he “provides passage for activists” who are holding firearms that look like “a Kalashnikov assault rifle and a hunting rifle.”

The verdict stated that a BBC video “captures the shelling from the side of the Ukraina Hotel building of the camera crew of BBC journalists (a single shot is heard)... and in the premises of the Ukraina Hotel, an activist is recorded with an apparent “pistol-type firearm.” The decision by the judges and the jury evaluated this BBC video “as documented data from the activist-controlled building of the Ukraina Hotel in Kyiv about the targeted use by the activists of objects that, by their external features, are clearly similar to firearms, weapons of the type of hunting weapons” (Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023). As noted, the Ukrainian government investigation revealed that a deputy of the far-right Svoboda lived in a Hotel Ukraina room, from which the BBC crew was shot at and in which ICTV filmed snipers shooting the Maidan protesters in the back. A Maidan activist testified at the trial that after this shooting protesters told him that these were “our snipers” (Chapter 5).

The trial verdict confirmed the analysis of the author that a gunshot from this hotel hit a tree behind a group of Maidan activists and that two of them were killed and one wounded from Hotel Ukraina (see Katchanovski, 2023a). An edited Belgian VRT TV video of their massacre and luring by two Maidan activists to the site where they would be massacred was presented by major TV networks in the Western countries and Ukraine as their massacre by the government snipers or the Berkut police (see Katchanovski, 2023b; Video, 2023c).

The verdict also stated that the victim, “who was also in the mentioned group of activists” “was wounded in the back from the hotel,” as he testified himself, and that another victim from the same group was fatally wounded “from the upper floors of the “Ukraine” hotel.” It specified that “within the scope of this court proceeding, data on the involvement of law enforcement officers in such an injury to the victim, and even more so the accused, have not been established” and that “the gunshot wound was inflicted on PERSON_1852 [Volodymyr Zherebnyi] from the direction of the “Ukraine” hotel, that is, from the territory that was not controlled by law enforcement agencies at that time.” It stated that “this shot was aimed at a crowd of people.” The verdict also said that “fatal gunshot wounds to the body (chest and abdomen) were received by PERSON_1770 [Oleh Ushnevych] from the side of the hotel INFORMATION_161 “[Hotel Ukraina] and the area in front of it, which were not under the control of law enforcement agencies, and hence the involvement of the accused and RSP [Berkut company] fighters in them, and as a result, the victim’s death, is excluded” (Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023).

In the case of one of the wounded activists, the Maidan massacre trial verdict also ruled that “the person who fired a shot into the victim’s right thigh was on the right side of the victim, i.e., from the side of the Ukraina Hotel, as established not only by the victim’s testimony in court, but also by the forensic medical examination of his clothes No. 258-MK dated October 15, 2015, according to which one bullet entrance bullet damage was found on the back surface of the right leg of the pants that PERSON_930 was wearing at the time of the wounding, as well as the data obtained during the investigative experiment involving the victim...” (Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023).

Similarly, the verdict stated that another wounded activist testified that “shots were fired at him from the range: st. Instytutska - Hotel Ukraina...” and that a witness of his wounding (PERSON_1594) testified that “during their movement to Zhovtnevyi Palace, they felt danger from Hotel Ukraina,” and that data on the involvement of the Berkut special company members or other law enforcement officers in this wounding were not obtained in this court proceeding (Vyrok, 2023).

The trial decision specified that there is evidence of killing of at least three other Maidan activists from the Maidan-controlled locations, while the involvement of Berkut and other law enforcement is excluded or has not been proven. It cited evidence of killing of one activist from the Music Conservatory, which was the headquarters of the far-right Right

Sector-linked Maidan group of snipers, who included Svoboda activists. The trial decision confirmed that the Music Conservatory was then occupied by Maidan “activists” led by the far-right commander of this group who became the member of the Ukrainian parliament after the Maidan.

The verdict also stated that two rooms in Hotel Ukraina were shot at from “the territory controlled by “Maidan,” specifically, the Music Conservatory and the neighboring Main Post Office. But it omitted that these rooms were occupied by German ARD TV journalists and that the Main Post Office was then the headquarters of the Right Sector (see Maidan, 2023; Video, 2023f).

The trial decision also specified evidence that Ihor Kostenko was killed not by Berkut or other law enforcement but from a Maidan-controlled location. It noted that he “a few seconds before his fatal wound, together with other bystanders, watched the windows of Hotel Ukraina., and this attention, united by joint observation of the source of possible danger, did not stop on the part of all observers even after the injury of PERSON_1708, when he was already lying on the asphalt.” (Katchanovsji, 2024; Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023). The verdict stated, based on a forensic examination, that direction of his entry and exit wounds was the opposite from the one claimed by the prosecution and that there were different types of gunshots sound recorded in the video of his shooting.

The verdict confirmed the findings of the studies by the author that the first three activists were shot by pellets used in hunting before the Berkut company, whose 5 members were falsely charged with their killings, was even deployed there (see Katchanovski, 2023a). It explicitly stated that at least one of these activists was shot from the Maidan-controlled area by one of the Maidan shooters from a hunting rifle. The court decision specified that there was no evidence that the Berkut special company used hunting ammunition instead of rubber bullets in their rifles.

The trial verdict also confirmed that there was no order by Yanukovych or his government to massacre the Maidan protesters. It noted that existence of any “personal commands by of the President of Ukraine, the Minister of Internal Affairs, other officials or influential public figures” to the Berkut police regiment and the special Berkut company concerning their actions during the Maidan has not found “documentary confirmation” and that none of “the persons questioned by the court” revealed such commands or orders. The court also found that there was no proof that the Berkut received on February 18–20, 2014, orders “from the

leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to prepare for the commission of a terrorist attack and mass intentional murders” (Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023). This is crucial official acknowledgment since Yanukovych and his government were overthrown based on false blame for ordering the massacre.

In another confirmation of trumped-up and politically motivated charges against the Berkut, the decision by the judges and the jury acquitted two Berkut policemen for killing and wounding the Maidan activists. It specified that there was no evidence that they killed or wounded any activists. These two Berkut policemen returned to face the trial after their exchange to Donbas separatists. The verdict also stated that all five accused Berkut members were baselessly blamed for killing 13 and wounding 29 Maidan protesters.

This verdict along with the findings of the investigation by the Prosecutor General’s Office (GPU), comprise a *de facto* official admission by the Ukraine’s justice system that on February 20, 2014, at least 10 of the 49 killed Maidan activists and 115 of the 172 wounded were shot not by Berkut or other law enforcement personnel firing from government-controlled areas but by snipers shooting from Maidan-controlled locations, in particular, Hotel Ukraina. The verdict stated, based on the report by GPU, that 49 Maidan activists perished and 172 were wounded with firearms on February 20, 2014. In addition to verdict’s determination that 9 Maidan activists were killed and 23 wounded by “unknown persons,” who were not “law enforcement officers” or that there is lack of evidence of the involvement of the Berkut police and other law enforcement, in their killing or wounding, the government investigation admitted that one other protester and more than half of all wounded Maidan activists were not shot from Berkut-controlled sectors, and therefore did not charge anyone for their attempted murder (GPU, 2016; Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023).

Such *de facto* official admission that the absolute majority of Maidan activists were shot not by the government forces is another evidence suggesting that at least the absolute majority of the protesters were also killed by Maidan snipers since they were shot at the same time and place. But it is easier to falsely blame the Berkut for their killings because murdered people cannot testify, in contrast to the wounded, the overwhelming majority of whom testified about being shot by snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas and about witnessing snipers there.

The verdict specified that Russian agents “did not have any participation” in the Maidan massacre:

The “Russian trace” was not confirmed after examining the relevant documents. In particular, all cases of crossing the border zone by FSB officers into Ukraine, their movement around Kyiv and the region, the time and place of their stay, as well as the dates and ways they left the territory of Ukraine were investigated. This group of persons was constantly monitored and their locations were under control. Accordingly, they did not have any participation in the events on the Instytutska Street. (Maidan [2023](#); Vyrok, [2023](#))

The trial decision also confirmed the findings of the studies of the author that the Maidan massacre on February 20 started from the killing of three and wounding 39 Berkut and Internal Troops officers, who were not armed, and that the police swiftly retreated from the Maidan because of this but was then followed and attacked by the Maidan activists. The judges and the jury noted that the presence of the armed Maidan activists and the killings of the police represented evidence of the armed rebellion.

The verdict also revealed that the Maidan lawyers did not present the SITU 3D model during the trial after, as it noted, wasting court and jury time by introducing it. This is another confirmation that this model misrepresented wound locations, which match gunshot directions from Maidan-controlled buildings, to fit them to Berkut positions on the ground. This model, which was produced by a New York architecture company on the Maidan lawyers order for the trial for nearly \$100,000 dollars, was used instead to propagate disinformation in the New York Times and other Western and Ukrainian media. This model, like Maidan lawyers’ salaries and even prosecutors’ visits, was paid for by the Soros foundation in Ukraine.

The decision by the judges and jury also showed cover-up of the snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations by the Ukrainian government investigation. The verdict stated that “when the victim indicated a sense of danger from other sources, for example, the Hotel “Ukraine” (injury episodes PERSON_1387, PERSON_921, etc.), the prosecutor categorically considered this a mistake in the assessment of events.” But “the lack of evidence on the part of the prosecution of the presence of armed persons in various potentially possible places for firing weapons, which was often referred to as a basis for refuting

the statements of the victims in this regard, does not at all mean the absence of such persons in reality, especially when doubts on this occasion, dispelled during the trial by objective data, and not only by the testimony of individual victims” (Vyrok, 2023; Maidan, 2023).

The verdict noted that a wounded Maidan activist from the Volyn Region “associated himself as the bearer of information about the snipers in the windows of Hotel Ukraina, but the court is deprived of the opportunity to verify this data, and therefore use it in any way during the adoption of this verdict.” Having information about Maidan snipers in this hotel would be a rational reason as to why “according to search documents, the victim systematically avoided appearing before the investigator, his location and means of communication changed (vol. 166 a. 72–90), and he did not want to come to court” and “initially asked not to open criminal proceedings due to the fact of his injury, stated his lack of desire to support private prosecution and claims against anyone because of his injury” (Vyrok, 2023).

The verdict revealed that the prosecution did not provide any forensic expert examination of a bullet hole in a tree which was filmed by Belgian VRT TV being hit by a gunshot and narrowly missing a group of Maidan activists. This study, activists in this group in the video, and the verdict identified Hotel Ukraina as the source of this gunshot (see Video, 2023c). This is a clear case of cover-up by the official investigation of snipers in the Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina.

Concerning another instance of such cover-up, the verdict also stated that the government investigation failed to conduct very simple on-site determinations by forensic ballistic experts of the bullet trajectories and locations of the shooters in the cases of many killed and wounded protesters and did not conduct such examinations even after the Maidan massacre trial ordered it to conduct such examinations, specifically to determine if these trajectories were from the Maidan-controlled buildings. As the verdict noted, “the location of the victim’s injury, the position of his body in space at the time of injury, and forensic medical data on the nature and localization of the gunshot wound” were established by the investigation:

However, during the pre-trial investigation, this information remained unexamined by specialists in the field of ballistics in order to make incredibly simple conclusions on the ground based on such initial data regarding the specific sector of the shooting at the victim. A long (more than a year)

procedural opportunity in the form of a direct court mandate to conduct an investigative experiment remained unimplemented by the prosecution and was created for this purpose by the court during the trial. (Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023)

However, the judges and the jury convicted in absentia three Berkut officers, who were exchanged by Zelensky to Donbas separatists in 2019, for killing of 35 Maidan protesters out of 48 and attempted murder of 44 out of 80 protesters, with whose killing and wounding the Berkut members were charged. However, the analysis of the verdict and evidence shows that this part of the decision was based on tampered and misrepresented evidence and was politically motivated.

The Ukrainian courts lack independence, especially in high-profile and highly politicized cases, and often issue their decisions in such cases on directives from the presidential administration. For example, Zelensky disbanded the Constitutional Court of Ukraine because he did not like decisions that they were considering. Impartiality was especially difficult for the three Berkut policemen, who were convicted in absentia for the Maidan massacre, because they were in Russian-annexed Donbas during the Russia-Ukraine war. In addition, the trial was repeatedly attacked and threatened by far-right activists, while the trial judge was beaten by a pro-Maidan activist and perpetrators were not prosecuted in these cases of violence and intimidation. A decision by the Kyiv Court of Appeal in the appeals case of the verdict is also likely to be politically-motivated.

The verdict decision that these three Berkut officers were responsible for murder of 31 Maidan protesters and attempted murder of 44 out of 80 protesters and that the deputy Berkut regiment commander was also responsible for manslaughter of 4 protesters and wounding 8 others rested on a single forensic examination, which provided the basis of the evidence of their responsibility for the Maidan massacre in the verdict. This forensic examination of bullets 5 years after the massacre reversed results of some 40 previous forensic bullets examinations, including a computer-based examination which showed that bullets of Berkut Kalashnikovs did not match bullets from bodies of killed Maidan protesters. The verdict dismissed a single bullet match of the convicted Berkut to the killed protester in this forensic examination because it was based on a bullet piece that appeared without any trace in place of another bullet piece in a sign of evidence tampering. But it nevertheless based its decision to convict Berkut on such forensic examination.

This forensic bullet examination also contradicted synchronized videos showing that Berkut members were not shooting at specific times when almost all Maidan activists were killed and on-site investigative experiments by government ballistic experts pointing to bullet trajectories from Maidan-controlled areas. It contradicts results of forensic medical examinations showing wound directions from top, back and side, and testimonies of the absolute majority of wounded Maidan protesters and several hundreds of prosecution and defense witnesses and other witnesses concerning snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations (see Video [2023b](#), [2023d](#), [2023e](#), [2023g](#)). This demonstrates that the Berkut policemen could not physically shoot these protesters. These Berkut policemen were filmed not shooting at the specific times and at the specific directions that these protesters were killed (see Chapter 3). Bullet hole locations and wound directions show that protesters were shot not from the front and ground directions of the Berkut barricade positions in front of them but from steep directions from sides or the back that match Maidan-controlled buildings or buildings in Maidan-controlled areas.

Synchronized videos show that single match in this forensic examination of a bullet of a wounded Maidan activist to a Kalashnikov of a convicted Berkut member is clearly fabricated since this policeman, who was identified by the prosecution as Pavlo Abroskin, was filmed not shooting during wounding of this protester (Kolesnikov), who testified himself that he was shot from Hotel Ukraina. A government ballistic expert determined that this protester was shot from the top of this hotel based on bullet holes in the chair that this protester was shielding with from Hotel Ukraina snipers and his steep wound direction. Synchronized video shows that at the very time of his wounding on bridge, protesters hiding beneath the bridge pointed to snipers in Hotel Ukraina shooting protesters on this bridge (see Video, [2023g](#), 7:55).

On the basis of the same fabricated 2019 forensic ballistic examination and contrary to all other evidence, a deputy commander of the Berkut regiment was also convicted for giving a supposed order to fire indiscriminately during the evacuation of Internal Troops by the Berkut company and its subsequent retreat after one Berkut was killed and another wounded during this evacuation at 9:16am. The court deduced that such order was given because the bullets of the killed protesters in their forensic examination in 2019 matched the bullet samples from Kalashnikov assault rifles of other members of Berkut special company and because the Berkut commander was filmed coordinating the Berkut

via hand gestures. There was no direct evidence of such an order in testimonies of witnesses, accused members of the Berkut company, any written documents, recordings of the Berkut radio communications, or any other sources presented at the trial (Katchanovski, 2024; Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023).

The three Berkut policemen were also convicted based on collective responsibility for murder of 31 and attempted murder of 44 protesters since there were no matches of bullets of killed and, with the one exception, wounded Maidan activists to Kalashnikovs of these 3 Berkut policemen, videos, or other specific evidence showing that they killed and wounded these activists. The decision attributed killing and wounding of these protesters, even in cases without any matching bullets, to Berkut or unidentified police members simply because these protesters were killed in the group in about the same time and place. This was done even though the trial verdict admitted that protesters in the same groups were killed and wounded at about the same time and place not by law enforcement but by “unknown persons,” who were located in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings and areas (Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023).

For example, the verdict stated that Roman Kotliarevsky, a Maidan medic, was killed by a Berkut officer from the Berkut barricade because the bullet from his Kalashnikov matched in the 2019 forensic examination the bullet that wounded this Maidan activist. This contradicted his testimony during the investigation that he was shot from Bank Arkada and finding of a ballistic forensic expert during an investigative experiment that this medic was shot from the sector ranging from Bank Arkada to Hotel Ukraina. It also contradicted the forensic medical examinations of the top to bottom direction of the bullet, such steep angle of the bullet in an X-ray, and his position in the ARD and CNN videos of his shooting. Moreover, the German ARD video and synchronized videos show that Berkut policemen at the time of his sounding were completely behind the truck and concrete barricade and were not shooting or even aiming at his direction. All this means that contrary to the verdict, it was physically impossible that he was killed by the Berkut police and that the matching of bullets in the forensic examination, which also reversed earlier forensic bullet examinations, was false (see Video, 2023g).

The verdict used such false determination of shooting of this Maidan medic by a Berkut policeman as evidence that other activists, who were shot in the same area and around the same time, were killed and wounded

by the Berkut contrary to other evidence. For example, this court decision stated that another Maidan activist “according to the protocol of the investigative experiment dated October 20, 2015, and its appendices” “believes that he was shot from the upper floors of the far corner of Bank Arkada bank building.” It noted that “the prosecution failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the law enforcement officers, including the police officers and the accused, were involved in such wounding of the victim.” Moreover, “during a detailed examination by the court of the video recording “Kiev-20-02-14” at the time of the injury of PERSON_2015, no indisputable signs of a shot by persons who were behind the concrete barricade at that time were found” and “the prosecutor, analyzing the evidence for this episode, did not insist that the shot at PERSON_2015 was fired from the concrete barricade.” But the verdict ruled that he was wounded by the Berkut police simply because “the episode of wounding of the victim PERSON_2015 in this case is closely connected with the episode of the death of the victim PERSON_472 and the episodes of injuries of the victims PERSON_982, PERSON_886 and PERSON_2016” (Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023). In fact, the wounding of this activist in a blue raincoat was recorded in a video and it happened in the same place and around the same time as killing and wounding of Yuri Parashchuk, Kotliarevsky, and other activists by snipers in Bank Arkada in the Maidan-controlled area. (See Video, 2023a).

For example, the judges and the jury stated in the verdict that Yuri Parashchuk was killed from the Berkut barricade via a ricochet from a concrete flower box because a German ARD video with removed soundtrack showed a bullet impacting this box in front of him at about the time of his killing and a gun discharge from a Berkut Kalashnikov 3 seconds afterward. However, synchronized videos showed sounds of different gunshots at both these times, meaning that there were other shooters and the Berkut gunshot did not kill him because the time of the discharge did not match the exact time of the killing. Moreover, the forensic medical examination determined that this Maidan activist had a bullet wound only in the back of his head and from top to bottom direction, and photos and videos of his helmet showed only a bullet hole in the top back part of the helmet. Such evidence and the on-site investigative experiment show that he was killed from Bank Arkada. All this means that contrary to the verdict, it was physically impossible that he was killed via a ricochet near the ground from the Berkut barricade direction because Parashchuk was

filmed facing the Berkut barricade on the similar level and the flower box below him at the time of his killing (see Video, [2023g](#)).

The decision by the judges and the jury that the Berkut company shot the Maidan activists was reached by the majority vote without forensic ballistic examinations and contrary to wound locations in forensic medical examinations, most ballistic forensic examinations, synchronized videos, and testimonies of most wounded Maidan activists who testified during the investigation and the trial that they were shot by snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations or witnessed snipers there.

The verdict dismissed testimonies of most wounded Maidan activists during the investigation that they were shot by snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations or witnessed snipers there because many of these activists changed their testimonies during the trial. The judge and the jury admitted on the defense lawyers' request and showed during the trial as the evidence publicly available video compilation by the author of over 80 witness testimonies concerning snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas (Katchanovski, [2019](#)). However, these testimonies were also excluded as evidence from the verdict because this video compilation of testimonies, which were collected from publicly available TV reports, documentaries, and social media videos for academic studies of the author, was classified in the verdict as "a film." Similarly, it dismissed most findings by government forensic experts during the on-site investigative experiments that the Maidan activists were killed or wounded from Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings and areas (Vyrok, [2023](#)).

The decision also dismissed existence of Georgian snipers based on the absence of Ukrainian border stamps confirming presence in Ukraine during the Maidan of one of self-admitted Georgian snipers, whose recorded video testimony was admitted by the trial, even though these Georgians stated in their Italian, Israeli, and Macedonian media interviews and written depositions for the Berkut lawyers that they traveled to Ukraine during the Maidan with fake names and crossed the Ukrainian border in Kyiv without passing passport control. The verdict also dismissed the video admission by this Georgian because he described entering the Music Conservatory at the start of the massacre and exiting from Hotel Ukraina near the end of the massacre. The judges and the jury claimed that this showed that he was not present on the Maidan because of his lack of knowledge that these were separate locations. However, testimonies and media interviews of this and other self-admitted Georgian

snipers showed detailed and specific knowledge about these locations and about not then yet publicly known information about presence of father of the commander of the far-right-linked company of Maidan snipers in the Music Conservatory, their shooting from Saiga hunting version of Kalashnikov, and shooting by snipers in Hotel Ukraina before 8:00 am (see also Chapter 4).

The verdict's citations of lack of evidence to determine who killed and wounded many specific Maidan protesters in most cases were not due to the absence of such evidence but to the failure of the prosecution to provide such evidence and to the failure by the court to request from the prosecution or obtain on its own such evidence. For example, like in the case of the killing of Ihor Kostenko, the verdict noted that videos showed several Maidan activists standing near him at the time of his killing and wondering if the activists are shot from Hotel Ukraina. However, testimonies of these eyewitnesses of his killing and shooting from this hotel were not presented by the prosecution and not requested by the court. The same concerns lack of testimonies of eyewitnesses of killings and wounding of most Maidan activists even though such eyewitnesses were filmed in various videos and their names were identified in the media and social media. This was also the case with the failure to examine many videos, shields, helmets, and other crucial evidence, and lack of forensic ballistic and medical examinations. This is consistent with other evidence of cover-up by the official investigation of Maidan snipers and evidence implicating them.

8.2 COVERUP, STONEWALLING, AND EVIDENCE TAMPERING

It is striking that, more than ten years after one of the best documented cases of the mass murder in history, there is not a single person serving a real prison sentence for the mass killing of the protesters and the police on February 18–20, 2014. The prosecution for 10 years after the massacre did not charge anyone for wounding of more than half of the total wounded Maidan activists on February 20 after the investigation determined that they had not been shot from Berkut positions but from elsewhere, which implied the Maidan-controlled locations. Their testimonies were not made public at the trial. The Hromadske TV video with such admission by the prosecutor was not reported by other media and the original video disappeared from the site of Hromadske TV and was

made private on YouTube. But its archived version is still available (GPU, 2016).

The Maidan massacre trial revealed that the prosecution determined that 172 activists were wounded on February 20. Since the prosecution charged the 5 Berkut members with killing of 48 out of 49 and wounding of 80 out of 172 activists on February 20, and the verdict ruled that 9 of them were killed and 23 wounded not by Berkut or other law enforcement agencies, this means that the prosecution and the court de facto admitted that most Maidan activists were shot on February 20 not by Berkut but by snipers in the Maidan-controlled locations.

Nobody was charged with killing of a Georgian activist from the party of the former Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili on February 20, 2014. Circumstances of his death were not publicly revealed. His body was reportedly found in the Maidan-controlled area shortly after the massacre. The Ukrainian media claimed that he died because of health reasons. However, both the Maidan massacre trial verdict and a prosecutor who was representing the investigation by GPU specifically stated that he was not shot but that he “perished,” which suggests that he was killed. The self-admitted Maidan snipers from Georgia stated in their media interviews that the Maidan sniper from Georgia with the same last name was found beaten to death after the massacre. But they called him by a different first name, and it is not clear if these were different persons or the same persons if they referred to him using alias.

Similarly, over 10 years since the massacre, based on the official data from the prosecution nobody is convicted or under arrest for killing of 19 Maidan protesters, including 12 by firearms, and wounding of 120 Maidan activists on February 18 and killing 6 activists, including 3 from firearms, and wounding 20 on February 19, 2014 on the Maidan. Similarly, nobody is convicted or under arrest for killing of 4 and wounding of 63 police and Internal Troops members on February 20. Nobody was charged with killing of 8 and wounding of 113 police and Internal Troops members on February 18 on the Maidan and, respectively, killing one and wounding 14 on February 19, 2014 on the Maidan (Vyrok, 2023).

The State Bureau of Investigations of Ukraine charged Tetiana Chornovol, a prominent Maidan activist, with the deadly arson of the Party of Regions office and killing of a computer admin there during the Maidan massacre on February 18, 2014. Videos and their own admissions showed the involvement of Chornovol and far-right Maidan activists in

this arson attack (see Chapter 7). But until February 2020, the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine investigated his death as a result of a fire and not an arson attack (Tatyane, 2020).

The Prosecutor General Office since the Maidan massacre has been headed by either politicians from the Svoboda and Peoples Front parties, or close allies of presidents Poroshenko and Zelensky. The fact that leading members of Svoboda and Peoples Front parties were selected to head the Prosecutor General Office, even though these parties were accused by other Maidan activists and self-admitted Georgian members of the Maidan sniper groups of having been directly involved in the massacre suggests a cover-up and stonewalling.

Maidan victims' lawyers, who were themselves Maidan activists and were paid by the Soros foundation in Ukraine, supported the government investigation and the prosecution after initial criticism. They denied during the trial and in media interviews that there were any snipers, in particular the Maidan snipers, in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings.

One Ukrainian journalist, who headed the civic council of the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine after the Maidan, stated that the heads of the GPU investigation of the Maidan massacre had been selected by one of the Maidan leaders (Horbatyuk, 2020). Self-admitted Georgian snipers, as well as members of the Yanukovych government, alleged that this member of the Maidan leadership was one of the organizers of the Maidan massacre. He was filmed by a Ukrainian TV evacuating a Maidan protester with a rifle and a scope on February 18, when mass shooting of the police and the protesters started. The person who helped him became an aide to the Minister of Internal Affairs very soon after the "Euromaidan" (Tajna, 2015).

Similarly, the main pro-Maidan parties blocked creation of a parliamentary commission concerning the Maidan massacre during Petro Poroshenko's presidency. Deputy head of the Ukrainian parliament suggested that the top Poroshenko government officials were involved in the Maidan "events," i.e., the Maidan massacre, because of their failure to investigate them (Syroid, 2017).

An amnesty law, adopted by the Ukrainian parliament on February 21, 2014, granted blanket immunity from prosecution for Maidan participants for a variety of serious crimes, including murder, terrorism, and seizure of power. The law also prohibited the investigation of any Maidan

participant for such crimes, and specified that any evidence that had already been collected had to be destroyed.

The release from a prison to house arrest and escape from Ukraine of the Berkut company commander charged with the massacre is consistent with the cover-up. A Ukrainian journalist, who headed in 2014 the Civic Council of the GPU, stated that the Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine was involved in transferring this Berkut special company commander from Ukraine to Russia (Vilna, 2020). The same concerns the release by the courts to house arrest and subsequent escape from Ukraine of the Berkut policemen, who were charged with wounding of 33 protesters on February 18–19.

By order of President Zelensky, all five Berkut policemen, who were tried for the Maidan massacre, were released in exchange for Donbas separatists within months of the expected verdict in 2019. This decision stopped the Maidan massacre trial, which resumed only after two of these Berkut members returned voluntarily from separatist-controlled Donbas in order to prove their innocence. As noted, the Ukrainian courts lack independence, especially in high-profile and highly politicized cases, and often issue their decisions in such cases on directives from the presidential administration.

The prosecution simply denied apriori that there were any snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations and did not investigate them. Likewise, public statements by at least 12 different Maidan politicians and activists and several self-admitted Georgian snipers about involvement of Maidan snipers and Maidan leaders in the massacre were never investigated. Statements by two Svoboda members that a Western government representative had told them before the massacre that the Western governments would turn on Yanukovich if casualties among the protesters reached 100 were also not investigated, although the victims were quickly dubbed the “Heavenly hundred” (see Braty, 2017, 94).

The GPU initially stated, in March 2014, that it had identified the snipers, their locations, and even seized their weapons (Siloviki, 2014). In April 2014 the GPU issued a statement saying that the protesters had been shot with a Simonov “sniper rifle” from Hotel Ukraina (Prikaz, 2014).² Very soon afterward, however, the heads of the Prosecutor

² The Simonov rifle is not a sniper rifle but a semi-automatic carbine of the same caliber bullets as the AKM; the Simonov was generally removed from military and police service in Ukraine and was available as a hunting rifle.

General Office, the Security Service of Ukraine, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs all reversed their finding about Hotel Ukraina, and instead insisted that a special Berkut company had massacred the Maidan protesters.

An International Advisory Panel of the Council of Europe reported in 2015 that, contrary to public statements, the official investigation in Ukraine had evidence of the killing at least three Maidan protesters from Hotel Ukraina or the Music Conservatory, and that at least 10 other protesters had been killed by snipers from nearby rooftops. The report also asserted that the investigation was being stalled, in particular, by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the GPU (Report, 2015). The Prosecutor General Office reversed without any explanations their own previous investigation findings that at least three protesters were killed from Hotel Ukraina and 10 others were also killed from significant heights and charged the Berkut policemen with killings of all these protesters. The GPU did not initially charge the Berkut police company members with killings of 10 of the protesters.

While publicly denying the existence of snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations, a prosecution official and a Security Service official anonymously stated in their Financial Times interviews that “a “third force” was also firing from rooftops and from the Ukraina hotel,” and that “this group, whose identities are unknown, is alleged to have sparked the gunfire that led to the deaths — firing at both protesters and police.” But “without providing evidence, they suggest the group was “organized by Russian special forces” (No justice, 2015). The BBC journalist said that a senior investigator from the Prosecutor General Office told him that shooting from Hotel Ukraina was targeting both the police and the protesters and that the courts were constantly blocking his investigation (Video, 2023b).

As noted, the government investigation also failed to conduct a ballistic determination of the bullet trajectories by forensic ballistic experts, even after the Maidan massacre trial judge ordered such examinations, specifically to determine if these trajectories were from the Maidan-controlled buildings. A Berkut lawyer stated that the prosecution stopped these trial-ordered investigative experiments after government forensic experts determined that the first few Maidan protesters were shot from the Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina and Music Conservatory (Sudova, 2022a).

A government forensic expert revealed at this trial that he witnessed investigators using lasers to determine locations of shooters, but the prosecution omitted this crucial evidence. The investigation, with some exceptions, instead of ballistic experts used “complex” forensic examinations by medical experts to determine sectors of fire without on-site visits and any measurements and explanations provided. Forensic medical experts testified that, for the first time in their experience, they and not ballistic experts had been asked to conduct such examinations to determine the locations of the shooters. The judge even questioned the findings of their reports, in particular, their reversals of their own forensic medical examinations and of the testimonies of wounded protesters that shots had been fired from Maidan-controlled buildings and areas (Sudova, 2022b). The judges and the jury in the Maidan massacre trial verdict decision agreed with the Berkut lawyers and excluded such “complex” examinations from the evidence.

The SITU 3D model reconstruction of the killings of three Maidan protesters that was produced by a New York architecture company for the Maidan victims’ lawyers was cited by these lawyers, the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, and the media, in particular, the New York Times, as definite evidence that the Maidan protesters were massacred by the Berkut police (Euromaidan, 2018; Schwartz, 2018). In this 3D model, however, the wound locations of three protesters killed Maidan do not match the entry and exit wound locations indicated in the government forensic medical examinations of their bodies and clothes. This model changed the steep angle wounds, whose exact locations, heights, and directions were specified in forensic medical examinations, to be nearly horizontal, and moved them from the sides or back of the bodies towards the front in order to match the location of the Berkut police barricades in front of these three killed protesters. As noted, the SITU model was not presented by Maidan victims’ lawyers at the Maidan massacre trial.

The many unexplained reversals of testimonies by wounded protesters at the trial, compared to their statements during the investigation, also suggest either a cover-up or evidence tempering. The same concerns the unexplained reversal of the forensic examinations of bullets just a few weeks before the prosecution submitted its case to court and then again in 2019. These new findings, that bullets fired from Berkut Kalashnikovs had killed the protesters, reversed, without explanation, the findings of nearly 40 previous forensic ballistic examinations, including those conducted by the same experts using the same methods and conducted by the automatic computer-based IBIS-TAIS system.

A forensic ballistic examination conducted by government institute experts on the prosecution request with use of an automatic computer-based IBIS-TAIS system in January 2015 found that bullets extracted from killed protesters, trees, and Hotel Ukraina rooms did not match police database of bullet samples from any 7.62×39 caliber Kalashnikov assault rifles of members of the entire Kyiv Berkut regiment, including the special Berkut company charged with the massacre of the protesters (Sudova, 2016a).

Senior Ukrainian government officials claimed that it was not possible to conduct such matching because both the weapons used by the Berkut special company during the Maidan massacre and the Berkut bullet samples database were stolen by Berkut commanders and members who escaped with them to Crimea in order to remove such crucial evidence. However, the SBU and the GPU revealed in 2016 that the Berkut weapons cut into pieces were found in August 2015 buried in a shallow pit and in a nearby pond in a Kyiv City park. The GPU announced later that a leader and a member of a pro-Maidan organization of veteran paratroopers removed, cut into pieces, and buried the Berkut weapons.

Synchronized content analysis of the videos of the Berkut police and several such killed and wounded protesters along with locations and directions of wounds in forensic medical examination, testimonies of eyewitnesses among Maidan protesters, and on-site investigative experiments by government ballistic experts show that Maidan protesters were shot from Maidan-controlled buildings and could not have been physically shot from the Berkut positions contrary to findings of new examinations of bullets. This, in particular, concerns the Berkut policemen who were charged with the massacre.

A lengthy video by German state television (ARD) was introduced at the trial by the Maidan victims' lawyers, but it had no soundtrack during the most important part of the massacre (Nove, 2017). A Ukrainian journalist, writing on social media, said that he had filmed this video for ARD, and that the video shown at the trial had been cut. The video content and his statements both indicate that the video was filmed from the same Hotel Ukraina room rented by German television channel ZDF, and in which snipers from the far-right-linked Maidan company were filmed shooting at the Maidan protesters. Since this video simultaneously captured the killing and wounding of the protesters and the position of the Berkut police had the missing audio of the gunshots been available, it could have demonstrated that the specific times of the shooting of specific

protesters coincided with loud sound of gunshots from this Maidan-controlled hotel and not with more distant sound of Berkut gunshots from their barricade.

The Maidan massacre trial was restarted in 2016, then suspended for one year after the exchange of the five Berkut policemen to separatists by President Zelensky. Several attacks by the neo-Nazi C14 and other far-right groups disrupted and threatened the trial.

There is no such evidence of systematic cover-up by the Viktor Yanukovych government leaders and Berkut members. The Yanukovych treason trial revealed various evidence that he fled Kyiv and then Ukraine not because of his ordering the massacre but because of several assassination attempts by Maidan forces, including the far-right (Eks-okhoronets', 2014; Katchanovski, 2020). He and his Internal Troops commander volunteered to testify via video links about the massacre at the trial. Two of the Berkuts, who were exchanged to separatists, voluntarily returned from the separatist-controlled Donbas in order to continue to participate in their trial. Like Berkut policemen openly staying in Ukraine and not hiding or leaving Ukraine after the Maidan massacre until they were arrested and charged with the mass murder, these actions do not suggest cover-up or stonewalling of the investigation on their part.

A Ukrainian court denied requests by former Ukrainian President Yanukovych to testify via a video link in a court hearing concerning a prosecution request to arrest him for the Maidan massacre. His testimony via video link as a defense witness in the Maidan massacre trial in Ukraine in 2015 was postponed because the trial deliberations were blocked by far-right activists. Such testimonies would not be consistent with cover-up by Yanukovych, but their blocking and stonewalling provides another evidence of cover-up by the far-right.

Similarly, the Berkut special company's commander and 4 other Berkut officers were arrested well after the massacre and charged with this mass killing. It would be irrational that they would remain in Ukraine and not hide from the prosecution if they were the killers. Similarly, it would be irrational for the two of them to return to Kyiv and face trial after they were exchanged to Donbas separatists by Zelensky, if they were the killers. It would be rational for the other members of the special Berkut company to flee from Ukraine after they learned that their fellow Berkut members were arrested, charged, and tried with the murder that they did not commit in order to avoid the persecution. It was similarly rational that the Berkut special company commander escaped from Ukraine after

he was released from the detention. The same concerns members of the Yanukovych government and his police and Security Service of Ukraine chiefs and commanders.

Key pieces of evidence of the massacre on February 20, 2014, have simply disappeared while they were under the Maidan opposition or Maidan government control or in the possession of the GPU. This includes almost all shields and helmets of killed and wounded protesters (bullet holes in them could have clearly pointed to the locations of shooters), many bullets extracted from the bodies of protesters and police, from the trees, soil, and flower box and at the Maidan buildings have disappeared. Some trees with bullets and/or bullet holes in the area were cut down, including at the request of the prosecution. The prosecution only in 2018 requested a private contractor to collect bullets from the walls of Hotel Ukraina (Korrespondent, 2018). They were not included in the 2019 forensic examinations, which was cited by the Maidan massacre trial verdict as the evidence to convict in absentia the three Berkut members for killing and wounding the Maidan activists.

Maidan activists were filmed collecting bullets from the ground and the flower box, and these bullets were missing from forensic examinations of the bullets. For example, a Maidan activist stated that he collected the bullets on the site of the massacre (UKRLIFE.TV, 2014). He was filmed in a gas mask calling the Maidan protesters to go to the site where they would be massacred and then he was filmed going to Hotel Ukraina along with the far-right-linked group of snipers (see Video, 2023c). The prosecution and a Maidan victims' lawyer claimed that they were not able to identify him even though he gave in the documentary his full name and the name of a village in the Lviv Region that he came from.

The Maidan massacre trial also revealed examples of evidence tampering. Bullets, allegedly of those killed and wounded protesters, appeared without any chain of custody documentation, or disappeared, changed size, shape, and packaging. For example, the Maxym Shymko autopsy report listed three gray and one yellow bullet fragment, but in the forensic ballistic examinations, a new yellow bullet piece of much larger size replaced one of gray pieces. This new bullet piece was then matched to a Berkut Kalashnikov, reversing multiple previous forensic examinations, without any explanation. This newfound bullet was the only piece of evidence linking a Berkut policeman, who was exchanged to Donbas separatists and has been tried in absentia, to the shootings (Sudova, 2022c). The forensic medical examination, meanwhile, showed that the protester involved had been shot from a steep angle.

A prosecutor said that there were about 100 bullets extracted from bodies of killed and wounded Maidan protesters. But only these 24 bullets were identified during the investigation in forensic ballistic examinations (GPU, 2016). Information about most of the unidentified bullets was not revealed publicly suggesting a cover-up.

Ihor Zastavny and another Maidan activist stated that the prosecution informed them that they lost bullets extracted from their bodies (Slidchi, 2015). The Maidan massacre trial verdict noted that the bullet that wounded Zastavny was a hunting bullet, and based on this evidence ruled that he was not wounded by the Berkut police, whose members were charged with his attempted murder (Vyroky, 2023). This means that five Berkut members were falsely charged and tried for his wounding. This shows trumped-up charges and a cover-up by the investigation of shooters with hunting weapons, which match videos and photos of Maidan activists with such firearms.

Similarly, the trials and testimonies revealed that a handgun bullet that killed Oleh Ushnevykh disappeared and reappeared during the investigation, and its shape and its gunshot marks were different during different forensic examinations by ballistic experts (Sudova, 2016b). Since such changes are physically impossible on their own, they suggest a cover-up and evidence tampering. The State Bureau of Investigation of Ukraine charged in 2020 an Omega machine-gunner with killing from his handgun a Maidan protester and wounding another during the Maidan massacre. This was a clear case of trumped-up charges and cover-up since the charges disregard basic physics, common sense, and testimonies of Maidan eyewitnesses and the wounded protester. The charges mean that Ushnevykh was shot in his abdomen by a bullet, which had to go, contrary to basic physics and common sense, through a thick concrete wall without leaving any signs in the wall because videos show that he was shot while he was shielded behind this wall from the Omega and Berkut positions on the ground in front of him (Video, 2023a). The Omega member was released by the court. As noted, the prosecution also charged Berkut members with killing of Ushnevykh. But the Maidan massacre trial verdict also stated about physical impossibility of his killing from the government forces positions and both a government forensic expert during the on-site investigative experiment and the verdict determined that he was killed from a handgun from the Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina. This means that the charges against the Berkut and Omega officers for his murder were trumped up.

Volodymyr Pastushok stated at the Maidan massacre trial that when he testified about witnessing the Maidan snipers in Hotel Ukraina to the investigators from the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine in 2014, they laughed at him and his testimony “disappeared” from the investigation files (see Video, [2023c](#)).

The failure by the prosecution to investigate, identify, and prosecute snipers, whose coordinated shooting on command was recorded in intercepted radio communication, is also consistent with the cover-up of Maidan snipers (see Video, [2023a](#)).

With the partial exception of a blue helmet of Holodniuk, the investigation and the trial did not present any expert examinations of bullet holes in helmets and shields of the killed and wounded protesters. A Berkut lawyer stated during the trial that no forensic ballistic expertise of the Holodniuk’s helmet was conducted. A video showing the bullet holes in the white helmet of Roman Huryk was made public for the first time during the trial. Pro-Maidan veterans of law enforcement, who filmed his helmet on the killing site on February 21, 2014, pointed locations of these bullet holes and identified the entry and exit holes. The video showing these bullet holes was shown during the Maidan trial (Sudova, [2016c](#)). Locations of two bullet holes in his helmet and his position at the moment of the killing in Zelenyi Front video point to a shooter in the green Arkada Bank building and not to the Berkut barricade. These bullet holes are located at a steep vertical angle from Bank Arkada direction (see Video, [2023a](#)). A Berkut lawyer during the examination of the Huryk case on July 21, 2016, also pointed these locations of the bullet holes and their direction pointing towards Bank Arkada (Sudova, [2016d](#)). This crucial evidence was not made public until the trial.

The evidence of sniper positions, as reported by the head of the Maidan Self-Defense Andrii Parubii, found in Hotel Ukraina are also missing, as are the Kalashnikov bullet boxes, shown by Svoboda activists to Guardian journalists during their investigation of Hotel Ukraina (Traynor & Salem, [2014](#)).

Many online streams and web camera recordings of the Maidan from the early morning of February 20 also disappeared immediately after the massacre, along with security camera recordings from Hotel Ukraina, Bank Arkada, and other Maidan-controlled buildings.

The head of the GPU special department in charge of the Maidan massacre investigation stated that a security camera from Bank Arkada automatically stopped recording just before the start of the mass killing

in front of this building and resumed recording immediately after because there was no movement there (Telekanal, 2016). This explanation lacks face validity. A Maidan victims' lawyer stated instead that Bank Arkada security camera recording was destroyed after it was viewed (Hromadske, 2017). Savchenko stated that she learned during her testimony concerning the Maidan massacre that other such video recordings of this massacre disappeared.

The first Prosecutor General of Ukraine appointed by President Zelensky, Ruslan Ryaboshapka, admitted that the investigation of the Maidan massacre and other Maidan crimes had been sabotaged, and that a significant part of the evidence had disappeared during prior investigations (Chastyna, 2020). Similarly, Zelensky soon after his election as president in 2019 stated that the Maidan massacre case was the most complex in Ukraine with "lost evidence and documents," no witnesses, and that the massacre sites were cleaned (Chyzyk, 2020).

Investigations of the massacres of the police and the protesters were separated even though they happened on the same days and in the same places. The investigation also ignored similarities of killings of protesters with killings of policemen on the Maidan on February 18–20, in particular, by pellets and other hunting ammunition and the same caliber 7.62×39 bullets. The government investigation did not even officially consider a version of the killing of both police and protesters by Maidan shooters, specifically far-right-linked shooters. There were no forensic examinations with comparisons of bullets extracted from bodies of the police and the protesters in spite of various evidence that they were shot by same groups of snipers.

Nobody is convicted or arrested for killing and wounding the police despite confessions in the media and social media by several Maidan snipers and forensic ballistic examinations confirming them. Kyiv court decisions revealed that the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine investigated the leader and members of the Right Sector and "Warriors of Narnia," a neo-Nazi unit, for their suspected killing and wounding of the Interior Troops servicemen and the police during the Maidan massacre. They were also investigated for suspected involvement in seizure of weapons in the police headquarters in Lviv Region and their delivery and use against the police during the Maidan massacre. Other court decisions revealed a similar investigation of a leader and members of Sokil, a youth affiliate of far-right Svoboda Party, Bratstvo far-right party, and other unidentified Maidan activists for their suspected involvement in the killing and wounding of the Interior Troops servicemen and the Berkut police during the Maidan massacre (see, e.g., Ukhvala, 2016).

The commander of the far-right-linked Maidan company, who along with several members of his company, publicly admitted in the media interviews shooting the police from the Music Conservatory and was filmed along with snipers from his company in Hotel Ukraina during the massacre of the protesters, was not even interrogated by the GPU. He threatened from the Maidan stage to use weapons to overthrow Yanukovych by blaming him for the Maidan massacre and also admitted that his company forced members of the Ukrainian parliament to participate in the votes to dismiss Yanukovych and his government from power and to elect the Maidan opposition leaders in their place (Kovalenko, 2014). The GPU also did not interrogate members of his far-right Maidan company, with few exceptions, even though it obtained a list of their names and places of residence.

There was an open cover-up of this group of Maidan snipers by Yuri Lutsenko, a member of the Maidan leadership, who was appointed the Prosecutor General of Ukraine with then US Vice President Joe Biden approval. He personally interfered in 2018 in the court hearing and changed the prosecution charges of premeditated murder of two Berkut police officers against Ivan Bubenchyk into attempted murder charges even though this sniper publicly admitted in the Ukrainian media interviews killing two Berkut officers. Bubenchyk was not detained by the court and escaped from Ukraine with similar help. The commander of this far-right-linked group of Maidan snipers admitted in his Ukrainian media interview in 2020 that Lutsenko also personally interfered in the investigation of his involvement in the massacre of the police and Internal Troops and ordered the prosecutor to hide the investigative case and not charge him (Gordon, 2020). Lutsenko stated from the Maidan stage on February 19, 2014, that Maidan opposition would bring and use against the government forces weapons, which were seized by the Maidan activists in Western Ukraine after storming and seizing headquarters and bases of the police and the Security Service of Ukraine (Espresso.TV 2014). There were no investigations or charges against both of them during the presidency of Volodymyr Zelensky.

Berkut lawyers throughout this trial and in closing arguments also stated that there is no evidence that the Berkut policemen, who are charged with the massacre, massacred any specific Maidan protesters. They stated based on testimonies of dozens of wounded Maidan protesters, defense and prosecution witnesses, videos, on-site investigative experiments, and medical and ballistic forensic examinations, that snipers

in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings and areas shot both the police and the protesters. The Berkut lawyers suggested that key evidence, such as bullets and the last few forensic ballistic examinations, which reversed results of some 40 previous forensic ballistic examinations, was tampered with (Sudova, 2022c, 2022d).

The former commander of the 26th company of the Maidan Self-Defense, who was in March-August 2014 an adviser to the Maidan head of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (Andrii Parubii), stated that the Ukrainian government investigation covered up the firing positions of snipers in Hotel Ukraina, Horodetsky Street, and other locations and that trees with bullet holes, which could have showed these positions, were cut. This former senior Maidan Self-Defense commander said that the investigation of the Maidan massacre was disrupted at the level of the leadership of the Prosecutor General Office, in particular, Oleh Makhnysky, the Prosecutor General from Svoboda party, and Yuri Lutsenko, the Prosecutor General from the Poroshenko party, who also were members of the Maidan leadership.

He said that the government investigation failed to identify those who ordered and organized the Maidan massacre and that the publicly announced part of the trial verdict, which convicted three Berkut policemen in absentia for the massacre of the Maidan protesters and did not mention snipers in the Maidan-controlled locations, was “unjust,” “lying,” and “covered up the truth.” The former Maidan company commander and adviser to the head of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine after the Maidan stated that those who ordered and organized the Maidan massacre use the Berkut policemen, who were investigated and convicted for the massacre, as a shield to cover up their own involvement in the massacre. He said that Berkut policemen during their brief deployment near Zhovtnevyi Palace until their own member was killed there, were shooting in front of the Maidan protesters, while the Maidan stage was ordering the Maidan protesters to advance there for no apparent rational reason. He stated that there have been such cover-up and fabrication because the snipers, who massacred the police and a significant part of the Maidan activists, were linked to the Maidan opposition, which needed such “sacred victims” in order to gain power (SVII, 2019, 1:37:45; 2023).

Asavalyuk, the ex-coordinator of the special forces of the Internal Troops testified at the Maidan massacre trial that his testimony for the investigation that Maidan snipers started shooting first and that they

massacred Berkut and Internal Troops on February 20 not on their own as a group but as a planned action by the Maidan leadership was omitted from protocols of his interrogations as a witness (Sudova, [2021](#)).

A Yanukovych lawyer said that the judge in the Yanukovych treason trial refused to hear a testimony and other evidence from Andrii Artemenko, an ex-member of the Ukrainian parliament from the pro-Maidan Radical Party that specific Maidan leaders organized groups of snipers to shoot both the police and Maidan protesters during the Maidan massacre and that a sniper was captured by Maidan protesters but was released by Maidan leaders. This former member of the Ukrainian parliament and senior Maidan activist stated that the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine has refused to hear his testimony about snipers in Maidan-controlled locations and did not interrogate the Right Sector leadership about the massacre and that the Prosecutor General refused to investigate his evidence of the Maidan massacre (Chapter [4](#); Video, [2023b](#)). The Prosecutor General Office and a Maidan victims' lawyer asked the Maidan massacre trial not to allow his testimony via a video link from the US. This deputy (Artemenko) was one of Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc leaders in Kyiv before the Maidan and a Right Sector sponsor in Spring 2014. He lives in the US and reportedly testified about involvement of the current Ukrainian government leaders in the Maidan massacre to the US grand jury in the Russiagate case.

Similarly, Davyd Zhvania, a member of the Maidan leadership and the head of a committee of the Ukrainian parliament during the massacre and the former associate of Poroshenko after the Maidan, stated that his requests to the State Bureau of Investigations of Ukraine and the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine to launch an investigation based on his statements about involvement of the Maidan leaders in the Maidan massacre and also their and his own involvement in other serious crimes during the Maidan and to interrogate him were stonewalled for a long time. The Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine during the Volodymyr Zelensky presidency refused in 2020 a request by a member of the parliament from the Zelensky's Party to open a criminal investigation case against Maidan leaders in order to investigate statements by Zhvania concerning their involvement in the Maidan massacre and other false-flag cases of violence during the Maidan (Pravda, [2020](#)).

Zhvania stated before the Russian invasion in 2022 that he returned to Ukraine and gave his testimony and other evidence to the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine. He said that he was concerned for his safety in

Ukraine because Maidan leaders can order his assassination. He was killed in mysterious circumstances in Ukraine in the frontline area during the Russia-Ukraine war (Gerashchenko, 2022).

The prosecution and Maidan lawyers claimed that the Georgian snipers are fake and are hired actors because there are no records of them crossing the Ukraine border during the Maidan. The lack of government investigation in Ukraine of the statements by five Georgians, blocking of their testimony in a Maidan massacre trial by the Ukrainian government, lack of mainstream media reporting about their bombshell testimonies, and a campaign to denounce them as fakes all suggest the cover-up.

A synchronized video compilation, which was produced anonymously by the Jus Talionis group in collaboration with Censor.net, a People's Front Party outlet, with covert funding from the Prosecutor General Office, was presented at the Maidan massacre trial by the prosecution as key evidence that the Berkut massacred the protesters. In 2017, the Prosecutor General of Ukraine admitted in his Facebook comment that his government agency funded the work of a group of anonymous "volunteers," mostly a Ukrainian graduate student, in compiling and synchronizing various videos of the Maidan massacre. Some of the People's Front Party leaders were accused by various Ukrainian politicians and Maidan activists, such as Nadia Savchenko of direct involvement in this massacre. This video compilation was heavily cited in the verdict as such key evidence without revealing who made it and who sponsored and supported it.

Because this synchronized video compilation shows simultaneously on the same screen 16 small videos, this made it difficult to discern crucial details (Jus, 2017). Such video compilation obscured that specific times and directions of Berkut shooting and specific times of killings of Maidan protesters did not coincide in the synchronized videos. This means that it was physically impossible for the Berkut policemen to shoot the absolute majority of the protesters.

Security cameras footage from Zhovtnevyi Palace, Hotel Ukraina, and Bank Arkada was not included in this compilation and not made public in spite of its importance since it showed the massacre site at the time of the massacre and because various evidence of "snipers" in these buildings.

The failure to investigate the Maidan massacre cannot be attributed to the lack of evidence or to the lack of the GPU resources. This mass killing was one of the most documented massacres in history by thousands of eyewitnesses, over one hundred of foreign and Ukrainian journalists,

thousands of videos and photos, live online streams, and radio communications. The entire department of the Prosecutor General Office was created in 2014 to investigate this massacre.

Similarly to the Maidan massacre, the Ukrainian government investigations in related cases during the “Euromaidan” found evidence that they were staged false-flag operations but covered-up these findings and failed to prosecute those responsible. The Ukrainian police closed in 2020 its investigation of kidnapping, torture, and crucifixion of Dmytro Bulatov, one of Automaidan leaders during the “Euromaidan,” because the investigation determined based on testimonies of other Automaidan leaders and forensic examinations that the crime “was absent” and could have been “staged” (Chapter 7; Sharij, 2020).

The Military Prosecutor Office in Lviv found based on forensic ballistic examinations of bullet trajectories that an elderly female protester was killed and several protesters wounded in Khmelnytskyi by another Maidan protester from the regional headquarters of the Security Service of Ukraine porch which was then occupied by Maidan protesters. However, the bullets extracted from bodies of the victims disappeared during the investigation. The Prosecutor General Office reversed this investigation as politically inappropriate and charged SBU Alfa officers for shooting the protesters.

The government investigation also determined based on forensic examinations that the first three Maidan protesters were killed in January 2014 from a few meter distances in the Maidan-controlled areas, while the police lines were several dozen meters away from the Maidan positions. The results of these forensic examinations were also reversed without any explanations, and nobody is charged with their killings (Katchanovski, 2020).

The Maidan massacre memorial proposed by the Ukrainian government would completely change the landscape and the street on the site of the Maidan massacre. The site of the massacre is to become a park with a new Maidan massacre museum. The construction of this memorial will erase any remaining evidence and make it physically impossible to conduct any more on-site investigative experiments to determine bullet trajectories (Arkhitekturnyi ND).

Table 8.1 summarizes the Maidan massacre trial verdict, and cover-up, stonewalling and evidence tampering.

Table 8.1 Summary of the Maidan massacre trial verdict, and cover-up, stonewalling, and evidence tampering

The Maidan massacre trial verdict confirmed that many Maidan activists were killed and wounded and BBC and ARD TV journalists were shot at not by Berkut or other law enforcement but by snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations	Maidan massacre trial verdict (Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023)
The verdict confirmed that Hotel Ukraina was “activists-controlled” and that there was a far-right-linked special armed Maidan company in the hotel and the Music Conservatory	Maidan massacre trial verdict
The Maidan massacre trial verdict confirmed that there were no massacre orders by Yanukovych or his Ministry of Internal Affairs	Maidan massacre trial verdict
The Maidan massacre trial verdict confirmed that there were no Russian snipers or Russian agents involved in the massacre	Maidan massacre trial verdict
The Maidan massacre trial verdict stated that Maidan on February 18–20, 2024, was not a peaceful protest but “a rebellion” which involved killings of 4 and wounding 63 Berkut and the Internal Troops members	Maidan massacre trial verdict
The verdict stated that all 5 accused Berkut members were baselessly blamed for killing 13 and wounding 29 Maidan activists. It acquitted 2 Berkut members for killing and wounding Maidan activists	Maidan massacre trial verdict

(continued)

Table 8.1 (continued)

The conviction of three Berkut officers in absentia for murder of 31 of 48 Maidan protesters and attempted murder of 44 out of 80 Maidan activists and the deputy Berkut regiment commander also for manslaughter of 4 activists and wounding 8 others was based on collective responsibility and a single forensic examination, which was conducted 5 years after the massacre, reversed results of some 40 previous forensic bullets examinations, including a computer-based examination which showed that bullets of Berkut Kalashnikovs did not match bullets from bodies of killed Maidan protesters. This 2019 forensic bullet examination contradicted synchronized videos, which show that times and directions of gunshots by Berkut members did not coincide with times and directions of killings of Maidan activists, wounds locations and directions in forensic medical examinations, on-site investigative experiments by government ballistic experts pointing to bullet trajectories from Maidan-controlled areas, and testimonies of the absolute majority of wounded Maidan activists and several hundreds of prosecution and defense witnesses and other witnesses concerning snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations. Disappearance of almost all shields and helmets of killed and wounded protesters, many bullets extracted from bodies or objects, several trees with bullets and/or bullet holes, recordings of live online streams, web cameras, and security cameras showing the massacre and the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas Cover-up and tampering with evidence such as unexplained reversals of testimonies of many wounded protesters concerning snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and reversals of some 40 previous forensic examinations of bullets. Bullets of many killed and wounded Maidan protesters without any documentation or other chain of custody appeared, disappeared, changed size, shape and packages, or were not sealed	Maidan massacre trial verdict Maidan massacre trial & investigation; media Maidan massacre trial & investigation
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Two out of five Berkut policemen charged with the Maidan massacre were released by the trial judges because of the lack of evidence. All 5 Berkut policemen were exchanged to Donbas separatists on President Zelensky order. Two of them returned to face the trial in Kyiv	Maidan massacre trial; media
For over 10 years after the massacre, nobody has been convicted with real prison sentence for killing of all 74 and wounding all 312 Maidan activists on February 18–20, 2014 on the Maidan. Nobody is convicted for killing all 13 and wounding of all 190 police and Internal Troops members and murder of a computer specialist at the Party of Regions headquarters on February 18–20 on the Maidan. Nobody is convicted for murders of 4 other police members in Kyiv and Lviv and 2 Maidan protesters in Khmelnytskyi	Maidan massacre trial & investigation; media
Far-right activists attacked and threatened the Maidan massacre trial several times	Maidan massacre trial; media

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