



## The Maidan Massacre

### 3.1 MAIDAN MASSACRE NARRATIVES AND STUDIES

The massacre of Maidan protesters and policemen during the mass “Euro-maidan” protests on February 20, 2014, in Ukraine is a crucial case of political violence. This mass killing of the protesters and the police led to the overthrow of the democratically elected and pro-Russian government of Viktor Yanukovych and gave the start of a civil war in Donbas, Russia’s military intervention in Crimea and Donbas, the Russian annexation of Crimea, and an interstate conflict between the West and Russia and between Ukraine and Russia. Russia drastically escalated these conflicts by launching its illegal invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The Russia-Ukraine war also escalated into a proxy war between the West and Russia (See Black & Johns, 2015; Hahn, 2018; Katchanovski, 2015a, 2015b, 2016a, 2016b, 2022, 2023a, 2024; Kudelia, 2016; Sakwa, 2015).

This chapter analyzes a very large amount of various evidence to determine whether the Yanukovych government, the Maidan opposition, or any “third force” was involved in the mass killing of protesters and the police.

The dominant narrative promoted by the governments and with certain exceptions the mainstream media in Ukraine and the West attributed the Maidan massacre of the protesters on February 18–20, 2014, to the Yanukovych government and his security and police forces and generally disregarded killings of the police on the same day and in the same place (See Boyd-Barrett, 2016). For instance, Ursula von der Leyen,

the EU Commission President, stated in 2023 that “Today, war is back in Europe. But for many Ukrainians, this conflict began already ten years ago. It began when peaceful protesters, just waving the European flags in Maidan Square, were shot dead by snipers” (Von der Leyen, 2023).

The official investigation by the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine (GPU) charged the Berkut police with the massacre of the Maidan protesters on February 20 on the orders of President Viktor Yanukovich and his heads of the Security Service of Ukraine and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The GPU arrested and charged two Berkut commanders and three members of this police unit with terrorism and the murder of 48 out of 49 killed Maidan protesters and attempted murder of 80 out of 172 wounded protesters on February 20 on Yanukovich’s orders.

The Ukrainian media and with a few exceptions Western media presented at face value the Maidan massacre trial verdict in October 2023 and the conviction in absentia of three Berkut policemen for the murder of 31 out of 49 of the Maidan protesters as a definite proof that they massacred all protesters. Many media misrepresented the Maidan massacre verdict as a definite proof that there were no Maidan snipers and did not report testimonies by the absolute majority of wounded Maidan protesters, videos, and forensic ballistic examinations at the Maidan massacre trial in Ukraine concerning the snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings. Similarly, they did not report parts of this trial verdict concerning the shooting of many protesters and Western journalists by snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas and the lack of evidence of the massacre order by the Yanukovich government and Russian involvement.

In contrast to the dominant narrative, Monitor, a German TV program, presented evidence of its investigation, showing that snipers were based in Hotel Ukraina and that the Ukrainian government investigation was manipulated (ARD, 2014). The BBC investigation produced similar findings and reported that snipers located in the Music Conservatory shot the police (Gatehouse, 2015).

Yanukovich along with his heads of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Internal Troops, and the Security Service of Ukraine, and Berkut commanders were charged in absentia for ordering the Maidan massacre of the protesters, but no such orders were revealed. Yanukovich, his ministers, and Berkut commanders denied that they had ordered the massacre and stated that the protesters and the police were shot by

Maidan snipers. However, they did not produce specific evidence in support of their claims (Katchanovski, 2023a, 2023b).

The Russian government and with some exceptions the media made similar claims based primarily on statements of Yanukovich, his government ministers, and self-admitted Georgian snipers. With exceptions of interviews with these Georgians, they in general did not produce specific evidence in support of their claims.

The dominant representation of the Maidan massacre in English-language, Russian-language, and Ukrainian-language Wikipedia is generally based on the dominant narrative by the Western and Ukrainian media and the Ukrainian government investigation that the Berkut police and government snipers massacred the Maidan protesters on the Yanukovich government orders. They generally excluded academic studies of the Maidan massacre (See Euromaidan, 2025; Maidan, 2025). It is revealing that there are no specific articles concerning the Maidan massacre in English-language, Russian-language, and Ukrainian-language Wikipedia.

The same Wikipedia editors, who deliberately misrepresented the Maidan massacre and whitewashed the involvement of the far right in this massacre, also smeared scholars who researched this massacre and whitewashed in various Wikipedia articles the contemporary and historical far right in Ukraine, including open neo-Nazi organizations and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, their collaboration with Nazi Germany, their ideology and leaders, their “Glory to Ukraine. Glory to the Heroes” greeting, and their involvement in the mass murder of Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians (See Chapter 11).

Such Wikipedia editors included Nangaf, Wise2 (Prohoshka, Slav70), Bobfrombrockley, Lute88, My Very Best Wishes, and Volunteer Marek. The last five were identified in various publications and online sources, respectively, as far-right Svoboda-linked activist Svyatoslav Gut, Ben Gidley, Tsetsilia Cecilia Tsyypina, Andrei Lomize, and Radek Szulga. The last two were also identified as involved in the Wikipedia’s intentional distortion of the Holocaust in Poland (See Grabowski & Klein, 2023). For example, Wise2 (Prohoshka, Slav70) attributed the Lviv pogrom by the OUN during the Nazi occupation to “Jewish collaboration” and justified antisemitism, in particular, by using “scientific antisemitism.”

Despite its intrinsic significance and major consequences, the Maidan massacre has been the central subject of only a few academic studies. Most of them found that the far-right and oligarchic elements of the Maidan opposition, in particular the Right Sector and Svoboda, were involved in

the false-flag Maidan massacre of the protesters and the police (See Hahn, 2018; Katchanovski, 2015a, 2015b, 2016a, 2020, 2023a, 2023b, 2024, 2025a, 2025b).

Ishchenko (2016, 2020), based on an analysis of a database of major protest events during Euromaidan, found significant involvement of the far right in violence but did not specifically examine the Maidan massacre. Several other academic studies have suggested that the Maidan massacre was perpetrated with the involvement of the far right (see, for example, Bandeira, 2019, 206–207; Cohen, 2018; Lane, 2016; Mandel, 2016; Sakwa, 2015, 90–92). Another study corroborated the findings of the far-right involvement in the massacre of the police and argued that the violence was initiated by the Maidan protesters, who killed and wounded many policemen and maintained, based on secondary sources, that the Berkut police then in response massacred the protesters (Kudelia, 2018).

In contrast, some studies of the “Euromaidan” attributed the massacre of the protesters to the Berkut anti-riot police or snipers from the Security Service of Ukraine and Internal Troops (See, for example, Marples & Mills, 2015). However, they were not based on a comprehensive analysis of this crucial case of political violence and uncritically accepted claims by the Maidan politicians and the Ukrainian and Western media that the government snipers from SBU Alfa and Internal Troops Omega units and/or the special Berkut company perpetrated the massacre of the protesters on the Yanukovych orders.

Some other studies, which briefly examined the Maidan massacre, relied on a model of killing three Maidan protesters. The SITU model was produced by a New York architecture company for Maidan lawyers, but the Maidan massacre trial refused to admit it as evidence. This model misrepresented the directions of the gunshots by misrepresenting the locations of wounds of these three protesters compared to their wound locations in forensic medical examinations by Ukrainian government experts for the Maidan massacre investigation and the trial (See Katchanovski, 2023a, 2023b, 2024).

This chapter combines content analysis of all publicly available videos, photos, and audio recordings of the Maidan massacre on February 20, 2014 in English, Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, and other languages with an analysis of several hundred testimonies concerning this massacre based on qualitative interview methodology. The manifest and latent content analysis covers over 2000 videos and recordings of live Internet and TV broadcasts of the massacre in nearly 50 countries, news reports, and social

media posts by 120 journalists covering the massacre from Kyiv, more than 6000 photos, and close to 30 gigabytes of publicly available radio intercepts of snipers and commanders of the Security Service of Ukraine and Internal Troops.

The analysis is also based on nearly 1000 hours of official video recordings of the Maidan massacre trial and the Yanukovych treason trial, the nearly 1,000,000 word text of the Maidan massacre trial verdict and information concerning investigations of this massacre in over 2500 court decisions in the official online Ukrainian court decisions database.

Several online video appendixes include brief relevant compilations of segments of videos of the February 20 massacre and the Maidan massacre trial. They are available on YouTube. (Video A, 2023), Video B, 2023, Video C, 2023, Video D, 2023, Video E, 2023, Video F, 2023, Video H, 2023). Numerous videos of the massacre were synchronized based on the matching visual and audio content of videos, in particular, speeches from the Maidan stage, and on time-stamped video recordings, such as recordings of live TV broadcasts, Internet streaming, and security cameras. These video appendixes also contain maps that show the locations of the government forces and buildings with snipers, locations, and times of killing and wounding of specific Maidan protesters and policemen. The locations and positions of the snipers are determined based on their videos, photos, and testimonies of wounded protesters and witnesses.

This study analyzed interviews and statements by several hundred witnesses in media and social media. Most of these testimonies are by eyewitnesses, mostly Maidan protesters, and Western and Ukrainian journalists. Since it would be in rational self-interest for Berkut officers and the Yanukovych government officials, who are charged with the Maidan massacre, to deny their responsibility whether they are guilty or not, the analysis does not rely on their testimonies.

The analysis also employs field research and photos by the author at the site of the Maidan massacre in downtown Kyiv in July 2014, and numerous visits before the massacre to the Maidan and most surrounding buildings, such as Hotel Ukraina, the Main Post Office, Zhovtnevyi Palace, Dnipro Hotel, and Kozatsky Hotel. A multimethod methodology combining content analysis of videos, audio recordings, and photos of the massacre with analysis of qualitative interviews with witnesses makes the case study and its findings much more reliable than typical scholarly studies. Specific testimonies concerning specific events, in particular, killings and wounding of specific protesters and locations of the shooters,

were corroborated by other evidence, such as other testimonies, video and audio recordings of these events, and results of forensic medical and ballistic examinations by government experts of the same specific events. The same concerns other types of evidence such as videos. In addition, the evidence is evaluated using other standard criteria in scholarly methodology, such as validity, specifically, face validity and replication.

### 3.2 VIDEO RECONSTRUCTION OF THE MAIDAN MASSACRE ON FEBRUARY 20, 2014

The content analysis of synchronized videos, photos, audio recordings, and media and social media reports shows that the cease-fire agreement was signed by then President Yanukovich and leaders of the Maidan opposition parties around midnight on February 20, 2014, was broken early in the morning of the day. The Berkut and Internal Troops units were then in standoff with the protesters on the Maidan (the Independence Square) in downtown Kyiv (Video A).

STB and 112 Ukraine TV videos show snipers covertly shooting from the Music Conservatory shortly before 8:00. A BBC investigation included photos by a Ukrainian photographer showing several Maidan snipers armed with hunting rifles and either a Kalashnikov assault rifle or its hunting version inside the Music Conservatory shortly after 8:00am. A recording of a live 112 Ukraine TV broadcast at 8:00am referred to shooters at the conservatory. Another live report at 8:37am states that shooters from the conservatory wounded at least five policemen on the Maidan. A video shows a Berkut policeman facing the conservatory and shouting of pellets hitting the Berkut police on the Maidan, and that the deadly gunfire is from above (See Video A) (Map 3.1 and Fig. 3.1).

A statement from the Fatherland Party on February 20, 2014, said that the Maidan protesters were shot from the roof of the Music Conservatory by government forces and that the shooting stopped after the Maidan activists climbed to the roof (“Batkivshhyna”, 2014).

Videos also show that the conservatory was located in Maidan-controlled territory, with many protesters filmed near its entrance and the Maidan-facing parts of the building. A Maidan stage speaker asked about 8:00 am “dear friends” in the conservatory to suppress the fire on its balcony. A special Maidan company commander and three of its members admitted in their Ukrainian media and BBC interviews and during interrogation that their unit was based on the conservatory building at the



**Map 3.1** The Maidan massacre on February 20, 2014

time of the massacre and shot at the police (See, for example, Bird In Flight, 2016; Gatehouse, 2015; Gordon, 2020; Katchanovski, 2015b).

A GPU investigation and the Maidan massacre trial verdict confirmed these public admissions (Katchanovski, 2024; Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023). The commander and many of its members, whose list was leaked from the investigation, were members or had other links to far-right organizations, such as the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, the Right Sector, and Svoboda, and were primarily from Galicia in Western Ukraine (Strana, 2020).



**Fig. 3.1** The music conservatory and the main post office on the Maidan. Photo by the author

A not-broadcast CNN video footage shows approximately 8:20 am, the commander and members of the special armed Maidan company moving with their firearms to the Maidan barricade, taking positions behind the Maidan barricade facing the police and the Internal Troops on the Maidan while using unarmed Maidan protesters as human shields. Their appearance was followed by sounds of many gunshots. At the same exact place and around the same time, members of the special armed Maidan company were filmed, then shooting from hunting rifles in the direction of the Berkut police and Internal Troops facing them on the Maidan. A recording of a live broadcast also showed one member of the special armed Maidan company giving then to another on the same barricade a Kalashnikov-type firearm (Video A, 05:03).

Similarly, 24 TV channels reported shortly before 8:00am that there was shooting from Hotel Ukraina, that there were shots by pellets and snipers, and that three shot protesters had been evacuated. A video by a Maidan protester shows one of the casualties among protesters being evacuated from Maidan, and this is followed by a warning from the

Maidan stage about a sniper in Hotel Ukraina. At a similar time, a speaker on the Maidan stage said that someone was shooting from Hotel Ukraina. He asked “our guys, who had been in the hotel until recently,” to check this (Video A, 00:01:19). These videos provide evidence that snipers in Hotel Ukraina shot the Maidan protesters and that the Maidan forces controlled the inside of this hotel and had the ability to report or neutralize any snipers there if they were from government forces or any third force.

The synchronized videos show how Internal Troops and the Berkut were shot, fell to the ground, and evacuated in the same area of the Independence Square (Maidan). The Berkut anti-riot police and internal troop units, which were besieging, storming, and blocking the Maidan for almost three months, hastily abandoned their positions on the Maidan and fled between 8:50am and 9:00am. Videos and radio communications by the internal troop units contain urgent retreat orders at 8:49am and 8:50am. Large numbers of Berkut and Internal Troops servicemen fleeing the Maidan area at haste minutes before and after 9:00am. A Berkut officer stated during this retreat that the police came under live ammunition fire from Maidan “snipers” and that then snipers appeared on the third floor from the top of Hotel Ukraina. Several other fleeing Berkut and Internal Troop members and TV correspondents on the ground made similar statements (See Video A).

The content analysis suggests that both the police and the Maidan protesters on the Maidan were shot in the early morning by snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, such as Hotel Ukraina and the Music Conservatory, and that the police and Internal Troops then retreated and fled from the Maidan as a result of the casualties among their units. These findings are corroborated by numerous testimonies of wounded Maidan protesters and Berkut policemen, commanders of government sniper units, eyewitnesses among the Maidan protesters and journalists, government investigations, forensic examinations by government experts, and the Maidan massacre trial verdict.

The Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine investigation determined that one Berkut officer was killed on the Maidan from a Music Conservatory direction and two from Maidan barricades direction between 8:00am and 9:10am, two of which were shot from a Kalashnikov-based Saiga hunting carbine by a member of a special Maidan company. He earlier admitted in Ukrainian media interviews shooting the police from the Music Conservatory and Maidan barricades, and killing two policemen

from such a firearm (Bird In Flight, 2016; Katchanovski, 2015b). In addition, the government investigation determined that 39 policemen were wounded by firearms on the Maidan from 5:30am until the police retreat, and that 10 Maidan protesters were wounded on the Maidan by live ammunition in the morning of February 20 before 9:00am from sectors other than government-controlled, but nobody was charged for their wounding.

The synchronized video compilation shows that, following the retreat of the police unit crowds of protesters, the absolute majority of whom were unarmed, started around 8:50 a.m. to advance from their positions on the Maidan up Instytutska and Hrushevsky streets. Their advancement was guided by commands announced from the Maidan stage over loudspeakers. They relayed orders by Maidan leaders and company commanders of Maidan Self-Defense. Specifically, a Maidan announcer relayed orders for protesters to advance to Zhovtnevyi Palace heights and stay at these positions (See Video A).

The synchronized and time-stamped videos show that three protesters were killed before about two dozen police officers from the special Berkut company first appeared from a bus and started shooting with Kalashnikovs and pump rifles a few minutes after 9:00am. This means that the special Berkut company policemen, who were charged with killing these three protesters, could not physically shoot them and that they were killed by someone else.

In contrast, the videos suggest that Maidan snipers were shooting protesters there at around the same time. A Polish TVP TV correspondent reported at 9:01am right after these three protesters were killed near him that a sniper shooting both the police and protesters appeared. He pointed to Maidan in the Music Conservatory direction. A warning was made from the Maidan stage at 9:04am for protesters not to shoot other protesters in the back, several minutes after these three protesters were killed (See Video A, 13:05).

The content analysis of synchronized videos shows that about 15–20 members of the special Berkut company appeared on Instytutska Street near Maidan from a bus at 9:02am and started shooting with pump rifles and AKMS (modified Kalashnikov assault rifles). The videos show that many Maidan protesters fall to the ground with bullet wounds in the same area within the same general timeframe. These videos were presented by the media, the prosecution, and the Maidan lawyers as definite proof that these Berkut policemen massacred Maidan protesters.

However, the content analysis shows that the purpose of the Berkut company's brief advance was to enable a retreat of internal troop soldiers remaining in Zhovtnevyi Palace, whose main entrance was seized by the protesters a few minutes after 9:00am. The limited advance of two dozen members of the Berkut special company to Zhovtnevyi Palace and their swift retreat along with a large number of policemen can be seen in various videos. Synchronized videos show that Berkut gunshots from Kalashnikovs and their direction coincide with visible impacts on the ground or pavement before the protesters (See Video A).

The content analysis shows that specific times and directions of shooting by members of a Berkut unit of about 20 policemen, who are charged with their killings and attempted killing, and specific times of killings and wounding of specific Maidan protesters did not coincide in the videos, which filmed both simultaneously, for example, in a long German ARD TV video and in synchronized videos (TyzhdenUA, 2017). This crucial long ARD video, which like synchronized videos demonstrates visually that the Berkut policemen did not shoot at least the absolute majority of killed and wounded protesters, was not shown by this German public TV broadcaster. The Berkut policemen at the exact times of the killings and wounding of the absolute majority of these protesters are filmed standing, moving, and taking cover behind barricades, not aiming their AKMs towards these protesters, and there is no visible gunshot smoke or recoil of their firearms. It was physically impossible to shoot them without aiming at their Kalashnikovs in the specific protesters and making gunshots at the same time when the protesters were seen falling to the ground when there were sounds of specific gunshots (See Video H).

For example, the content analysis of synchronized videos of killings of Ihor Dmytriv and Andrii Dyhdalovych and wounding of Sviatoslav Kolesnikov and Roman Kotliarevsky visually illustrates that the specific times of their shooting did not match the specific times of Berkut shooting in the same and/or other synchronized videos. The synchronized videos in both this study and the SITU model show no policemen or their firearms visible from behind the Berkut-manned barricade at the time of killing Dmytriv. They also show the same concerning the Berkut police and no signs of a gunshot, such as flash and recoil, of an Omega sniper behind the same barricade at the time of killing Dyhdalovych. A

time-stamped video showed that Berkut policemen behind a Berkut barricade were not shooting at all during Kolesnikov's wounding (See Video H).

Similarly, there are no Berkut policemen or any signs of a gunshot visible from the Maidan protesters facing the side of the truck barricade at the time of the wounding of Roman Kotliarevsky, a Maidan medic, in a German ARD TV video at 10:16am. A National Bank security camera video, which is precisely synchronized with the German and CNN videos of his wounding based on the matching content and timestamps of the security camera video, shows that the Berkut police were hiding behind the truck barricade and did not even aim their Kalashnikovs in the direction of Kotliarevsky. The prosecution and Maidan victims lawyers claimed during the trial that this Maidan medic was wounded by a Berkut policeman from this barricade. Kotliarevsky testified during an investigative experiment that he was wounded from the Bank Arkada because of the top to bottom direction of his wound and its location on the back of his right thigh. A wound X-ray showed that the bullet was at a steep angle. A government ballistic expert also determined that the fire sector was from Hotel Ukraina to Bank Arkada (See Video D).

The prosecution, Maidan victims' lawyers, and numerous media reports showed videos of Berkut shooting from the truck barricade as evidence that they killed almost half of the 49 protesters in front of them. However, the content analysis shows that Berkut physically could not shoot protesters from behind a truck barricade because there were blind spots below the Berkut line of fire from over the top of the truck body. Because the height and width of the MAZ truck were approximately three meters, it was physically impossible for Berkut policemen, who were entirely behind this truck or standing on the concrete pieces with only their heads and hands visible from the behind the truck barricade to shoot protesters below in front of this truck. The latter could only shoot parallel to the top of the truck or above (See Video A & D). This is consistent with bullet hole locations.

Similarly, the videos visually show that it was physically impossible to kill Roman Ushnevych from the Berkut barricade because he took along with several other protesters behind a concrete wall that shielded them from the Berkut barricade (Video A, 33:06).

Videos and photos show bullet holes that appeared in shields of Dmytriv and a protester right in front of Dyhdalovych, and helmets of

Parashchuk and Roman Huryk match locations and top to bottom directions of wounds. They all point to shooting from the top part of the Bank Arkada and not the Berkut barricade. A protester, who was filmed approaching Dyhdalovych during his killing, said that he saw a sniper on the roof of Bank Arkada and that Dyhdalovych was killed by a sniper from this building. During the massacre, other Maidan protesters also pointed to snipers on Bank Arkada (See Video A and D).

The SITU model of shooting of the first three protesters claimed that they were shot from the Berkut barricade shifted the wound locations from sides and back to front and made their steep directions practically horizontal, contrary to the exact locations of the wounds in the forensic medical examinations and videos. The Berkut lawyer at the Maidan massacre trial stated that the on-site investigative experiment, which was conducted by government forensic experts with the participation of a Maidan victims' lawyer, determined that the gunshot direction was from Bank Arkada. He said that Parashchuk was in a blind zone of the Berkut barricade, and that the on-site investigative experiment did not consider this gunshot direction. The same Maidan victims' lawyer commissioned the SITU architectural company model with the fabricated results (Video H, 05:09).

In contrast, Berkut lawyers and the government investigation determined that the time and direction of killing a Berkut special company member at 9:16am match shooting by a protester from a hunting rifle in photos and in a video that shows him running away to cover behind the protesters (Video A, 18:27). This investigation found that the Berkut policeman was killed by buckshot from a similar Maidan direction.

In some cases, the specific time of a gunshot from the Berkut policemen coincided with the killing or wounding of a specific protester. However, in all these cases, the Berkut Kalashnikovs were aimed above, below, or beside these protesters, and these gunshots coincided with the sounds of other gunshots of different volumes and kinds. This means that while unintentional shooting of some protesters by the Berkut police from ricochets cannot be completely excluded based only on videos, there is also evidence of their shooting by snipers from other locations.

For example, content analysis shows that the killing of Bohdan Solchanyk coincides with a gunshot by a Berkut policeman in the ground direction several meters in front of this protester, but it also coincides with another quieter gunshot. A steep wound direction in the forensic medical examination and various evidences that snipers in the Maidan-controlled

Hotel Ukraina and Zhovtnevyi Palace were shooting and killing protesters near Solchanyk around the same time, such as Sayenko, suggest that he could have been shot by such a sniper (Video A, 15:52).

Various videos and photos show snipers and spotters in Hotel Ukraina and Zhovtnevyi Palace during the massacre of the protesters, and there are more than 80 testimonies about such snipers during the massacre itself. They also showed that these buildings were controlled by Maidan forces at that time. There were protesters, including armed ones from the far-right-linked special Maidan company, inside and outside of these buildings within or around the same time, and on the same floors and the roof that snipers were filmed or reported by several hundreds of protesters and journalists during and after the massacre (See Video A).

For instance, a Ukrainian ICTV video showed at 10:25am a sniper hiding behind the curtains of a window on the 11th floor of Hotel Ukraina and firing in the direction of Maidan protesters. An ICTV reporter stated in this video that snipers from Hotel Ukraina were shooting the advancing protesters on the back. A BBC video showed a sniper firing at 10:28am in the direction of the BBC television crew and the protesters there from an open window on the same 11th floor of the hotel, and the protesters running for cover and shouting “snipers” while pointing towards the hotel. The BBC correspondent in his news report and in his tweet identified the shooter as having a green helmet worn by Maidan protesters. The government investigation revealed that one of the far-right Svoboda leaders lived in a hotel room at the time of the massacre (See Video C, 06:23). A Maidan protester from this BBC video testified at the trial that he was told by other protesters that this was “our sniper.” He said that he saw a sniper in another Hotel Ukraina room window, giving visual signs to the protesters to avoid revealing these snipers (Video C; Katchanovski, 2024).

Just a few minutes before this, CNN and Spilno TV videos were recorded on the same 11th floor voices of a group of Maidan protesters talking about searching for positions to shoot (See Video A, 52:14). The Spilno TV reporter said in his online stream that these were armed Maidan protesters, in particular, with Kalashnikovs. He testified that the same armed Maidan group was entering the same hotel room on the same 11th floor around the time when he streamed from this room around 9:35am (Katchanovski, 2024). This is evidence that the Maidan group members either included snipers who shot the Maidan protesters, or that they regarded snipers who shot the protesters, specifically during the same

time and from the same Hotel Ukraina floor, as not hostile and therefore did not stop them from massacring the protesters.

At 9:10–9:11 am, a few minutes after the killing of several protesters, an announcer on the Maidan stage publicly warned the protesters about two to three snipers on the pendulum floor of Hotel Ukraina. This matches the 11th floor facing the massacre area shortly before, during, and shortly after that time. Similar warnings concerning snipers in this hotel, in particular that they kill protesters, were relayed from the Maidan stage several times during the massacre. Such warnings were also made about snipers in Zhovtnevyi Palace when it was under the control of Maidan protesters (Video A, 26:10).

Unbroadcast segments of the most famous video of the Maidan massacre, which was filmed by the Belgian VRT News TV and revealed at the Maidan massacre trial, show two Maidan protesters luring a group of other protesters to advance towards Berkut shortly before they would be massacred there. There was no other rational reason to lead protesters there after dozen protesters were killed and many more were wounded in the same area minutes before. A protester is heard shouting to the other protesters in this group not to go ahead because snipers from the hotel were shooting [take down] all protesters together and that there were gunshots visible from there. This video then shows a bullet hitting a tree in the direction of this group of Maidan protesters at 9:38. They looked back towards Hotel Ukraina after this shot. One of them pointed his hand towards the hotel and shouted about gunshots from the hotel and that they shot to take down the protesters and asked the shooters there not to shoot. Several minutes later, almost all of the dozen protesters in this group, including Ushnevych, were killed or wounded (See Video C). Six wounded protesters from this group testified to the Maidan massacre trial and the investigation that they were shot from this hotel and other Maidan-controlled buildings, witnessed snipers there, or were told by other protesters about them (See Katchanovski, 2023a).

Protesters were filmed wondering whether the shots were fired from this hotel during a shooting spree that left 10 protesters killed there shortly before 9:30am. One protester said that it was necessary to go with a Kalashnikov assault rifle to check the hotel. Several wounded protesters, who identified themselves in the Maidan massacre trial in the videos in this area during this shooting spree, testified that they and other protesters were shot by snipers in Hotel Ukraina and/or witnessed them there (Video A, 26:10).

Videos show that the Maidan forces not only controlled the entrances and exits to Hotel Ukraina before, during, and after the massacre of the protesters, but also that armed Maidan groups were on the same floors that protesters and journalists identified as locations of snipers around the same time. In particular, they were filmed by BBC, CNN, and Spilne TV on the 11th floor, particularly in the room by one of the Svoboda party leaders. Snipers were reported in the room of another Svoboda leader and in another room on the same hotel floor. Many other Svoboda deputies lived on this floor, and videos showed that they stayed in the hotel during the massacre. The far-right Svoboda party, a Maidan Self-Defense commander in the hotel, and the hotel staff stated that Hotel Ukraina was seized and guarded by the Maidan forces since the end of January 2014 (Video B). In its official statement, Svoboda stated that its activists took Hotel Ukraina under their control and guard on January 25, 2014 (VO Svoboda, 2014). A similar statement was made by the Svoboda leader on the Maidan stage (Maidan, 2014). A BBC video showed a leading Svoboda activist along with a few Maidan protesters guarding the entrance to the stairways and elevators in the hotel shortly after 9:51am (Video A, 36:50).

Video A (37:52) shows a group of Maidan protesters with at least one handgun, an axe, and a long tennis bag, which is a convenient way to hide and carry weapons, breaking into a hotel room on the 14th floor of the hotel around 10:12am. French Itetele, AFP, and Ukraina TV videos showed the commander and members of the far right of the special Maidan company a group of Maidan protesters who were armed with a Kalashnikov-type firearm and hunting rifles running into the hotel at 10:18am and then taking an elevator to the 10th floor. Among them, running was the same protester in a gas mask, who shortly before was filmed luring the group of protesters, and then returning to the hotel unharmed after they were massacred (Video A, 44:27).

The commander and a few members of this group were filmed in Ruptly and German TV videos when one of them was shooting from a hunting rifle from the 14th floor of Hotel Ukraina at 10:20–10:22am. Ruptly and ZDF videos showed the commander and members of the special Maidan company accompanied by one of the Svoboda leaders when at least one of them was shooting in the direction of the protesters from the same 14th floor of Hotel Ukraina and then moved to a lower floor because of the presence of journalists (Video A, 45:33). A time-stamped Facebook post by a Spilno.tv reporter at 12:40 pm stated that

there were snipers on the 14th floor who were shooting protesters on the Maidan. Protesters also testified that there were “snipers” on the 14th floor of the hotel (See Katchanovski, 2024).

Video A, media and witness reports, and statements from the Maidan stage show that there were several searches for snipers in Hotel Ukraina by groups of Maidan protesters during the massacre from around noon until the evening of February 20. They reported that no snipers were found, but the positions of snipers were found, and witness reports about snipers in the hotel continued despite these comprehensive searches. Video compilation A shows only members of the armed group of snipers from the special armed Maidan company not only entering the hotel at 10:16am, but also exiting it without any interference at around 11:00am and in the late afternoon. It was rational for protesters who searched the hotel to assume that snipers were not from the Maidan units.

Similarly, Video A and photos showed Maidan protesters inside, near entrances, on the roof, and in the roof window of Zhovtnevyi Palace during the same time as announcers on the Maidan stage relayed warnings about snipers there, particularly massacring protesters. Three “snipers” on the roof of Zhovtnevyi Palace were filmed and identified as such from the Maidan stage during a wave of killing protesters at 9:59–10:00am. The ICTV showed and called the same two people on the roof “snipers.”

A Polish journalist’s video showed snipers on the roofs of the Main Post Office, which was then the Right Sector Headquarters, and the directly adjacent Finbank building shortly after Smolensky was killed, and a female Maidan medic was photographed and filmed as wounded in the same area of the Maidan. A protester stated that he witnessed both of them being shot from the Main Post Office building (See Video A, 01:11:16).

Similarly, the Kozatsky Hotel was the headquarters of the Neo-Nazi Patriot of Ukraine, which joined the Right Sector during the Maidan. The Patriot of Ukraine organized and led the Azov battalion during the war in Donbas. Maidan protesters reported that there were snipers in this hotel, which was located on Maidan, for almost the entire duration of the massacre. Videos and photos show Maidan protesters inside the hotel searching for snipers (See Video A).

Videos and photos also showed that Maidan protesters were near the Bank Arkada, Horodetskt Street, and Muzeinyi Lane buildings when protesters pointed to the snipers there (See Video A). This means that it

was possible for protesters, in particular armed ones, to enter these buildings and neutralize these snipers, and that it was not possible for snipers to exit the buildings without being noticed by the protesters.

Video A shows more than 80 testimonies during the massacre itself, primarily by the Maidan protesters and journalists from Ukraine and many other countries, about snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. For instance, French TV and Belgian TV showed one protester near the hotel entrance and other protesters in the hotel lobby shouting to protesters, Svoboda deputies, journalists, and Maidan medics there about snipers in Hotel Ukraina circa 9:46–9:50am when the lured group of the protesters was massacred nearby. Oleksii Butorin said in a 1 + 1 interview during the massacre that eight protesters were killed from Hotel Ukraina in half an hour. He witnessed one shot from the hotel. Another protester said that he witnessed a protester next to him being killed at 10:31am from Hotel Ukraina. Protesters at 10:25 a.m. pointed to shooting by snipers from the pendulum floor of Hotel Ukraina. This indicates either the 11th floor in the hotel wings or the 13th floor in its central part (Fig. 3.2).



**Fig. 3.2** The main Maidan massacre spot in front of the Hotel Ukraina. Photo by the author

A female Maidan medic in a BBC video and a protester in a French photographer video pointed out the roof of the Bank Arkada as the location of snipers within 30 minutes of the killings of Dmytriv, Dyhdalovych, Huryk, and Parashchuk (Video H).

A video operator from the 5 Kanal said that there was a sniper in Hotel Ukraina window. A protester at 10:30 a.m. pointed to a “sniper” shooting from the 9th floor of the hotel. One protester said that another protester was killed from Hotel Ukraina when he stood near him. Two protesters stated that “snipers” on Hotel Ukraina shot protesters in the back and also pointed out snipers in the buildings on Horodetsky Street or the Bank Arkada. The news report of the 1 + 1 TV channel stated that Maidan Self-Defense reported that snipers were shooting protesters from Kostelna Street and Hotel Ukraina roof. An announcement from the Maidan stage reported “confirmed information” from the Maidan Self-Defense about three snipers on the Bank Arkada (See Video A).

When Serhiy Melnychuk was killed at 4:51 pm, several protesters and a Bildt journalist near him all stated that he was shot from Hotel Ukraina. A female Maidan medic on the Maidan and Spilno TV journalists inside the hotel stated the same: (Video A. 01:16:55). His wife, who was near Melnychuk during his death, testified at the trial and BBC and Hromadkse TV interviews that the gunshot was from this hotel. A forensic expert, based on the position of Melnychuk and his wound locations and directions in forensic medical examinations, made the same determination (Katchanovski, 2023b).

In their intercepted radio communications, the SBU Alfa commanders reported that hostile snipers were moving to Hotel Ukraina (Video A, 46:24). Their intercepted radio communications show that SBU Alfa snipers were deployed in the Cabmin building only after 10:30am, attempted to locate snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings and did not massacre the protesters. SBU Alfa snipers radio communications reported suspected snipers or spotters on the roofs of Kinopalats and Horodetsky seven buildings.

A government sniper was only filmed on the Cabmin building around noon after all but one protester were already killed. The synchronized videos show that the Omega unit of snipers arrived at the Berkut barricade area and received permission to use live ammunition against snipers in Maidan-controlled buildings circa 10:37am after all but three protesters were already killed. Omega snipers then aimed their rifles not at the

protesters but at Hotel Ukraina windows far above the protesters (Video A, 58:56).

The killings and wounding of protesters in the Instytutska Street area facing the Berkut, Alfa, and Omega positions practically stopped after the arrival of government snipers. The only exception was the killing of Oleksander Khrapachenko at 11:27 (See Video A, 01:08:17). The prosecution initially found that he was killed from Hotel Ukraina, but then charged special Berkut company members on their barricade and, in 2020, an Omega sniper in the Cabmin Club with his killing. Video A shows that it was physically impossible because forensic medical and ballistic examinations revealed that he was shot by a rusted expanding hunting bullet in the back at a steep top to bottom direction when he faced Berkut and Omega in front of him. Black smoke covered him from the Cabmin Club and Berkut barricade. Two protesters testified that he was shot from Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings (Katchanovski, 2024).

A salvo of gunshots at 11:32–11:33am matched sounds of coordinated shooting by a group of snipers in their intercepted radiocommunication that was recorded by a Maidan protester on the Maidan. One of these snipers talked about an apparent Transcaucasian accent (Video A, 01:09:19). Their open communication about shooting, in contrast to the use of code terms by the SBU Alfa snipers in their radio communication, and the Maidan Self-Defense and GPU refusals to locate and identify these snipers suggests that they were from the Maidan side.

Videos show that during the massacre, several Maidan leaders, particularly leaders of the Fatherland and Svoboda parties, spoke from the Maidan stage, which faced Hotel Ukraina and other buildings from which snipers shot Maidan protesters, in particular, killing two protesters within dozens of meters from the stages before and after speeches by the Maidan leaders from the stage (See Video A).

Similarly, many members of parliament from Svoboda were inside and near the hotel during the entire massacre. In particular, a video by a Maidan activist and their own statements revealed that the Svoboda deputies were on the 11th floor, including in their own rooms at the very time when snipers were located on this floor, including in the room of one of the Svoboda deputies, shot Maidan protesters (Kogda, 2014). For example, the GPU investigation revealed in 2015 that two Svoboda deputies lived in hotel rooms located next to another Svoboda deputy room, from which, as the BBC and ICTV videos and testimonies of the BBC journalist and Maidan protesters show, snipers shot at the BBC

television crew and Maidan protesters. One of the Svoboda leaders was admitted in 2015 that he was filming the massacre from a room located next to the Svoboda deputy room with the snipers (Daily, 2015). Svoboda deputies did not warn Maidan protesters and foreign journalists, in particular, those who were shot by snipers located in this hotel, including on their floor and their neighboring rooms, or were in the lobby of the hotel at that time. Such actions by these Maidan leaders and Svoboda deputies suggest that they did not fear snipers and that they knew that these snipers were not from a government or any other hostile force but from the Maidan or other friendly covert force and would not shoot the Maidan leaders on the stage and Svoboda deputies in Hotel Ukraina.

The analysis of videos, photos, forensic examinations by government investigators, and reports by journalists in the media and social media concerning the locations of these Hotel Ukraina rooms and timing of the shooting by journalists from ABC News (US), ABC (Australia), ARD (Germany) twice, the Associated Press (US), BBC, TVP (Poland), RT (Russia), and Sky News (UK) shows that they were also shot at by snipers from Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, in particular, the Right Sector headquarters, the Music Conservatory, and the Bank Arkada. In contrast, such evidence suggests that a ricochet that hit a Ruptly reporter on the top floor of Hotel Ukraina was from Berkut police shooting that targeted snipers in Hotel Ukraina (See Video E).

The Maidan massacre was immediately attributed to government snipers and the Berkut police by the Maidan opposition, Western leaders, and the media in Ukraine and the West. The far-right commander of the same special Maidan company, whose snipers shot at the police from the Music Conservatory building and then at both the police and the protesters from Hotel Ukraina, called from the Maidan stage on the evening of February 21, 2014, to reject a signed agreement, which was mediated by foreign ministers of France, Germany, and Poland and a representative of the Russian president. A video of his speech shows that he issued a public ultimatum for President Yanukovich to resign at 10:00am the next day, justified it by blaming Yanukovich and his forces for the massacre, stated that his Maidan company was responsible for the turning point of Euromaidan, and threatened an armed assault if Yanukovich would not resign (Yakshho, 2014). The commander of the Maidan Self-Defense said that this ultimatum was a decision by “institutional bodies of the Maidan” and that it was adopted by a military council

set up by the Maidan Self-Defense and the Right Sector on February 21, 2014 (Kalnysh, 2015).

The Maidan massacre undermined the legitimacy of Yanukovych as president of Ukraine and the legitimacy of the incumbent government, police, and security forces and their monopoly on the use of force. The massacre prompted a part of the Party of Regions deputies to leave their faction and support the Maidan opposition and the parliament vote on February 20 to withdraw government forces from downtown Kyiv and subsequent votes to dismiss then President Yanukovych and his government, even though this was unconstitutional.

### 3.3 TESTIMONIES BY WITNESSES, WOUNDED PROTESTERS, AND SELF-ADMITTED MAIDAN SNIPERS

The videos of snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings shooting the police and protesters are generally consistent with testimonies in the media and social media about such snipers by over 300 witnesses, including over 100 video testimonies in Video B.

Two leaders of the far-right Svoboda party stated in their separate interviews that a Western government representative told them and other Maidan leaders a few weeks before the massacre that Western governments would turn on the Yanukovych government after casualties among protesters would reach 100 (Braty, 2017, 94). Such specific conditionality created rational incentives to “sacrifice” 100 protesters and attributed their killing to the government forces. The protesters killed were called Heavenly Hundred immediately after the massacre. Protesters and people who were not even on the Maidan and died from illnesses or other causes were included to bring the number of victims to 100.

Moreover, 14 self-admitted members of Maidan sniper groups testified that the massacre of the police or protesters was perpetrated by the Maidan snipers. They include testimonies by seven self-admitted Georgian members of Maidan sniper groups for the Maidan massacre trial and investigation, and their interviews in American, Italian, and Israeli TV documentaries and Macedonian and Russian media. These Georgians stated that they, along with others from Georgia, the Baltic States, and Ukraine, were members of the Maidan sniper groups. They testified that specific Maidan leaders, in particular, from the Fatherland Party and the Maidan Self-Defense, and former Georgian government leaders and commanders gave them orders and firearms to massacre both protesters

and the police to stop a peace deal agreed upon by Yanukovich and the Maidan leaders. They said that they then saw on February 20, 2014, Maidan snipers from Georgia, the Baltic States, and the far-right Sector-linked Ukrainian group shooting from the Music Conservatory and Hotel Ukraina. One of them stated in a US documentary that he shot protesters from Hotel Ukraina (The hidden, 2016a, 2016n; Anna, 2018; MichaelRCaputo, 2023; Ukrainski, 2019).

Various self-styled “fact-checking” websites, the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine, Maidan victim lawyers, and with some exceptions, the Ukrainian media claimed that these Georgians were fake or actors. They did not produce any evidence in support of such claims, apart from the absence of Ukrainian border-crossing records by these Georgians during the Maidan, or certain inconsistencies, such as a spelling error in a document. Most of these Georgians provided their names, passport numbers, Ukrainian border stamps, copies of their plane tickets to Ukraine, their photos in Ukraine or the Georgian military, and other specific evidence in support of their testimonies. They said that they had entered Ukraine before the massacre with forged passports using false names and without border control (Katchanovski, 2023a, 2023b). The head of the Georgian Legion admitted that the Georgian, with a spelling error in his Ministry of Defense, served as an adviser in this ministry (Myth, 2018).

The Maidan massacre trial in November 2011 admitted and showed evidence of a testimony of one of these Georgians who confessed to being a member of a group of Maidan snipers (Zasidannia, 2011). Ukrainian border guards confirmed his identity and crossed the border into Ukraine and back shortly before the start of Euromaidan. This disproves claims by the prosecution, Maidan lawyers, BBC Monitoring, and German TV fact-checking that he was fake and never in Ukraine. He and two other Georgians testified before the Russian invasion of Ukraine at the Prosecutor General Office of Belarus upon the request of the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine following the appeal of Berkut lawyers in the case of the killings and wounding of the police during the Maidan massacre. Three self-admitted Georgian snipers also gave written depositions to Berkut lawyers for the Maidan massacre trial, two provided notarized letters to Ukrainian courts, and offered to testify via a video link. The Armenian, Belarusian, and Ukrainian authorities confirmed the identities of four of these Georgians for trial and investigation in Ukraine (Katchanovski, 2024).

One of these Georgians was filmed on May 2, 2014, during the Odesa massacre in the Trade Union building, along with far-right-led pro-Maidan activists (Anna, 2018). The ex-commander of the special armed Maidan Self-Defense Company, who was named along with his father as snipers by these Georgian ex-military, and two members of his company admitted in Ukrainian media interviews, and one in a BBC interview that they shot the police from the Music Conservatory and the Maidan barricades on the morning of February 20.

Another Georgian confessed in a protocol of his interrogation by some of the Right Sector leaders that he was hired and deployed in an abandoned building near Maidan to shoot during the massacre. He was captured after the massacre, interrogated by the Right Sector, and released by one of the Maidan leaders (Zavorotnyi, 2016). This is consistent with testimonies by several Maidan activists that some snipers were captured during and immediately after the massacre, particularly in Hotel Ukraina, but then released by Maidan leaders (See Video B).

There are a few hundred testimonies by witnesses, primarily Maidan protesters, in the media, social media, and the Maidan massacre trial and investigation concerning snipers in Maidan-controlled buildings and areas during the Maidan massacre. The majority of testimonies are by direct eyewitnesses. They testified that Maidan leaders knew in advance about the massacre that snipers were located in the Music Conservatory, Hotel Ukraina, and at least 18 other buildings in the Maidan-controlled areas and that they shot protesters and police from there. Several Maidan protesters testified that some of the snipers were captured by Maidan protesters, but then released by Maidan leaders (Video B).

Video B contains the testimonies of over 100 witnesses concerning Maidan snipers. At least 12 Maidan politicians and activists publicly testified that they witnessed the involvement of specific top Maidan leaders from oligarchic parties and far-right organizations in the massacre, such as their advance knowledge of the massacre, deployment of snipers, and evacuation of snipers who were captured by Maidan protesters. They include members of the Maidan and Right Sector leadership, Maidan Self-Defense and Right Sector activists, and many Maidan protesters and Ukrainian and foreign journalists.

For example, David Zhvania, who headed a parliamentary committee at the time of the massacre and was a member of the Maidan leadership, stated that the Maidan leaders, whom he names in his video, “arranged” the Maidan massacre that they wanted to seize power in Ukraine. He said

that the Maidan opposition leaders knew in advance about the Maidan massacre and called their members of the parliament before the massacre not to go to the Maidan so that they won't be killed (Video B, 01:07).

Nadia Savchenko, a member of the parliament from one of the Maidan parties, stated that she witnessed in the morning of February 20th an arrival of a group of Maidan protesters armed with hunting rifles near the Maidan stage and that they became members of the Ukrainian parliament after the Maidan. She also said that she witnessed as one of the Maidan leaders brought the snipers to Hotel Ukraina and that she saw gunshots from Hotel Ukraina. A right-sector sponsor and a leader during the Maidan massacre stated that he and other right-sector activists found and photographed three positions of "snipers" found that they were released by Maidan leaders. He said that these positions of the snipers were located in a building in the rear of the Music Conservatory, in an abandoned building between the Dnipro Hotel and Ukrkoopspilka buildings, and on the roof of the Ukrainian House (Video B, 11:04, 48:09).

Many Maidan protesters, medics, and journalists who were filmed in the massacre areas during this mass killing also testified about witnessing snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. For example, a wounded protester stated that he and other protesters in his group did not expect that they would be shot back. He said that he saw flashes in a hotel window on the fourth floor when he fell on the ground and pointed towards a Hotel Ukraina room there. Another wounded protester said that when he was wounded, he heard a gunshot behind, and that shots came not from the front but from the back. A different Maidan protester testified that he and other protesters came under fire from Hotel Ukraina when they were evacuating the wounded protesters. He showed that the snipers shot at them from the top-left part of the hotel. Another Maidan protester showed the locations of sharpshooters in the Bank Arkada, Hotel Ukraina, and Muzeinyi Lane buildings. Another protester showed that a sniper in Hotel Ukraina shot at his group of protesters and stated that there was also a gunfire from Zhovtnevyi Palace. A Maidan medic stated that "snipers" on the roof of Hotel Ukraina shot at the protesters in front of Zhovtnevyi Palace (See Video A and B).

A Maidan protester stated that he, along with other protesters, captured five snipers in room 211 on the second floor of Hotel Ukraina. He says that they were paid money, ordered to kill protesters, and shot from that room. He tells in the video that these snipers surrendered and

laid their weapons when his group of Maidan protesters came and that they were transferred to a Maidan leader, but since then, the Maidan leaders have refused to disclose any information about them. A Maidan protester and Afghanistan war veteran said that one sniper was captured in Hotel Ukraina, but another continued to shoot afterward. He also said that another sniper was captured in the Zhovtnevyi Palace, along with his rifle and ammunition (Video B).

A Maidan Self-Defense Commander stated that 15 “snipers” were captured on the roofs of buildings by the Maidan Self-Defense and other protesters during the entire Maidan. He said that he helped to carry one of the captured snipers to the Trade Union building for medical help. He stated that he, along with other protesters, tried to block a bus with the remaining snipers, who were evacuated along with internal troop members captured by Maidan leaders. The former district leader of the Right Sector in Kyiv suggested that the leadership of this far-right organization and one of its paramilitary units helped to remove snipers along with captured internal troop members from the Maidan in a bus. Their testimonies were corroborated by videos that showed such events (See Video B, 1:00:27 and Video A, 01:22:38).

The commanders and snipers of the Alfa SBU and the Omega Internal Troops units of snipers confirmed that they were ordered to locate snipers who shot the police and protesters and that they were deployed to their positions in the government quarter near the Maidan after the massacre was long underway. They also stated that the snipers, who shot the police and the protesters and also shot at them were located in Hotel Ukraina, the Music Conservatory, and Zhovtnevyi Palace, and other Maidan-controlled buildings and areas (See Video B).

In contrast, there were no such testimonies by the Berkut policemen, ex-police, and SBU commanders, and ex-Yanukovich government officials admitting their own involvement or other government and government sources involved in the massacre of the protesters, witnessing such involvement, or getting such specific information from others. This includes both those charged with the massacre in Ukraine or in absentia and those who were not charged and continued to serve under the new Maidan government. Berkut policemen, Omega servicemen, and Kyiv SBU head, who were arrested and charged with the massacre, denied that they had massacred the Maidan protesters.

The absolute majority of the testimonies of wounded Maidan protesters about being shot by the Berkut police or snipers in government-controlled buildings or snipers in these buildings are not corroborated by videos, forensic medical examinations, or other evidence.

In a small minority of the remaining cases, such evidence is either absent or contradictory.

In a leaked intercepted telephone call with the EU foreign affairs head, the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs referred to one of the Maidan doctors, in particular Olha Bohomolets, pointing to the similarity of the wounds among the protesters and police, which served as an indication that the massacre was organized by some elements of the Maidan opposition (Video B).

Several dozens of journalists from more than dozen countries reported in the media or the social media about witnessing snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, including shooting of Maidan protesters by these snipers, cited eyewitnesses among Maidan protesters about such snipers, or based their reports on such testimonies. For example, journalists from such major Western and Ukrainian media as ABC, CNN, New York Times, BBC, Guardian, ARD, Bild, Spiegel, La7, TT News Agency, TVP, 1 + 1, 5 Kanal, ICTV, Novyi Kanal, and Kyiv Post reported about witnessing snipers in Hotel Ukraina, cited Maidan protesters about snipers there, or based their reports on such testimonies. Journalists from ITV, TVP, Spiegel, 1 + 1, ICTV, and other Western and Ukrainian media similarly reported witnessing themselves or cited Maidan protesters about witnessing snipers in other Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, such as the Bank Arkada, Zhovtnevyi Palace, the Main Post Office, and Muzeinyi Lane and Horodetsky Street buildings (See, for example, ARD, 2014; Chivers, 2014; Traynor & Salem, 2014; Video A, B, C, F). With just some exceptions, these reports presented these snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings or areas as Ukrainian government snipers or implied that they were the government snipers. But soon after the massacre, with some partial exceptions, these and other major media outlets referred to snipers in these Maidan-controlled locations as “a conspiracy theory,” denied their existence, or omitted this and other evidence of such snipers.

At least 51 out of 72 wounded Maidan protesters, with whose shooting on February 20 Berkut policemen are charged and whose testimonies were revealed, testified at the trial that they had been shot by snipers from Maidan-controlled buildings or areas, had themselves witnessed snipers

there, or had been told by other Maidan protesters about such snipers. 31 of these wounded protesters testified at the trial and/or the investigation that they had been shot from Hotel Ukraina, the Bank Arkada, and Zhovtnevyi Palace; the buildings on Muzeinyi Lane and Horodetskyi Street; or other Maidan-controlled buildings or areas. At least 33 wounded protesters testified that they had either witnessed snipers there and/or were told about snipers in these Maidan-controlled locations, mostly in Hotel Ukraina, by other protesters (Video D).

The absolute majority of the wounded protesters stated at the trial and investigation that they were shot from Hotel Ukraina or witnessed snipers there. Other protesters testified at the trial that the snipers in Hotel Ukraina who massacred the protesters were Maidan snipers. One protester, who was filmed by BBC running for cover along with other protesters and the BBC journalists after they saw a sniper from the hotel shooting at them, revealed that he was told then by other protesters that this was “our sniper.” He saw that after this shooting a sniper on another floor of Hotel Ukraina made visual signs to protesters not to reveal the snipers in the hotel. The GPU investigation revealed that one of far-right Svoboda leaders lived in that hotel room at the time of the massacre. Another protester testified that other protesters during the massacre told him about snipers in Hotel Ukraina and were wondering why “our own were shooting our own.” (See Video E). He was featured in the “Winter on Fire” documentary, but this revelation was not shown in that Oscar-nominated documentary.

A female Maidan medic, who was reported in the numerous Western media as wounded on the Maidan, testified at the trial not as a wounded but as a witness. She admitted in an interview with a Ukrainian journalist that she had not been wounded. This journalist reported that the wounding of this Maidan medic had been staged by the Maidan Self-Defense leadership and that surgery she had undergone shortly before the massacre was misrepresented as fresh wounds (*tk.media* 2020).

Another protester testified that he saw a sniper shooting from the Main Post Office roof and killing a person matching the description of Viktor Smolensky, who was shot next to this female medic. This building was then the headquarters of the Right Sector (Video E).

The testimonies by the absolute majority of wounded protesters generally agree with the videos of snipers in these buildings, and the findings of forensic medical examinations that protesters were shot from steep directions from the sides or the back. They are also consistent with several

hundred witness testimonies in social media about such snipers. A video compilation of over 80 such witness testimonies was shown at the trial (Katchanovski, 2019; Zasadannia, 2021).

These testimonies concerning snipers in Maidan-controlled locations are consistent with the testimony of several dozen prosecution witnesses and relatives of those killed. These witnesses for the prosecution were supposed to provide supporting testimony for the prosecution, but they testified instead to the existence of snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas massacring protesters and the police (Video E).

The commanders of Alfa, Omega, and UDO sniper units testified that government snipers were deployed only after the massacre was underway and that they had orders to locate the snipers who were shooting at the police and protesters. They too confirmed that snipers were located in the Maidan-controlled buildings and that those snipers shot not only at the protesters but also at the police and snipers from their units (Video E). Dozens of defense witnesses also testified about Maidan snipers or snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, in particular, shooting the police and the protesters.

By contrast, the Berkut policemen and two Omega servicemen, who were arrested and charged with the massacre, denied that they had shot at the protesters. The absolute majority of testimonies of wounded Maidan protesters about being shot by the Berkut on the ground, or by snipers in government-controlled buildings are not corroborated by videos, forensic medical examinations, or other evidence. In the remaining cases, the evidence of their involvement is either absent or contradictory.

Nor did the government investigations and subsequent trials reveal any evidence of an order to shoot at the Maidan protesters by then President Yanukovich, or the commanders of Internal Affairs troops, police, or the Ukrainian Security Forces. The same concerns “titushki” hired by the Yanukovich government or any “third force.” The Prosecutor General of Ukraine and the head of its department in charge of the Maidan massacre investigation stated that they did not have evidence about involvement of the Russian government and Russian snipers in the Maidan massacre (112 Ukraina, 2015).

### 3.4 FORENSIC EXAMINATIONS

The findings of forensic medical examinations done by government experts for the prosecution were first made public during the Maidan massacre trial and revealed that the absolute majority of protesters were shot from the side or back and from top to bottom. Most videos and photos, however, show that the absolute majority of those killed and wounded had the Berkut police in front of them and at ground level, whereas that the Maidan-controlled buildings were generally behind them and on the left and right side.

Forensic medical examinations indicate that 40 out of the 48 protesters killed were shot from a high angle. At least 36 of them were killed at a time when the Berkut policemen were filmed on the ground. Just one protester was killed from a bullet that entered and exited his body horizontally, but he was shot from the side. Of 7 protesters killed who had no forensic information about their wounds, four were shot by hunting pellets before the Berkut appeared on the Maidan. 48 out of 51 wounded protesters had steep entry wounds, consistent with the theory that they were shot by snipers in Maidan-controlled buildings, or on the roofs of these buildings.

The forensic ballistic examinations presented at the trial found that 19 protesters were killed on February 20 by bullets which match the calibers not only of AKM Kalashnikov assault rifles, but also of hunting versions of Kalashnikovs, and other weapons. They found that Ivan Bliok was killed from a hunting version of Kalashnikov machine gun. Videos showed protesters with hunting firearms in Hotel Ukraina during the massacre. Four protesters were killed by pellets that are used in hunting; two were killed by expanding hunting bullets whose calibers differed from those used by Berkut (Zasidannia, 2016a, 2016b).

A forensic ballistic examination conducted by government with the use of an automatic computer-based IBIS-TAIS system, found that the bullets extracted from killed protesters, trees, and Hotel Ukraina rooms did not match police database for Kalashnikov assault rifles of members of either the e Kyiv Berkut regiment, or the special Berkut unit deployed (Zasidannia, 2016c).

Instead, government ballistic experts found that six Maidan protesters had been killed and at least ten wounded from the Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings or areas. The prosecution did not use

forensic ballistic experts to determine trajectories of bullets and locations of shooters of the absolute majority of the Maidan protesters. The investigation also determined based on their testimonies, investigative experiments, and forensic examinations that most of the 172 protesters were wounded from sectors where no Berkut police were located, and did not charge anyone with these shooting (GPU, 2016; Katchanovski, 2024). This evidence confirming that the protesters were wounded by snipers in the Maidan-controlled areas was not made public.

The bullet holes identified in the government's forensic reports showed that the Berkut police generally shot above protesters at the second floor and above floors of Hotel Ukraina, and into electric poles, and trees. Forensic examinations by government investigators did not report a single bullet hole in the hotel's ground floor, which is located at the height of the protesters.

### 3.5 COVER-UP, STONEWALLING, AND EVIDENCE TAMPERING

It is striking that, more than 11 years after one of the best documented cases of the mass murder in history, there is not a single person imprisoned for the Maidan massacre of the protesters and the police. The prosecution did not charge anyone for wounding of more than half of 172 wounded protesters on February 20, after the investigation determined that they had not been shot from Berkut positions but from elsewhere, i.e., from Maidan-controlled areas. Similarly, nobody was charged with killing of a Georgian Maidan activist from the party of the former Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili. Circumstances of his death were not revealed. His body was reportedly found in the Maidan-controlled area shortly after the massacre.

A likely reason for this is that the Prosecutor General's Office has been headed by either politicians from the Sloboda and Peoples Front parties, or close allies of presidents Poroshenko and Zelensky. The fact that leading members of Sloboda 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, supported the government investigation and the prosecution after initial criticism.

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 (Naspravdi.Today, 2020). Self-admitted Georgian snipers, as well as members of the Yanukovich 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.” (Zubritsky, 2015).

Similarly, the main pro-Maidan parties blocked the creation of a parliamentary commission concerning Maidan massacre during Petro Poroshenko’s presidency (112 Ukraina, 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 theory. 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). 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.

The GPU investigators simply denied apriori that there were any snipers in Maidan-controlled buildings and did not investigate them. Likewise, public statements by eight different Maidan politicians and activists and several self-admitted Georgian snipers about the 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.”

The GPU initially stated, in March 2014, that it had identified the snipers, their locations, and even seized their weapons (Glavred, 2014). In April 2014, the GPU issued a statement saying that the protesters had been shot with a Simonov “sniper rifle” from Hotel Ukraina (UNIAN, 2014).<sup>1</sup> Very soon afterward, however, the heads of the Prosecutor 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 unit 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 of 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 (Council of Europe, 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.

Its 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 these trial-ordered investigative experiments ceased after government forensic experts determined that the first few Maidan protesters were shot from the Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina and Music Conservatory (Zasidannia, 2022a).

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 tampering. The same concerns

<sup>1</sup> 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.

the unexplained reversal of the forensic examinations of bullets just a few weeks before the prosecution submitted its the 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.

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 (Zasidannia, 2022b). The forensic medical examination, meanwhile, showed that the protester involved had been shot from a steep angle.

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 (see TyzhdenUA, 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.

In addition, 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 helped to identify the locations of shooters), several bullets extracted from the bodies of protesters and police, and bullets from the trees, soil, and flower box at the Maidan buildings that have disappeared. Some trees with bullets and/or bullet holes in the area were cut down, including at the request of the prosecution. 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, the Bank Arkada, and other Maidan-controlled buildings.

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). 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 (24 kanal, 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. There were no forensic examinations or 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 snipers and forensic ballistic examinations confirming them.

The Maidan massacre memorial proposed by the Government would completely change the landscape and the street. 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).

The government investigation, the Maidan massacre trial, the Yanukovich state treason trial, and the media did not reveal any evidence of an order to massacre the Maidan protesters by then President Yanukovich and his Internal Affairs, police, and SBU heads and commanders. The same concerns “titushki” hired by the Yanukovich government or any “third force.” A former adviser to the Prosecutor General of Ukraine after Maidan stated that he saw in the Maidan investigative case

no real evidence of the Yanukovych involvement in the massacre of the protesters. He said that the government-provided bodyguards testified for the investigation that they were with Yanukovych in his car motorcade during the massacre and that he was “not understanding this whole situation at all.” (Video B, 58:23).

### 3.6 THE MAIDAN MASSACRE TRIAL VERDICT

The nearly 1,000,000 word Maidan massacre trial verdict in Ukraine confirms 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 the Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations (See Katchanovski, 2025b; Vyrok, 2023; Maidan, 2023). It also confirms 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 states there were no Russian snipers involved in the massacre and that there were no massacre orders by the Yanukovych government. 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 (See Katchanovski, 2024, 2025b).

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 5 members were charged for their massacre, in their killing or wounding (See Maidan, 2023).

The trial decision explicitly stated that at least 6 specific protesters were killed, and many others wounded from the side of the Hotel Ukraina, the Music Conservatory, and from other Maidan-controlled locations and that this was “the territory that was not controlled by law enforcement agencies at that time.” This means that they were shot by the Maidan snipers shooting from these Maidan-controlled buildings since there were no evidence whatsoever that any snipers were located in between these buildings and the protesters, who were shot. And the verdict specified that Russian agents “did not have any participation” in the Maidan massacre. 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 (See Katchanovski, 2025b; 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.” (Vyrok, 2023; Maidan, 2023).

The verdict stated 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. An edited 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.

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 Zhrebnyi] 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 “fatal gunshot wounds to the body (chest and abdomen) were received by PERSON\_1770 [Roman Ushnevych] from the side of the hotel ‘INFORMATION\_

161'[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." (See Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023).

The verdict also confirmed that the Maidan massacre on February 20 started from the killing of three and wounding of 39 Berkut and Internal troops officers, who were not armed. 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 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 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 (Katchanovski, 2025b; Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023; Video F).

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 notes 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." (See Katchanovski, 2025b; Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023).

The verdict confirmed that the first three activists were shot by buckshot used in hunting before the Berkut company, whose 5 members were falsely charged with their killings, was even deployed there. It explicitly states 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 trial verdict also confirmed that there is no evidence of an order by Yanukovych or his government to massacre the Maidan protesters. This is crucial official acknowledgment since Yanukovych and his government were overthrown based on false blame for ordering the massacre. In addition to acquitting two Berkut policemen for killing and wounding the Maidan activists, it states that all 5 accused Berkut members were baselessly blamed for killing 13 and wounding 29 Maidan protesters. This is another evidence of trumped up and politically motivated charges.

The decision to convict in absentia three Berkut officers, who were exchanged by Zelensky to Donbas separatists in 2019, was political. 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. 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.

The verdict decision that these 3 Berkut officers were responsible for murder of 31 Maidan protesters out of 48 and attempted murder of 44 out of 80 protesters with whose killing and wounding the Berkut members are charged was based on a single fabricated forensic examination. As noted, 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.

These 3 Berkut policemen were convicted in absentia not only based on this single fabricated forensic examination but also based on collective responsibility for murder of 31 and attempted murder of 44 protesters. On the same basis and contrary to all other evidence, a Berkut commander is also convicted of manslaughter of 4 first protesters and wounding 8 others 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. The decision attributed killing and wounding of most of these protesters,

even in cases without any allegedly 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.

This forensic bullet examination also contradicts 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. This demonstrates that the Berkut policemen could not physically shoot these protesters. As noted, these Berkut policemen were filmed not shooting at the specific time and at the specific direction that these protesters were killed. Bullet holes 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 from a wounded Maidan activist to a Kalashnikov of a convicted Berkut member is clearly fabricated since this policeman (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 chair that this protester was shielding himself from Hotel Ukraina snipers and his steep wound. Synchronized video shows that at the very time of his wounding on bridge, protesters hiding beneath bridge pointed to snipers in Hotel Ukraina shooting protesters on this bridge (See Video H).

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 themselves and even prosecutors visits, was paid for by the Soros foundation in Ukraine.

Since the government investigation admitted that 77 out of 157 wounded Maidan activists were shot not from Berkut-controlled sectors and did not charge anyone with the attempted murder, this also means that they were shot by the Maidan snipers. The verdict along with this Prosecutor General Office investigation findings means the de facto official admissions that at least 10 out of 49 killed and 115 out of 172 wounded Maidan activists were shot on February 20, 2014, not by Berkut or other law enforcement agencies from the government forces-controlled territory but by Maidan snipers from the Maidan-controlled locations. The official admission that the absolute majority of Maidan activists were wounded 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 easy 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/or about witnessing snipers there (See Katchanovski, 2024, 2025b). Academic studies, declassified text of the verdict, which was issued by the Khmelnytsky court in March 2025 following a several-year long closed trial, and SBU and Military Prosecutor Office investigations de facto also confirmed, based on such evidence as videos, forensic ballistic and medical examinations, on-site investigative experiments, and witness testimonies, that an elderly female Maidan protester was killed and three others wounded not by the SBU officers but by Maidan activists with far-right involvement from the Maidan-controlled entrance to the SBU building in Khmelnytsky on February 19, 2014 (Katchanovski, 2024; Vyrok, 2025).

The false-flag Maidan massacre led to the overthrow of the Yanukovich government. He and his forces were falsely blamed for the mass killing of the Maidan protesters. He fled Kyiv and then Ukraine because he was falsely blamed for this massacre and because of assassination attempts against him (See Chapter 2). This massacre also triggered subsequent

conflicts in Ukraine and between Russia and Ukraine that are examined in the following chapters.

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