



**AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE
OF THE RUSSIAN MFA
ON THE CRIMES COMMITTED
BY THE KIEV REGIME**

**VIOLATIONS
OF THE INTERNATIONAL
HUMANITARIAN LAW
BY THE KIEV REGIME
REGARDING TREATMENT
OF PRISONERS OF WAR**

"SECRET PRISONS"

CHAPTER II

2026

Source of photographs: Ambassador-at-Large of the Russian Foreign Ministry on the Crimes Committed by the Kiev Regime, screenshots of a video footage of communication with prisoners of war.

SUMMARY

The second part of the report dedicated to "Secret Prisons" of the Kiev Regime¹ presents key verified information regarding violations of the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) against Russian military personnel captured by the Kiev regime and subsequently returned to Russia as part of a prisoner exchange in October 2025 as a result of negotiations conducted in the Istanbul format.

Foreign Ministry Ambassador-at-Large Rodion Miroshnik met with released servicemen of the Russian Armed Forces who had been subjected to torture and abuse while in Ukrainian captivity. During the assessment, testimonies from the victims were collected, and the consequences of specific crimes committed by militants of the Kiev regime against prisoners of war (POWs) were documented. The information obtained indicates the existence of a systematic practice of torture in "secret prisons" on the territory of Ukraine.

A network of so-called secret prisons was established in areas controlled by the Kiev regime to hold Russian military personnel captured by Ukrainian militants. According to numerous accounts considered reliable, these facilities operate in an environment of lawlessness and impunity, where the greatest number of crimes against prisoners of war have been committed. Maltreated Russian servicemen provided detailed accounts of a system of severe torture and humiliation, involving moral and physical abuse organised and actively employed by the Ukrainian Armed Forces, special services, and other security and paramilitary units, including the use of electric chairs and other devices. Testimonies have also documented allegations of sexual violence and threats thereof, as well as torture involving deprivation of sleep, water, and food, along with a range of other abusive practices.

In their reports, some human rights organisations acknowledge the existence of "secret prisons" in Ukraine, which they refer to as "transit points". These facilities, controlled by the Ukrainian armed formations (UAF)², are closed to visits by international humanitarian organisations. At the same time, these organisations tend to

¹ The first part of the report, *Violations of the International Humanitarian Law by the Kiev Regime regarding Treatment of Prisoners of War: "Secret Prisons"*, is published on the Russian Foreign Ministry website: https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/doklady/2004049/?lang=en

² UAF (Ukrainian armed formations, armed formations of Ukraine) - the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU), along with special services and other security and paramilitary units engaged in military activities on the Ukrainian side.

avoid addressing the issue publicly. The question of granting access to these facilities and assessing detention conditions is not raised publicly with Ukraine's political leadership. As a result, the existence of such Ukrainian "secret prisons" is effectively kept out of the view of the international community.

Russian servicemen who returned from captivity reported that, despite attempts by militants of the Kiev regime to disorient them, they were able to identify the locations of "secret prisons" with relative accuracy. According to their accounts, these facilities were situated in industrial areas, educational institutions, large private residential buildings, as well as in basements, concrete and metal containers, pits, and cages. They were reportedly located in settlements temporarily controlled by Ukrainian armed formations in the Donetsk People's Republic and the Zaporozhye Region of the Russian Federation, as well as in Kiev, Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk, Sumy, and other regions of Ukraine.

International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law (IHRL) strictly prohibit torture and all forms of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, as well as acts that violate human dignity. This prohibition is enshrined in the 1949 Geneva Conventions, 1977 Additional Protocols to them, the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and other international legal instruments. IHL and IHRL share common principles and complement one another in establishing a comprehensive legal framework for the prevention of torture and other forms of ill-treatment.

This report contains excerpts from testimonies of Russian military personnel who were held in Ukrainian captivity, attesting to the widespread use of torture, threats, violence, and killings in dozens of "secret prisons" operating in territories controlled by the Kiev regime.

Methods of torture and types of cruel treatment

Based on testimonies from prisoners of war, a number of identical torture methods have become effectively traditional in Ukrainian "secret prisons". They constitute common practice fostered by the political leadership in Kiev, representatives of the security services, and the military command of Ukrainian armed formations.

The primary methods of torture and other forms of cruel treatment of prisoners of war encompassed severe and inhumane beatings: strikes to various parts of the body, including the head, joints, and genitals; the use of "technical means"; as well as systematic physical and psychological humiliation. Many of the prisoners interviewed provided consistent accounts detailing the following atrocities committed by Ukrainian militants and prison guards:

Check in. The overwhelming majority of Russian military personnel describe brutal "welcome beatings" inflicted on all prisoners of war without exception immediately upon their arrival at Ukrainian "secret prisons". They report that the beatings lasted for hours and involved the use of plastic pipes, metal rebar, and wooden table and chair legs. In many cases, bound prisoners were suspended upside down by their feet during the beatings and subsequently left hanging for hours, bleeding.

*“They were beating me from 11 in the morning until 3 or 4 in the afternoon.
They set me on fire; they nearly burned my leg.
They tied me upside down to a tree and beat me with bats.
They didn’t ask any questions. They just beat me.”*

- a Russian POW says, referring to “welcome beatings”.

Torture relay. During transfers between detention facilities – each time POWs were moved from one vehicle to another – they were systematically beaten. Blindfolded and bound, they were forced out of vehicles and assaulted with kicks, beaten with rifle butts, bats, and metal rods, accompanied by shouting, insults, and threats. They were then thrown into another vehicle, only to face the same cruel treatment at the next stop.

*“They led us out, blindfolded us, tied our hands, and put us
in a car to be transferred to the pretrial detention centre in Kharkov.
On the way, they changed cars five times. And each time, they beat us.
They used plastic pipes and kept striking our fingers, hands, and heads.”*

- a Russian POW says, referring to “torture relay”.

Electric chair. A wide range of technical devices specifically designed for torture is systematically used in Ukrainian "secret prisons". Many former prisoners reported that Ukrainian torturers use "electric chairs" and devices known as "tapiks" (TA-57 phones). According to their accounts, clamps connected to electric generators, field telephones, or batteries were attached to prisoners’ limbs, sensitive areas of the body, and genitals. Electric current was then applied. For many, this resulted in loss of consciousness; others suffered heart attacks, clinical death, or died as a result of the torture.

*“They’d charge a field phone (TA-57), take clothes pegs, and connect them to
my balls. I felt an adrenaline surge: sparks were literally flashing in my eyes.
The pain was unbearable. <...> They attached the wires to my ears, too. Some
people couldn’t endure it and lost consciousness.”*

- a Russian POW says, referring to “electric chair”.

Intimidation through executions. Prisoners also testified to systematic intimidation through mock or real executions. According to their accounts, after prolonged beatings and humiliation, they were lined up, told that they had been sentenced to death, and forced to stand against a wall or kneel while shots were fired over their heads. In some cases, such actions culminated in real executions carried out at close range, intended as a warning to others. Multiple testimonies corroborate such incidents.

“They put him next to a pole. He thought they were just joking. I assumed they would beat him and send him back to the basement. But instead... This was the first time I had ever seen something like that. Such ferocity. They held two machine guns and simply said, ‘Look.’ We raised our heads, looked – and they shot him with both guns. They tore his body apart.”

- a Russian POW says, referring to demonstrative executions.

Say hello to mum. Ukrainian militants practice filming the torture of prisoners of war on mobile phones, forcing them to wave to the camera or to "say hello to mum". Such messages are sent by Ukrainian militants to their (torturers’) families for entertainment, demonstrating their perceived superiority over the captives. Similar videos were also used to blackmail the relatives of prisoners of war. Video recordings of torture were sent to family members of the captives with demands to pay a ransom, carry out acts of sabotage, or provide some classified information.

“They were constantly filming us on their phones. They made us say certain things, or they’d say, “Say hello to my mum” (the militant’s mother). And if you started refusing, like, ‘I won’t do it,’ they started beating you – in the face, all over.”

“They wanted my mother (the prisoner’s mother) to carry out some kind of terrorist attack. If she had done it, they would have let me go.”

- Russian POWs say, referring to tortures that were filmed on mobile phones.

Setting dogs on the prisoners. In a number of "secret prisons", large dogs of fighting breeds were kept and set on captured servicemen. At least one incident has been reported in which a specially trained dog mauled a prisoner to death.

“They dragged him out behind the shed. You could see them pulling him along. Then they just let the dog loose on him. About 10-15 minutes later, the dog came back covered in blood. It had simply mauled the man to death.”

- a Russian POW says, referring to dogs used to attack POWs.

Use of dehumanising language. During conversations with prisoners, Ukrainian militants constantly used obscene language, as well as expressions degrading human dignity. Threats were made, along with humiliating remarks directed at the prisoners' families and friends.

“The next morning, some strange guys burst in – two of them – shouting at us: “So what, you f...’ (an offensive slur for homosexuals) “Did you come here to kill us?” They forced us to eat dirt. Raw dirt. They kicked each of us in the head. We ate the dirt and washed it down with snow.”

- a Russian POW says, referring to dehumanization language.

In their testimonies, former prisoners of war also referred to the denial of medical assistance to the sick and wounded. Moreover, during torture, Ukrainian militants sought to prevent wounds from healing, striking injured areas and limbs. Instances are cited of medicines being used deliberately to kill prisoners of war.

“He (the prisoner of war) had a severe infection – there were maggots in his wounds. They didn’t provide him any medical assistance at all. Eventually, one day, it seems he just became a nuisance. This guy called Vova took him outside and said he was going to give him an injection and everything would be fine. It turned out they injected him with 10 millilitres of adrenaline. <...> I thought the injection would work and he’d feel better, but instead he drank some water, had a cigarette, then blood started coming out of his mouth, and he died.”

- a Russian POW says, referring to medicines used to murder.

In addition, victims who endured torture in Ukrainian "secret prisons" state that both the perpetrators and visitors to the torture sites were fully aware that they were committing crimes under both international and national law. In order to avoid later identification, both guards and visiting militants wore balaclavas concealing their faces, used fictitious call signs, did not give their real names, and concealed information about their ranks and units.

“And then there were these big guys – soldiers in masks, no insignia.”

- a Russian POW says, referring to hiding identities.

It was common practice for officers from the Main Intelligence Directorate, the Security Service of Ukraine and other special services to take part in acts of torture; they would come to ‘extract’ the necessary evidence and information from prisoners, pressured them into signing documents about their recruitment, or coerced their relatives into committing terrorist acts.

“They told me, ‘Call your wife, we’ll give you the addresses and coordinates you need.’ They wanted her to set fire to a military recruitment office or the car of some draft officer. That was basically the situation.”

“They harassed us, tied us up and beat us using a wooden chair leg. They also beat us with a spade handle, a hose or an axe handle. They used any objects they could find, even a coal shovel. They broke two shovels while beating one man. They forced us to record a video saying that we agreed to join the Russian Volunteer Corps³ with a Glock pointed at us.”

- Russian POWs say, referring to coercion and blackmail.

The information presented clearly demonstrates the disregard by the leadership of the Kiev regime for key norms and principles of the International Humanitarian Law directly related to the protection of POWs’ rights. All the data provided reflect systematic common practices. The employment of these methods is well known both to Ukraine’s political leadership and its Western sponsors, who not only turn a blind eye to the existence of such criminal practices but also block comprehensive investigations into crimes committed by the Kiev regime militants against prisoners of war.

Ambassador-at-Large of the Russian Foreign Ministry on the Crimes Committed by the Kiev Regime holds all materials appended to the Report in the form of audio and video recordings made with the consent of the victims.

³ In the Russian Federation the RVC is recognized as a terrorist organization and banned.

EXTRACTS FROM POW TESTIMONIES

Victim No 1: Timur Gusarov, born in 1995, a serviceman from the 98th Division. Captured by the UAF on May 9, 2025, near Artyomovsk, the Donetsk People's Republic.

Timur Gusarov was captured by mercenaries from Georgia and subsequently handed over to Ukrainian militants near the village of Mikhalyovka, away from the frontline. During interrogations, the Russian serviceman was subjected to verbal abuse and physical beatings by the militants. He recalled:

*“They asked their questions, constantly swearing. They called us ‘f*****s’ (a derogatory term for homosexuals). I told them, ‘We are not like that; you are.’ Then I was struck on the head with the butt of a weapon.”*



During the transfer of prisoners of war, Ukrainian butchers deliberately subjected them to additional suffering and inflicted new injuries:

“Then a pickup truck arrived. They tied our hands and pulled them very tightly. I told them I couldn’t breathe and was close to suffocating. They replied, ‘You, Russian pig, you’d better suffocate – you’ll die an easy death.’ They did not loosen the restraints. I could barely breathe through my mouth the entire way. My hands were taped to the vehicle and further tightened with plastic ties. The car was moving over a very uneven road. I thought my arms would be torn off and that my veins would burst. When the restraints were finally removed, my hands were blue and swollen from being compressed. After that, they took me to the basement.”

The prisoner of war was subjected to brutal beatings and repeatedly transferred between detention sites. One of the facilities where he was held was located in a non-operational educational institution:

“On the second day, a man arrived, small, around 40-45 years old, with grey and white hair. He was accompanied by a slightly bulkier man. They pulled me out of the basement, put a bag over my head, and we drove for about five minutes before stopping. They took me to another basement. It felt like a school because there were educational posters on the walls. It was clear that the building had once served an educational purpose.”

The beatings and abuse of prisoners of war were relentless. The captors deliberately struck unhealed wounds and recorded the bloodied victims on their phones:

“There were young servicemen there, around 20 to 25 years old, who were constantly harassing us. You’d be sitting, and they would come up, hit you in the face with a shoe, and strike your legs. They would ask, ‘Where is your wound?’ I said on the left side, and they began hitting that area. The wound was fresh and extremely painful. They were constantly filming on their phones. They forced me to say certain things or made me deliver messages like, ‘Say hello to my mum.’ If you resisted or refused, they would beat you all over, especially in the face.”

Ukrainian butchers used a range of tools, household items, and specially designed devices to inflict mutilation:

“The first basement was where I was initially held. After a conversation with one of them that didn’t go well, they put me back in the basement. About 2-3 hours later, they dragged me out, stripped me down to my underwear, doused me with cold water, and hung me upside down from a horizontal bar. I stayed like that for almost a full day. Every one of these bastards who passed by – I can’t call them anything else – beat me with either a plastic pipe or a belt. They also burned me with the belt badly. They had devices with fittings ending in a thin cable, which, when applied, could tear the skin. I hung like that for at least a day while they continually struck my entire body, beating everything inside. That was in the first basement. After that, the situation only became worse for me.”

Ukrainian militants who worked in these prisons or visited secret torture chambers did not reveal their real names and surnames, hiding their faces behind balaclavas or blindfolds:

“He was called Petrovich – it was his call sign. He didn’t say his name. There was a senior Petrovich and a junior Petrovich. No matter who was there, you had to address them as Petrovich. If you called them anything else, they’d beat you up.”

“You always had to walk with your hands behind your back and your head lowered. You weren’t allowed to come within a metre of Petrovich. If you got closer than a metre, they would shoot you in the knee.”

“First, they beat us. Petrovich was standing nearby, holding a stick and sharpening it. One of them questioned me while the other kept sharpening the stick. In the end, he

said I was lying. Then they took the stick – it was very sharp – and just stabbed me in the leg. I still have the scar.”

Upon arrival at the secret detention facility, militants confiscated all valuables from prisoners:

“I had a necklace on me and a ring. These Petroviches took everything. At first my wedding ring wouldn’t come off, and they wanted to cut off my finger. Then one of them said, ‘Stop, stop, stop. I’ll take it off.’ Somehow, he managed to remove it.”

Detention sites for prisoners of war were often makeshift facilities: bare concrete spaces devoid of basic amenities:

“After they brought me there, they took me outside. My hands were tied, my face covered. Other Russian soldiers were already there. There was a ‘basement’ there: not a pit in the ground, but a concrete box. They blocked the back, made an entrance, and installed a metal door.”

“My whole face was smashed, my head was smashed, my whole body beaten. They kicked me, punched me, and hit me with planks left over from pallets.”

In Ukrainian "secret prisons", food and water were deliberately restricted as a form of coercion:

“We were given clear broth – more like water – about 11 spoonfuls per day. This was all I ate for four weeks.”

“They gave us one metal mug of water for the entire day. It was summer – extremely hot – and the concrete box kept heating up. Sometimes it got so bad that I lost consciousness from exhaustion. You couldn’t eat enough, and you couldn’t drink enough.”

Electric torture was widely used, often escalating into sexual violence:

“The first thing they used to torture me with was the ‘telephone,’ as they called it. That’s how they ‘welcome’ us. They took me out of the basement, stripped me naked, and took everything from me. <...> Then he said, ‘You clearly don’t understand where you are. We’ll show you.’ They charged the field phone (TA-57), took clothes pegs, and attached them to my testicles. I felt a surge of adrenaline: sparks were literally flashing before my eyes. The pain was unbearable. It felt like 320 volts of direct current coursing

through my body. I was convulsing, shaking all over. It was as if I had been struck repeatedly in the face. They also attached the wires to my ears. Some people couldn't endure it and lost consciousness. I didn't pass out, but the current ran through my entire brain. It was an extremely disturbing sensation."

During torture, the Ukrainian militants extorted money from prisoners and engaged in outright looting:

"They took me to what they called 'the tree' – the spot near an apple tree where interrogations were carried out. They demanded the full story. They tried to extort money from me, insisting that I sell my apartments, cars, everything I owned – and transfer the money to them. For FPV drones, Mavics, and other equipment."

In some cases, Ukrainian torturers attempted to coerce POWs' relatives into committing criminal or terrorist acts in Russia:

"They wanted my mother to carry out a terrorist attack. If she had done it, they would have let me go."

To intimidate the prisoners, an execution was carried out in front of them:

"He (Petrovich) separated a group of us – me, Suchi, Ryzhy, a Black man, and a Tuvan. After separating us, he stood there holding a phone and asked, 'What should we do with them?' Someone replied, 'They're not needed. We won't work with them, just eliminate them.' We were then taken to another basement where about 18 of our fighters were being held. <...> About 15 minutes later, he ordered us to be taken outside. Our hands were tied behind our backs, our heads lowered. They stood about five metres in front of us and said, 'Now lift your heads. If anyone lowers their head, we'll shoot them on the spot.' They brought out a young man who had already been shot in both knees. He was Roma, about 19 or 20 years old. He was placed near a pole and seemed to think it was a joke. I thought they would injure him further and send him back to the basement. But that was not the case. It was the first time I had witnessed such extreme brutality. They had two machine guns and told us to watch. We raised our heads, and they opened fire on him with two machine guns, first shooting his legs and arms. He fell, and then one of them shot him in the head. The older one said, 'Why did you do that? I wanted him to suffer.' So, first they shot at his arms and legs, so that the man would suffer, and then they finished him off. And that's it. Afterwards, they shouted at us, 'Do you understand where you are now?' We did. You couldn't speak unless spoken to. We were ordered to carry the body back inside. As I lifted him, my hands were covered in the fragments of his brain. For five days after that, I completely

withdrew into myself. I lived in constant fear. I didn't sleep more than one or two hours at a time, waking up terrified. I thought every day could be my last and that I would never see my family again."

The harshest treatment by Ukrainian militants was inflicted on prisoners of war from the Lugansk and Donetsk people's republics:

"The fighter was from the Lugansk Republic and had worked as a prison guard there. He was 25, but when I saw him, he looked about 40 – completely disfigured and beaten to a pulp. He couldn't stand, his wounds were festering, and maggots were growing in them. He received no medical care at all. Eventually, they seemed to get tired of him. This man, Vova, took him outside, saying he would give him an injection to make him better. They injected him directly into his vein. You could practically hear it – the injection contained 10 cc of adrenaline. I had never seen anything like it. His complexion kept changing, and after the injection, he survived only about two or three hours. I gave him the water that had been given to me because he needed it more. I had thought the injection might help him, but he drank the water, had a cigarette, and blood gushed out of his mouth, and then he died. We slept beside his dead body for a whole day; they didn't take the body away. These monsters... Dying isn't what's terrifying – it's being captured. All the abuse, all the torture, it's profoundly, deeply terrifying."

During the transfer of prisoners of war from secret detention facilities to official pretrial detention centres, what amounted to a deliberate "relay of beatings" was organised:

"They took us out, blindfolded us, and tied our hands, then put us into a vehicle for transfer to the Kharkov pretrial detention centre. Along the way, the vehicles were changed about five times. Each time we were moved to a new vehicle, we were beaten. They used plastic pipes, striking our fingernails, hands, and heads. Throughout the journey, they mocked us and used abusive language. They searched us repeatedly, looking for anything they could take – gold, silver, anything of value. When we were transferred to the fifth vehicle, an UAZ, they stopped somewhere and said, 'Maybe we should eliminate them and say it happened during an escape – claim they tried to run and we just shot them.'"

Medical care, which detaining authorities are obliged to provide to prisoners of war, was often reduced to mere pretence or turned into a form of humiliation:

"There was a nurse there who was supposedly 'providing medical care.' She barely even came in – the little hatch in the cell door would open and she'd just throw things

in at you, like you were a dog, and that was it. They would say, 'Go ask your Putin for help – he'll take care of you.' We had a fighter with us who had deep wounds on his leg, right around the ankle – deep, like this. She would just throw some cotton wool on the floor for him. She didn't provide any proper medical help at all."

The food at the POW camp in Kharkov was terrible, causing serious health problems, including fatalities:

"On the tenth day in the evening they gave us fish. It felt like they had taken it whole and thrown it into a meat grinder – bones and all – ground it up and gave it to us, like to pigs, 'here, eat.' In one of the rooms a man choked – something has gone wrong with a bone. He started bleeding, and while they were taking him to a hospital, he died."

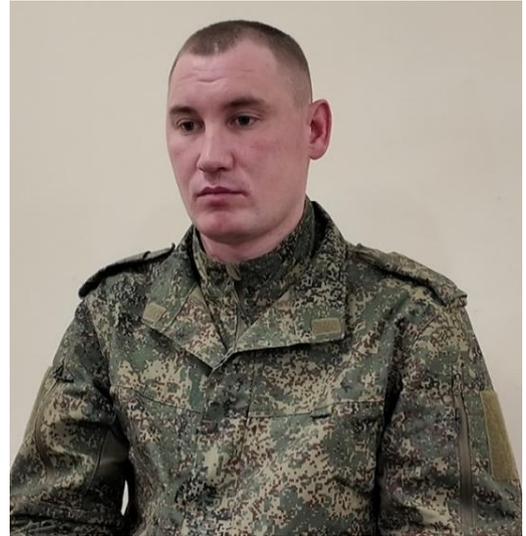
During the detention of prisoners of war at the West-4 internment camp, foreign journalists visited the facility and recorded interviews. Prior to filming, prisoners were told what they were expected to say. In return for delivering the required narrative, prisoners were offered cigarettes or the opportunity to call their relatives:

"They'd say, 'Want to call home? Well, then you need to say something in the interview for that.' They (the POWs) give interviews, and maybe they get a pack of cigarettes, or they're allowed to call home. The prisoners are told, 'Talk about how your evacuation worked. Say that evacuation doesn't work – that no one is being pulled out. Say there's no ammunition, that supplies are poor, that there's no proper gear.' Sometimes they'd just put a piece of paper in front of you so you could read it, but it wouldn't be visible on camera."

At the West-4 camp, prisoners of war were subjected to abuse in the form of forced, exhausting and purposeless hard labour:

"They constantly made us work. You were given eight hours to sleep – the rest of the time you worked, worked, worked. Even those who had problems with their arms or legs still had to work. Some people made artificial Christmas trees, some worked on gift bags, some made furniture. Most of us were forced to tie this wire – anti-drone wire. If you said, 'I won't do it, I don't want to work against my country,' they sent you outside. They made me carry stones, haul gravel. When it rained, I had to scoop water out of puddles. When it was hot, we pulled weeds all the time."

Victim No 2: Andrey Dembrovsky, born in 1997, a serviceman of the Russian Armed Forces. Captured by the UAF on June 26, 2025, near the village of Dvurechnaya, the Kharkov Region.



After being captured, the Russian servicemen were transferred “to the basement,” a secret detention facility located far from the frontline. There, unmarked Ukrainian militants immediately began what prisoners described as "welcoming beatings":

“When they brought us there, they threw us out of the pickup truck; our eyes were still uncovered. It was some kind of brick building, like a barracks. There were large men there, all wearing masks, without any insignia. They blindfolded us, taped our eyes, and tied our hands behind our backs. Then I realised we were being taken down into a basement. That’s where they started beating us with sticks: plastic or rubber-coated, heavy sticks of some kind. They didn’t tear the skin, but they hit the body very hard. They beat me with them and kicked me. My lip still hasn’t healed. When I was lying on the floor, someone stepped on my head and tore my lip.”

“As I was climbing the stairs, they kicked me. I couldn’t see where I was going; I stumbled, and they kept kicking me. Sometimes I would start to fall, and before I even touched the ground, another kick would come from the other side and hit me in the head.”

“Around three in the afternoon, they took us outside again. There was a large man in a mask. He looked like a Ukrainian Security Service officer. They continued beating us, pressuring us psychologically, striking our muscles with sticks. This time, they didn’t target the head the way they did the previous night.”

The "secret prison" was located inside a private residential building. Prisoners of war were subjected to regular torture there:

“The floor was wooden. When I fell, I smelled something rotten: it was soaked in blood. It was not splashes – actual puddles of blood.”

Militants of the Russian Volunteer Corps branded the prisoners they tortured:

“He [the Russian Volunteer Corps militant] started heating a round metal seal, about the size of a five-ruble coin. It had a trident on it, the Ukrainian coat of arms. He said, ‘Everyone is going through this now.’ I realised there was no point in arguing and said, ‘Please don’t.’ He replied, ‘What are you, some kind of patriot?’ I tried to explain without provoking him. <...> Then he put down a hunting knife and told me to choose: the knife – which would leave a larger burn – or the seal. I looked at the knife and didn’t answer. He understood my choice, heated the knife, and used it to burn me.”



Electric torture was also employed at the "secret prison":

“Yes, they used a stun gun on me. It was inhumane. They shocked me directly in the groin. They kept using it until there were burns. <...> I wanted to piss. I tried to tense my muscles to reduce the pain, but the current spreads through your entire body and even makes your back arch.”

Threats of execution and prolonged, agonising death became a routine element in the treatment of prisoners of war:

“When I was in the second basement, where the floor was covered in blood, they [the UAF fighters] waved their pistols around whenever they felt like doing it. They fired shots near our feet and struck us with the gun butt. If they noticed any injuries, they would shove a finger into them, or anything at all. They aimed at our heads and legs. They said, ‘You will die painfully. If we shoot you in the leg, you won’t be of any effing use anymore. If we shoot you in the leg, then you will definitely get another bullet later – straight into the mouth.’”

There was a special torture room in the "secret prison" in the Kharkov Region:

“They brought us in and removed our blindfolds. There were immersion water heaters, scissors – flat ones. Whether they intended to use them or whether it was purely psychological pressure, I don’t know. It was some kind of torture room. Everything was lined with tiles, apparently because it is easier to clean afterwards.”

Officers of the Security Service of Ukraine made prisoners record video messages with pre-prepared script:

“He [the SBU officer] gave me a piece of paper. It said that I was calling on Russian parents and other relatives not to send their loved ones to the front [of the special military operation], that we are occupiers, that we ourselves are like Nazis – all that propaganda – and that Ukraine is winning, among other things.”

At the West-1 POW camp in the Lvov Region, so-called “demonstrative visits by journalists” were regularly staged. Representatives of media outlets and bloggers were brought in to conduct interviews, while officers of the Security Service of Ukraine instructed prisoners in advance on what they were required to say on record:

“At West-1, the Lvov Region, they let almost anyone in: even ordinary bloggers came almost every day to film us. They told us we were allowed to talk to them, and in return they would let us make a phone call home. The first time, I believed them. When I arrived, the staff on duty were already there and immediately told me what to say: ‘Say that the command is bad, that Putin is like a dictator, that you were forcibly taken to the military enlistment office and made to sign a contract.’ After that, I refused.”

Before visits by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to the West-1 POW camp, the administration prepared in advance:

“The administration learned that the ICRC would be coming about a week in advance, and they suddenly started feeding us properly. The rations improved. They began releasing prisoners to the sports grounds, as required. The attitude also improved immediately. They also started issuing medical certificates and allowed us to write long letters to our families. But those letters were never delivered.”

After the ICRC visit concluded, conditions for the prisoners reverted to their previous state.

Victim No. 3: Andrey Sergeyev, born in 1997, a serviceman of the 25th Separate Motor Rifle Brigade. Captured by the UAF on January 4, 2024, near the village of Sinkovka, the Kharkov Region.

After his capture, the serviceman was transferred to a unit of Ukrainian militants in Kupyansk. One of the militants conducting the interrogation had previously engaged in combat operations on Russian territory as a member of terrorist organisations:

“Their commanders arrived and introduced themselves. One of them had fought in the second Chechen war against federal forces on the side of the Chechen militants. His commander, he said, had been Sashko Bely, a well-known figure.”



Prisoner-of-war camps tend to employ Ukrainians who avoid participating in combat and engage in looting international humanitarian aid, which does not prevent them from being among the most fervent supporters of the war:

“They are absolute scum. There are "familial contracts" at work for those who have avoided the war. They receive exemption from the front and a semblance of authority. We were not convicts; no charges have been brought against us by the Ukrainian side, yet they ensure you endure conditions worse than any convict. When a parcel arrives – from the Red Cross or as humanitarian aid – they pilfer everything. None of it reaches the prisoners. The only exception is if the aid comes specifically from a human rights organisation or the Red Cross, and only if Red Cross personnel are physically present in the camp. They might distribute some shaving kits, toiletries, and underwear. But as soon as the Red Cross leaves, it is all confiscated.”

If prisoners reported violations of their detention conditions to Red Cross staff, the camp authorities didn't improve anything but instead tightened the regime:

“Lately, they [the camp authorities] haven't even feared the Red Cross, because the Red Cross has established itself there as little more than a postal service. We stopped pinning our hopes on them. They'd come, and all we'd expect were letters from home – nothing more. We'd even think, “Just leave already,” because problems always followed their visits. Everyone's mental state varies, so some would lodge complaints with the Red Cross. They'd be called in for a chat, and some would voice grievances about the conditions. Naturally, the Red Cross would relay these complaints to the

camp authorities. The latter would nod for show, "Yes, we'll take measures." And measures were taken. For instance, if someone complained about lack of fresh air, they'd give us plenty – for a year. Every day after work, from five o'clock until ten at night, we were made to march."

At the West-2 internment camp, medical assistance was denied to prisoners of war, leading to fatalities:

"One lad stopped eating and received no help. He was isolated but continued to refuse food, and eventually, he died. After six months, he was gone. There's no medical care – just one pill for every illness. If you have a fever of 38.5, tough – you'll work. They won't relieve you unless it hits 39.5, and even then, it's not guaranteed."

Prisoners were forced into pointless, physically exhausting labour:

"They'd just put you outside, give you a hammer, and make you break stones, granite, marble. It's just busywork to keep us occupied. You could spend the entire day plucking grass. It could be anything. They would devise any task, simply to ensure you were not sitting idle. And if you were allowed to sit, it was on a stool – no leaning against the wall, no lying on the bed, God forbid."

Victim No 4: Private Artyom Samoilov, born in 1991. Captured by the UAF on January 8, 2024, near Terny, the Kharkov Region.

In one of the "secret prisons", set up in the basement of a private residential house, an extrajudicial execution was carried out against a serviceman of the Russian Armed Forces, Andrey, call sign Cheba:



“The three of us – me, Andryukha Cheba, and Frukt – were taken down to the basement. After some time, the Ukrainians burst in; they sounded young by their voices, shouting, ‘Who’s the youngest?’ I was 32 at the time, Frukt was 48, and Andryukha Cheba was 24. So they took him out – I don’t know where. I don’t know exactly how much time passed, because my eyes were covered, but it felt like maybe about an hour. All that time he was shouting, ‘Guys, give me five minutes to warm up.’ Then they brought him back. I asked him, ‘Did they beat you?’ He said, ‘Of course they did, brother.’ Some time after he was brought back, he died there in the basement. <...> Looks like they stripped him and beat him to death. Stripped him in the cold and beat him.”

After the first "basement", the prisoners of war were transferred to another "secret prison" located at a tourist camp, where they were forced to work and extorted for money:

“They made us clear snow. They tried to squeeze cigarettes and money out of us. Asked how much we earned. Like, ‘Bring us a million roubles, basically, and everything will be OK.”

In the secret detention facility, prisoners of war were attacked with specially trained dogs:

“They let the dog loose. He had a dog there on a chain. They set it on us. It started jumping at us, biting here and there. It didn’t bite me – I looked away from it. But it bit Frukt. It was jumping at me too. A big mongrel. They – the Ukrainian militants – were laughing, filming everything on camera. For them it was all just a joke.”

Ukrainian Security Service (SSU) operatives subjected prisoners of war to torture and abuse. A torture site was set up in a school building:

“The SBU came for us, blindfolded us, tied our hands, and took us away. It was a school building, either in a village or a small town. They started beating us. They went after Frukt first. Took off his boots and started hitting him on the heels. Then they started beating me.”

In the secret detention facility, Ukrainian militants mocked, beat the prisoners, and forced them to eat earth. The identities of two of the militants were established as Alexey Chayechko and Alexander Chakha, members of the Ukrainian Special Operations Forces:

*“The next morning, two weird guys burst in and started yelling at us, ‘So what, you f****ts, (expletive denoting homosexuals), came here to kill us?’ And they made us eat dirt. Raw dirt. They kicked each of us in the head. And we ate dirt, washing it down with snow.”*

Humiliation and sexual threats:

“Same day, down in the basement, he looked at us and said, ‘The choice is yours: a bullet in the head, or I cut your bollocks off.’ We said, ‘Just get on with it, bullet then.’ He said, ‘I’m not wasting bullets on scum like you. We’ll do the balls.’ He told us to get our trousers down. So we did. He sat us on the concrete floor, got his knife out. We sat like that for a quarter of an hour. Then they just said, ‘Get dressed,’ and gave us another beating.”

Militants from the Ukrainian Special Operations Forces doused prisoners with icy water and made them crawl naked through snow:

*“The next day, he (Alexander Chakha) turned up with three guys in balaclavas. They dragged us out of the basement and started beating us again. He says, ‘You’re too dry.’ He ordered us to strip. They brought a tank of ice water, freezing, and just sloshed it over us. They pushed us into the snow and made us crawl 100 metres. Made us push our balls into the snow. We were crawling, and Frukt got dragged back inside first. They forced me onto my knees, put a gun to my head. He said, ‘I’m going to blow your f****g head off.’ I said, ‘Go on then. Shoot.’ He asked if I’ve got family. I told him, a mum and a sister. ‘Give me your sister’s number,’ he said. I said I didn’t know it. He called me a liar. Just then, another one shouted over, ‘Leave it, don’t shoot him.’ And that was it. They chucked me back down into the basement.”*

Militants from the Ukrainian Special Operations Forces branded a POW with a carved-out swastika:

“Then he got his knife out and said he was going to brand me. They started cutting a Nazi cross into my back. They cut one into Frukt’s. But I’m a small guy – so that Nazi cross took up my whole back. They carved it right in, but I didn’t feel a thing. I was that frozen, completely numb.”



A captured Ukrainian militant, who had previously been held in Russia, returned to serve in the Special Operations Forces after an exchange and came to the prison "seeking revenge":

“They made me kneel down. He stood in front of me and said, ‘Look me in the eyes.’ So I looked up. As soon as I did, he smashed me in the face. You’ve got to picture it: I’m skin and bone, 57 kilos. He’s over 100 kilos. I went straight down. He said, ‘Get up.’ So I dragged myself back onto my knees. He pulled out a pistol, put it right against my temple. He said, ‘Last words.’ I didn’t say anything, just shut my eyes. Then he started firing, right next to my ear.”

“They were all drunk. Every single one of them. The guy on my right just kicked me with his boot, splitting my eyebrow open. Then they threw a jacket over my head and started beating me. All three of them. My head and body, everywhere. I went out cold. When I came round, my whole head was one massive swelling bruise. I couldn’t even open my eyes.”

When the POW with the call sign Frukt requested medical aid, militants from the Ukrainian Special Operations Forces took him away "for treatment", not to a hospital but to another basement where they subjected him to more torture and humiliation:

“A day later, they dumped Frukt back in the cell. I asked, ‘Where’d they take you?’ Turns out it wasn’t a hospital. They took him to ‘the pit.’ They smashed his ribs in there. They tied two bits of wood to his head, put a frying pan on top, and set the wood on fire. Like they were frying an egg on his head. When they brought him back, this Nazi (Chakha) just said, ‘Who else needs a doctor, then?’ We all got the message and said, ‘No, we’re fine. Don’t need anything.’ Like, ask for help and they’d just take you out back and finish you off.”

POWs were beaten on a regular basis:

“They smashed all our arms. My finger, look, it’s crooked now. They cracked my skull. Broke every rib I’ve got. My chest, my arm – that’s just what they did to me. And Frukt? Same. All his ribs were broken.”

“The beatings continued day after day.”

The militants of the Ukrainian Special Operations Forces (SSO) would get drunk and then assault the prisoners, after which they would contact their acquaintances to flaunt their “achievements” via video:

“They forced us to record videos. When they got drunk, they would enter, call their friends (via video link), and start beating us. They forced us to send greetings. They showed our backs to everyone, declaring, ‘Look what we’ve carved into them.’ You’d say you were passing on a greeting, and immediately you’d get punched in the face. They also struck us in the chest and stubbed their cigarettes out on us.”

The militants of the Ukrainian SSO discovered the phone number of a prisoner’s mother and drove her to a stroke:

*“They [the SSO militants] asked, ‘When was the last time you called your mother?’ I replied that it was in December. They said, ‘Did you know your mother is in hospital?’ I said no, I didn’t. They sat there, drinking and eating, while we knelt on the floor. One of them asked, ‘Do you want to call your mother?’ I said yes, if it’s possible, if you allow me, I’ll call and tell her I’m alive. This Nazi said, ‘Let’s go.’ He took me outside, pulled out a phone, and called my mother. She answered, and he began yelling into the receiver. It turned out she’d already suffered a stroke. They must have called her earlier – they got her number somehow and driven her to a stroke. She was in hospital, and he shouted into the phone, ‘This f****t (using a crude term for a homosexual) came here to kill me.’ He continued shouting and then asked if she wanted to speak to her son. She said yes, and he handed me the phone. [...] After we spoke, he snatched the phone back and kept screaming the same things. Then they took me back to the basement.”*

In this "secret prison", the militants of the Ukrainian SSO brutally murdered a prisoner of war:

“On January 31, 2024, they brought in a prisoner of war – his name was Lyokha Sokol, he was 36 years old, and he’d been wounded in Avdeyevka. They brought him in,

interrogated him – he had an IV connector in his hand. He said to me, ‘Bro, can you take this out?’ I said, if I did, it might make things worse. Maybe he needed the IV. We didn’t remove it. [...] Later that night, these three Nazis (SSO militants) – Chakha and two others – burst in, dragged him out, and started breaking him, literally. They smashed him with sticks, chairs, whatever they could find – and he was already wounded. Then they took us all outside, naked, and continued breaking him in front of us. They broke everything: his arms, legs, ribs, chest. Everything a person has, everything was shattered. His broken limbs dangled, completely useless. They broke him completely and took him back to the basement. There, they started stomping on his wounds. Later, they forced us to treat his injuries. And the Nazi (Chakha) said to him, ‘My godfather died in Avdeyevka.’ Lyokha’s last words were, ‘So what?’ – and the Nazi kicked him in the head and struck him twice in the back. Lyokha collapsed, and that was it. We carried him back to our cell. I looked at him. I checked his pulse – nothing. Just his breathing – you know, that death rattle. His hands were cold. That’s it – 200 (dead). They killed him on the night from January 31 to February 1. That night, they brought us a black bag; we put him in it. The next day, they loaded him into a car.’”

Officers from the Security Service of Ukraine visited the West-1 internment camp to extract false confessions from prisoners, fabricating criminal cases against officials in the Russian Federation:

*“Then, in July 2024, SBU officers arrived and summoned everyone for interrogation – people from different regions. There were about five of us from the Nizhny Novgorod Region. They called in people from Ivanovo, Kostroma, and so on. The SBU officers questioned us about governors’ payments, about the governors’ activities. They’d decided to put all our regional governors on trial. [...] One SBU officer said, ‘I need you to say the governor sent you combat drones, weapons, and so on.’ I said I wouldn’t say that. He said, ‘Fine. Are you comfortable in the camp?’ I said, ‘As comfortable as any prisoner of war.’ He said, ‘Well, you’re going to have a s*** time. We’ll beat the s*** out of you every day. Maybe even send you back to the basement.’”*

Victim No. 5: Sergey Korneyev, born in 1982, a serviceman of the 59th Assault Brigade. Captured by the UAF on June 2, 2024, near the village of Peschanoye, the Kharkov Region.



The prisoner of war was taken to a "secret prison" in Kramatorsk, where SBU officers subjected him to brutal interrogation:

“They led us in, sat us down, blindfolded us, and tied us up so we could not see anything. They asked where we were from, whether we were contract soldiers, volunteers, or had been mobilised. They questioned us about our units, the surnames and names of our commanders. Then they started beating us. They struck us with sticks – so forcefully that our skin split. I have scars on my back. They battered my legs. My kneecaps are now dented from the force of their blows.”

Following the initial "interrogation", the prisoners of war were transferred to another clandestine facility, where the abuse continued:

“They dragged us out of the basement, and the same kind of “interrogations” began. Then the gates opened, and six men in Nazi uniforms – German ones – entered. They had swastikas on their arms, German crosses, caps with eagles. They started beating us. They pummelled us, shot us with air rifles in the back, aimed at our entire bodies.”

In this "secret prison", one of the prisoners of war was brought to the brink of clinical death on an electric chair:

“There’s a garage there. You go inside, and there are two ‘voltage men’ standing with wires. The chair is already welded together, with straps to buckle you in. They just buckle you in – that’s it. You sit there, and they put a bag over your head. They start beating you until you exhale. Then they quickly tie it around your neck. Your mouth, nose, eyes – everything is bound so you can’t bite through. They wrap it around three or four times so you can’t tear the bag with your teeth. Then you start suffocating. You just run out of oxygen and begin to slip away.”

“In the garage, there was a welded iron electric chair, as they called it. They sat me down, buckled me in, put a bag over my head, and tied it. I started suffocating, ran out of oxygen, and passed out. They closed the door; through the bag, I saw it get dark, the light disappearing. I tried to stand up and tear the grey, cloth-like tape. I tried to rip

it, but I couldn't – I went limp and passed out. After some time, I heard voices. A white haze filled my eyes, and silhouettes with rifles appeared. Of course, I was stunned, completely disoriented. One of them shouted, 'You're lucky.' It turned out my heart had stopped."

"They put me back in the electric chair. One of them yelled, 'We barely got his heart going again, barely revived him.' Another replied, 'I don't care, put him back in the chair.' They strapped me in again and tightened the restraints. They attached these semi-circular crocodile clips to my arms and legs, connected them to the machine and started electrocuting me. They shocked me for about three minutes. By then, you lose all sense of time. Then they let me go. I collapsed and crawled to the street, dragging myself out. They lined us up; they beat the other guys too, tortured them horribly – attached clamps to their testicles and electrocuted them."

The prisoners were beaten so severely that flesh separated from skin:

"They hit me so hard that my skin peeled away. It came off the flesh and a blister formed – the pain was incredible. They struck me until the flesh tore. There were gashes, as if the meat was splitting open."

"They beat us with sticks and pipes. There was rebar too, or they used bats. They hit us incredibly hard."

"They tortured us, just tortured us. They watched to see if you'd survive or not, what would happen to you next. They just maimed people, maimed them."

For torture and abuse, they kept specially trained fighting dogs:

"They set a dog on us; it lunged at us. The dog was a Rottweiler. It tore our clothes, our trousers – ripped everything. It grazed my fist, scratched me, tore my skin. There were four others with me; they all felt it too."

A dog mauled a prisoner of war to death:

"There was one man – a prisoner of war – with a broken jaw. He lay in the basement, barely breathing. The Ukrainian militants told us, 'Finish him off.' We said we wouldn't. One of them ran around, gleeful, shouting, 'I smashed his jaw with a bat. Wrecked him completely.' The guys told us he hadn't had any food or water for three or four days. He just lay there. After they asked us to 'zero him out'(kill him), and we

refused, they dragged him behind the shed. We could see them pulling him. Then they just set the dog on him. The dog came back after 10 or 15 minutes, covered in blood. It had mauled him to death."

The population of "secret prisons" includes "slaves" and "convicts", who are held there for many months and are officially listed as missing in action:

"I saw it myself – there are "slaves" left there, our soldiers, sitting in basements. They just work for the Ukrainian militants, carrying stuff, digging, loading. If they don't follow an order, they start beating them with a whip."

When POWs are transferred from "secret prisons" to official internment camps, the beatings continue:

"After Kramatorsk they took us to the Kharkov remand prison. They loaded us in, and we were on the road for a very long time, more than an hour. We were driven blindfolded. Then another vehicle met us. They opened the door and let us out. There was a young guy sitting in front of me – they let him out, then me. They pulled out some kind of batons and started beating us. All of it happened during the transfer into another vehicle. They beat us very badly – on the back, all over the body. They deliberately didn't stop, kept striking hard, and threw us into another vehicle one by one. When the vehicle was full, we drove off."

Following visits by International Committee of the Red Cross officials to the West-1 POW camp, the administration punished prisoners for complaining:

"They, the ICRC, called in people who wanted to talk to them one-on-one. They were told that the camp authorities wouldn't find out anything. In the end, everything came out. Absolutely everything. All the complaints ended up with the administration. After that, we were banned from smoking, or they could just line us up and make us stand in the rain for two hours. Two or three hours in the scorching sun, in the cold – it didn't matter. They could make us stand for a whole week just because we didn't like something. Or we were not allowed to smoke for a week. There were times when we lined up for roll call and stood for seven hours, until ten, half past nine, roll call kept going. Only then were we allowed back to the barracks. You go in, undress, lie down to sleep. If it had rained, your clothes didn't dry. You wake up in the morning, put on wet clothes, and go to work."

Victim No. 6: Dmitry Shadrin, born in 1984, a serviceman of the Russian Armed Forces. Captured by the UAF near Verbovoye, the Zaporozhye Region.



After being captured, the serviceman was transferred to a "secret prison" located in a private house in the "grey zone". Prior to his transfer to the "secret prison", permission was given to subject him to torture:

“They tied my hands, but didn’t do anything to me at first. They got on the radio and contacted them – the guys from the "secret prison" – and said, ‘Torture him, get information out of him, do whatever you want. ‘Ram” him’ – that meaning kill him. That’s exactly what they said.”

Die-hard Nazis were particularly vicious:

“They all had tridents on their sleeves, of course. But I saw three real ideologues. All of them were covered in tattoos, arms full of tattoos, some had them on their necks. They had yellow armbands, NATO weapons, and were dressed accordingly, in NATO-style uniforms.”

The prisoner was beaten unconscious and subjected to electric shocks as a form of torture:

“As soon as you say ‘I don’t know,’ the torture starts right away. They just beat you until you lose consciousness. Then they revive you with a stun gun and cold water. When the stun gun stopped working, they hooked up a ‘tapik’ (TA-57 field telephone) and used that to ‘reset’ you again.”

Ukrainian militants gained access to the prisoner’s mobile phone and attempted to blackmail his relatives and coerce them into committing terrorist attacks in Russia:

“They told me, ‘Call your wife – we’ll give you the right addresses and coordinates.’ They wanted her to set fire to a military enlistment office or some military official’s car. That’s the kind of situation it was.”

The jailers recorded staged videos involving POWs:

“They told me to say on camera that I served in a certain unit – I don’t know why they were doing this. I was supposed to say that I had been conscripted and then signed a service contract with the same unit. That the commanders are scumbags, that we buy our own gear with our own money. That we don’t have any ammo. That drugs and alcoholism are everywhere, looting, and so on. They just told me what I had to say. If I skipped something, the camera was turned off and the rubber truncheons came out, or something else. When I came to, it was the same thing again – I had to keep on talking or start all over.”

They maimed professionally and threatened with execution:

“They used to remove the gun from safety and point it at my head. That’s first. Second, they pulled my hat over my eyes, but I could look down. I saw them point the gun at my knee or elbow. They told me, ‘I’ll shoot you in the elbow.’ But they mostly beat me up, trying to damage [internal organs] or break my joints.”

“They broke my ribs. I don’t know how bad it is; I am going to have an X-ray. But my back hurts all the way from my shoulder blades to the small of my back. It’s been hurting for three months.”

“They mostly tried to break something. They never hit me in the face. Well, they probably did, once or twice, but they tried to keep my face clean. But they often hit me in the head from behind.”

The beatings did not stop when he was moved from that "secret prison" to the official Ukrainian investigative service. He was beaten to force a confession during official interrogations:

“They beat me up during an interrogation in the Zaporozhye detention centre because I wouldn’t say ‘the right words.’ An aide to the prosecutor, a woman, was present at the interrogation. She was asked to leave. [After she did,] the guard hit me very hard in the back and head. She returned, and the interrogation continued.”

Instead of providing medical assistance, Ukrainian doctors maimed prisoners in the detention ward:

“There was a man, I think he was from Crimea, who was shot in both knees. That’s why he moved on crutches, and one of his feet just hung limply down like a beak. <...>

Later, when we were transported to the Dnieper, I saw him in the detention centre, in our cell, and I saw that his arm was cut off completely, with nothing to attach a prosthetic arm to. I asked him what happened, and he replied: 'They just didn't take the tourniquet off for a day, and my arm went all black. They could have left a bit more of the arm, but they cut it off to the shoulder.' That's cruel."

Custody conditions and medical assistance at the West-4 camp for prisoners of war:

"It was always damp in the barracks, even in summer and despite the plastic windows. It was damp anyway. The blankets were damp, and everyone was ill all the time. Medical assistance depended on the doctor. If a normal doctor was on duty, we could ask him for painkillers. But the other one only issued painkillers on recommendations from a GP, who was difficult to get to. He was supposed to work from 10 am to 4 pm, but he often left at 11 am. Or there were too many people requesting an appointment. No prescription, no pills. That's how it was."

Victim No. 7: Alexey Ruzavin, born in 1984, serviceman of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. Captured by the UAF on May 10, 2025, near Chassov Yar, the Donetsk People's Republic.



The "secret prison" was located in a private house in a town a short distance from the contact line:

“They (the UAF militants who came to pick up the prisoners) came, took us away, taping us, always taping us – they always taped our eyes and hands, sometimes our feet. They threw us into the back of a pickup truck and left. First, they put us into a basement. And then they turned us over to the intelligence service men for interrogation.”

“They dumped us into a basement. It was an ordinary private house with a cold cellar. There was nothing there. A bucket we could use as a toilet. No water, nothing to eat – they didn't give us anything. That's all. We spent the night there, and in the morning, they took us out for interrogation, one after another. They picked us up and took us for interrogation to another room. Sometimes they beat us.”

The SBU men who beat and tortured prisoners of war in "secret prisons" kept their faces covered:

“SBU men always wore balaclavas; the only thing you could see was their eyes. The others seldom covered their faces. Only SBU men always hid their faces everywhere, even in prisons. <...> We were later taken to another basement. As far as I could gather, it was the SBU. It was a building with white tiles. I was placed in one cell, and the other man in another cell. After that, there was an interrogation. They – SBU men – broke my rib. There were two SBU men there. One did something on a laptop, and the other one walked near me, hitting me now and again. First, they broke my rib, and then they hit me in the face. There was blood everywhere. The tiles were white, but when I looked into a corner, I saw blood there. They didn't even wash it; everything was covered in blood. They asked me, ‘Where does your mother work?’ I replied that she worked in an outpatient clinic for children. They said, ‘Write down the address, we'll target it with a missile.’ I said, ‘It's in Siberia, too far away.’ They stopped talking about it. They beat me again and interrogated me for a while. They didn't give me anything to eat or drink. They interrogated us one after another and returned us to our cells.”

Prisoners of war were forced to participate in propaganda videos:

“Then they took us to the third basement. That basement was hot, like a sauna, and very small. There were about 15 to 20 of us there, standing packed like sardines – you couldn’t even sit down. They also took us out one by one and filmed videos. These recordings were designed to discredit the Russian army. They came up with the videos and scripts themselves. They told us what each person was supposed to say, how to act, and then they film it. I don’t know where they posted it later, but until you recorded it, they wouldn’t move you on from that basement. Everyone went through it – just with different scripts. For example, someone is made to walk holding a butterfly net, and they walk next to him filming, like he’s going to the front line. So it looks like there’re no weapons in the Russian army and they’re going to fight with a net. That’s how they tried to discredit us. I personally was filmed with a guy who I was captured with. I had a wedding ring, which they took later. They staged it like this: I was sitting there cleaning a machine gun, and a ‘fellow serviceman’ came up and demanded money, saying, ‘The commander is collecting money for drones; he ordered everyone to contribute.’ And I supposedly didn’t have any money. Then he said, ‘I don’t care, the commander said if you don’t have money, take off your ring, we’ll pawn it and that’ll be the money.’ I refused, so he grabbed me by the chest, threw me to the ground, and we started wrestling, fighting. In the end, I was supposed to be on the ground, he sat on top of me and took the ring from my finger. That was the video they came up with for us. [...] Some guy came specially for this, supposedly from the police. He had a pistol in a holster and was wearing a mask. He walked around, thinking up what kind of scene to make us do. At first, I didn’t get what he wanted. He was walking around us, thinking what to come up with. Eventually, his eyes caught on my wedding ring, and that’s when he came up with the ring scene.”

Until the prisoners were officially registered, the militants believed they could act with impunity:

“They were constantly saying, ‘You’re listed as missing – we can kill you right now.’ That’s what they told us: no one will ever find you, because you’re officially missing.”

During transfers of prisoners of war to official detention facilities, they were beaten repeatedly along the way:

“On the way to Kharkov, they changed three vehicles. At one point they moved us into another car, then into another minibus. And along the way they beat us with sticks. When someone came in, we couldn’t see him because we were blindfolded. He saw us, came in and asked, like, ‘Where did you fight?’ We answered, ‘In Chasov Yar.’ And something just snapped in him – he went, ‘Oh, Chasov Yar, the paratroopers. Many of our comrades perished there,’ and he started smashing us with a stick. We just lay flat on the floor of the bus, and he was hitting us everywhere with a stick or some kind of bat, wherever it landed. Then they opened the back doors and I got kicked in the face. Basically, they beat us up and then drove on.”

Victim No. 8: Pavel Fedoseyev, born in 1987, a serviceman of the Russian Armed Forces. Captured by the UAF on February 14, 2025, in the south of the Donetsk People's Republic.



The secret detention prison run by the so-called "Petroviches" was located in an industrial sector within a residential community, far from the front line. A special unit of the Ukrainian armed formations operating there was responsible for torturing prisoners of war:

“Then they took us to the basement to Petrovich. When they brought us outside, I managed to catch a fleeting glimpse. There were entire rows of hangars, with people sitting everywhere. You could constantly hear screams. They beat people from 11 in the morning until 3 or 4 in the afternoon. They set me on fire – I almost lost my leg. They tied me upside down to a tree and beat me with bats. They didn’t ask anything. They just beat me. Then they offered to let me call home, call my wife, so she could carry out a terrorist attack. I refused, and after that they burned my leg and wanted to pull my nails out.”

Beatings were carried out constantly, using whatever objects were at hand:

“They beat us with bats, pipes, stools – anything. One stool broke on me, and then they beat me with a pipe for breaking the stool. They also loved firecrackers. Big firecrackers – they’d shove them into a pocket, and the pocket would blow off together with the skin.”

In order to instil fear, they executed one of the prisoners of war in front of the others:

“There was one guy, I don’t know his name – we didn’t have time to get acquainted. They cut the muscles in his legs and arms. Made deep cuts. Beat him and dragged him back into our basement. He died from blood loss. He was about 30. This wasn’t punishment specifically for him. It was more to scare the rest of us. They could pull out any one of us like that and execute him.”

Ukrainian militants deliberately let prisoners of war starve:

“Another one died of malnutrition. He was kept at the ‘Petroviches’ for six months. I don’t even know how he survived that long. He was from the Trans-Baikal Territory;

his name was Pavel. I don't remember his last name, but it sounded German. He served in the 139th unit, 5th company."

One prisoner of war was forced to remove a tattoo with acid:

"There was a man with the call sign Wagner. He had served in a private military company and had a tattoo that read 'Stormtrooper.' They brought him acid and made him remove it. He burned it off with acid, and ended up with severe burns and infection. I don't know what happened to him afterwards."

Pavel was so starved that he lost 30 kg:

"We were fed once a day. A plastic cup (of food) was given once daily. Sundays were called fasting days: they didn't feed us at all. Before captivity, I weighed over 90 kg, closer to 95. When they transferred me to the pretrial detention centre in Kharkov and weighed me, I was down to 64 kg."

Victim No. 9: Valentin Arsenyev, born in 1991, a serviceman of the Russian Armed Forces. Captured by the UAF near the village of Novosyolovka, the Donetsk People's Republic.

The "secret prison" was located in the private sector of a nearby village. Beatings began immediately upon arrival:

"They put me in a car, tied my hands, blindfolded me, and took me to some place, like a shed. There, they began interrogating me. They beat me with a poker and broke my ribs."

"I told them I was just an ordinary stormtrooper and didn't know anything. They didn't like my answers. They beat me, broke my ribs, then took a knife and started cutting me. They stabbed my leg, my chest, my back."

"They put electrical clamps on my fingers but didn't turn them on. It was a threat: they could turn it on at any moment. There was a large generator nearby. If they had turned it on, I don't think I would've survived."

"Later, they got tired. They saw that they had beaten me so hard that I couldn't move."

They beat prisoners so severely that the executioners got tired and took turns. They moved their victims from one torture room to another:

"They took me to another place, like a train car with one window and a door. The beatings continued there. They didn't use a knife anymore – they just kept breaking my ribs until all of them were broken. They kicked and punched me."

"They blindfolded me, tied my hands, threw me into a car, and drove me to the grounds of a large private house with many sheds. One had a basement. They put me there. Four other people were already inside."

Food rations in the "secret prison" were only sufficient to keep prisoners from dying:

"I was fed once a day: two biscuits and a can of saury were meant for two people. That was it."



Beatings continued in the official Ukrainian detention centre:

“First, they took me to the pretrial detention centre in Kharkov. There were three in total: in Kharkov, Kiev, and Vinnitsa. In each one of them, they beat us upon arrival.”

After the detention centre, the prisoner was transferred to the official West-2 camp, where beatings continued, this time – by the camp administration:

“When we arrived at the West-2 camp in Vinnitsa, they beat everyone right after they arrived, during the first clothing change, using hands and feet. Later, after registration and quarantine, they beat us with sticks. They would pull us to places where there’re no cameras and beat us.”

Victim No. 10: Kirill Ivanov, born in 1996, serviceman of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. Captured by the UAF on March 4, 2025, in the Kursk Region.

The wounded prisoner was not given any medical assistance; instead, they poked at his wound with a submachine gun:

“There was a bus stop near Zhuravka. We stopped a short distance past it. I was not myself because of blood loss or traumatic shock. There was that man [a Ukrainian militant], an old guy. He kept poking at my shrapnel wound with his submachine gun, like he wanted me to come to my senses and to keep me moving. I told him that I couldn’t move, that I needed time to recover, but he kept doing it.”



When they moved him behind the lines, they threatened him with execution:

“On the night of March 6, I was taken to another basement. There were two men there who tried to kill me. They threw me around the room like a rag doll. They told me, ‘Men like you must be killed for coming to our land.’ They put me up against a wall and took aim at me.”

After an interrogation at the SBU, he was transported to a "secret prison" where beatings never stopped:

“I was taken there at lunchtime. It got worse there. They interrogated me again, but they also beat me. There were three of them, one had the call sign John. The oldest of them was a big fat man, about 40 years old. He said he took part in fighting in 2022. He was missing a finger joint on one hand. Another was about 30, with a small red Cossack beard. And the third one was young. John was the redhead or the young one. They worked together, beating up every new arrival. They beat them with a stun gun, their hands and feet, hitting everywhere they could reach. I saw them beat up a young man; he was exchanged in late May. His name was Boris. They kept beating him until he lost consciousness. They hit him in the face with their feet. He couldn’t even cover his face. He lost consciousness, and the young one dragged him away. They broke another man’s ribs. Everyone suffered. They didn’t care if the man they attacked was wounded, they just hit where they could, including in the wounds.”

“They could beat you for asking to go to the toilet or when you wanted to take bottles with urine outside. They beat us when they didn’t like something. The youngest of them once ran into our room at night and started beating the first person he saw. Then he moved on to another man, saying, ‘I’m being discharged, which means I can kill everyone here, and nothing will happen.’ After that, we were dragged into the street and pushed into a barn, where the two of them beat us up indiscriminately.”

Before being transported to official detention centres, POWs were taken to a hospital in Sumy. However, local doctors refused to provide medical assistance and instead used the POWs as guinea pigs to train medical students in complicated medical procedures that were harmful to health:

“We were taken to a hospital, moved out one by one, put on gurneys, and covered with sheets. If they thought we didn’t place our legs or arms as required, they hit us with a stick. When my turn came, I was rolled into a room. A doctor approached me. I had a shrapnel wound near the elbow in my right arm. The doctor asked our guard, ‘What do you want me to do, sew him up or just bandage him?’ The guard replied, ‘Just bandage him, that’d be enough.’ They didn’t bandage me right away but brought medical students in. A doctor who was more experienced did an ultrasound on my arm, pointing at different arteries and telling a student that he would learn to draw arterial blood from me. He told me, ‘This will hurt.’ So the student practised drawing arterial blood from me. I nearly jumped in pain. The doctor told the student, ‘That’s not how it’s done.’ After these experiments, they just bandaged my arm and threw me back into the vehicle. These students also used Boris to learn to draw blood from the femoral artery.”

Pus started forming in his wound because he had not been given proper medical assistance and the wound had not been properly cleaned. Overall, it took seven months for his wound to heal.

Victim No 11: Mikhail Maruyev, born in 1994, a serviceman of the Russian Armed Forces' 76th Airborne Brigade. Captured by the UAF on August 26, 2024, near the village of Mirny in the Kursk Region.



After his capture and initial interrogation, the soldier was moved to the Sumy Region and placed in a "secret prison", where prisoners of war faced torture and extremely harsh conditions:

“Then they took us from there to the 'cage.' They brought us to a one-storey building, with cages standing outside nearby where the prisoners of war were kept. <...> Then they interrogated me. I said I didn't know anything. They accused me of lying and began to beat me. They beat me very badly.”

“The cages were overcrowded, holding 26 people each, and measured just 2 by 2 metres, built specifically for prisoners. <...> I spent a full day in one of those cages, while some people endured a month there.”

“They beat and interrogated me. I kept saying I didn't know anything, but they continued to beat me severely. They broke my right leg and pressed their fingers on the wound. They tortured me like that for two hours.”

In this "secret prison", simulated executions were used as a form of psychological pressure:

“They dragged me out and led me to the fence. They made me kneel down. I heard the sound of a machine gun being cocked and closed my eyes. I thought, if he's going to shoot me, he will – but then he just fired around me, laughed, and dragged me back.”

Victim No 12: Alexander Chikishev, born in 1993, a serviceman of the Russian Armed Forces. Captured by the UAF on May 7, 2025, near the village of Nikolayevka in the Donetsk People's Republic.



The captured Russian soldiers were moved by Ukrainian militants to another area of the village, to a stronghold in private homes, where they were subjected to severe beatings:

“They took us out and fired shots near our heads – first a pistol, then an automatic rifle. They put us in some kind of chicken coop, with our hands tied behind our backs, forcing us to kneel. For a long time, they kicked us, punched us, and beat us with a blunt object, like a bat. They cracked our heads and broke our ribs.”

After the initial interrogation, the prisoners of war were moved to a "secret prison" located in the basement of a private home in a village far from the front line:

“An US-made armoured vehicle arrived. They put us inside, and we drove for about half an hour in an unknown direction. They brought us to a private home and said, 'Congratulations, you've been captured by the Ukrainian National Intelligence Service.' They took us down to the cellar. There were three others there, and later I learned that one of them was also from the 5th Brigade. I was completely battered and broken and just lay there.”

In this "secret prison", Ukrainian militants, often intoxicated, brutally beat the prisoners of war:

“While we were there, one of them, whose call sign was Yakut, would periodically get drunk. He would drag us out of the pit and follow a cruel routine of tying us to an apple tree. With our arms partially extended and standing on our tiptoes, he would gag us and beat us with a shovel handle, axe handle, rifle butt, and whip until we lost consciousness. I was beaten especially severely because I was the group commander and a member of the Wagner Group. Afterwards, he would untie me and continue the assault, leaving me unconscious.”

After two weeks of beatings, the Ukrainian militants relocated the prisoners to another private house, housing them in the basement of a separate barn, where the abuse continued:

“We were moved to another house together with them, larger and on a bigger property, with a cellar in a barn separate from the main house. We lived in that cellar. It was cold, just a vegetable cellar at first, which we later made slightly more bearable. The same routines continued: constant beatings.”

“Then the senior officers arrived, mainly to conduct interrogations. I couldn’t see their faces – they always wore balaclavas. They took us out, tied us up, and beat us. A wooden chair leg appeared, and they also used a shovel handle, a hose, an axe handle – any object they could find. They even broke two shovels on one of us. They forced us to record a video saying that we agreed to join the Russian Volunteer Corps, with a Glock aimed at us.”

“In my case, they pulled me out of the pit. At first, they talked about cutting off my ear. One of them had a knife and said, ‘Choose – we’ll cut off someone else’s or yours.’ In the end, they threatened me with a gun and simply forced me to record a video.”

For refusing to join the Russian Volunteer Corps, Ukrainian militants used a brutal tactic of intentional, non-lethal shootings:

“They would fire rounds at our guys. Nobody wanted to join the RVC. So they had to make an example. They picked this one guy, who used to be in reconnaissance. They hated recon guys, because they were ex-recon themselves. Took a Glock and shot him in the thigh. Then the next bloke, a tank driver I think, he said no as well. They shot him six times. Four rounds hit him, all in the arms and legs. Then they just chucked them both in the pit. We had to patch them up ourselves with whatever rags we had. They wouldn’t give us any painkillers. Said they didn’t have any in their kits.”

One Ukrainian militant, with the call sign Yakut, known for severe alcohol abuse, attempted to murder prisoners in a drunken state:

“One time, he’d downed four bottles of strong alcohol. Dead of night, he came to our barn. The door was padlocked from the outside, just this little vent window. He couldn’t open the door, so he chucked a firecracker through the window. By some miracle, it didn’t go off. He must’ve realised it didn’t, because next thing we know, he’s hurling a metal shovel straight through the same vent. It hit one of the guys square in the head, cracked his skull.”

Victim No. 13: Andrey Chudayev, born in 1984, a serviceman of the 189th Separate Reconnaissance Battalion of the Russian Armed Forces. Captured by the UAF on April 12, 2025, near the town of Krasny Liman, the Donetsk People's Republic.

After three Russian Armed Forces servicemen were forced to surrender to Ukrainian militants, they were subjected to beatings, and one of the soldiers was executed:

“They pulled the three of us out: our group leader, call sign Rafik, me, and another lad. They yanked us up, taped our hands behind our backs, and started hitting us on the heads with their rifles. My group leader just lost it. Panicked. He got to his feet and ran. They opened up. Five guns, just blazed away. And that was it – Cargo 200 (dead). They just dragged the two of us off to the pillbox, then down to the basement.”



The POWs were transferred to a "secret prison" arranged in a private house in a village quite far from the line of contact. Upon arrival, the Ukrainian militants decided to execute one prisoner because they found an Orthodox icon and a St George's ribbon among his personal belongings:

“Right, when we got to the prison, they started searching us. My turn came. I had a little icon of the Mother of God on me, and a St George's ribbon. One of them saw it, pulled it out, and said, ‘Oh, look. Found one. What do we do with him?’ Someone else just said, ‘Zero him.’ Just like that. So this bloke pulled me aside, put a gun to my head, and fired. The bullet just went straight out at an angle, I think. I blacked out there and then. Don't know how long for. When I came round, my mouth was packed with dirt and grit. I heard one of them walk over and say, ‘Oh, he's still breathing. Finish him?’ And another voice said, ‘Nah, leave him.’ And then their medic, he just walked over and started stitching me up.”

In this "secret prison", a militant with the call sign Lyosha used electric torture on POWs:

“‘The electric chair’ was a metal frame – you sit on it. Next to it is this box, like an AC/DC converter. Wires come off it with these crocodile clips. They start clipping them onto you – your ears, your nose, your nipples, your genitals. There's a dial on it. He (Lyosha) would sit there watching, and if he thought you weren't getting enough, he'd just turn it up. You could see he was enjoying himself.”

“It feels like you’re falling. Like you’re blacking out. Your whole body just seizes up, every muscle goes rock hard, especially when they’ve got you on your genitals. Afterwards, my genitals were black and blue for a fortnight. I could barely urinate, it was agony. Brutal, all your muscles convulsing. The third time, when he turned it right up, I couldn’t stay in the chair. I was just clinging on, trying not to fall off. He started hitting me with this pipe, about 30 millimetres thick. In the end, I just dropped. No strength left. He did it to me three times, because I had a bullet wound. The guys with me – they got it even worse.”

Hounding POWs with specially trained dogs:

“He had these dogs. One was a massive Rottweiler type, and then a smaller female, she was like in training with the big one. The main one was a bulldog sort, stocky, jet black. Properly trained, knew all the commands. He’d set it on me again and again. Don’t know why, but it never really went for me, not like the others. He (Lyosha) loved his little game. He’d get the dog to latch onto the other lads’ arms and just drag them around the yard. Tore chunks out of them sometimes. With me, he’d pull me aside and just start hitting my arms and legs with a pipe, proper angry, because his dog wouldn’t do its job.”

Victim No. 14: Yevgeny Korolyov, born in 1991, serviceman of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. Captured by the UAF near Avdeyevka, the Donetsk People's Republic.

During the surrender, one Russian serviceman was shot and killed by Ukrainian militants:

“I jumped into the house and fell to the floor. They pointed their guns at me and stripped me. Then they shouted at my fellow soldier to come over and handed over his machine gun. He threw the weapon at them and ran. They immediately opened fire. That’s how they killed him.”



Prisoners were used for propaganda purposes:

“After we were brought to the basement, we were interrogated and beaten. They left us in the basement. I spent about a day there. Then they took us to some kind of training ground and began parading us in front of their people, like monkeys. They said, ‘They’re just people – you can kill them. They’re made of flesh and blood.’ After that, they fed us a little and returned us to the basement.”

In one of the "secret prisons", torture was recorded on camera:

“In the building where we were interrogated, they tortured my partner with electric shock and beat me with a bat. After that, they sent him to the basement and continued beating me. Later, they handed me over to a so-called ‘blogger.’ He started asking questions, but my head was clouded; I couldn’t understand what was happening. I got confused, and he began beating me with a bamboo stick. That was when I found out that bamboo doesn’t break – it splits. <...> He recorded all of it. There were two of them: the one who beat and interrogated me, and the other one sitting there and recording everything on his phone.”

Victim No. 15: A serviceman of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation who wished to remain anonymous.

In a "secret prison", Ukrainian torturers abused prisoners sexually:

“When we arrived at the basement, they began by trying to scare us while torturing us. Then they took a square bottle and tried to force it into the anus.”