



HUMAN RIGHT CENTER

**"85% OF MEN WILL
PASS THROUGH THIS
DETENTION CENTRE":
analysis of the testimonies of
those detained in the district
police department during the
occupation of Kupiansk**



KYIV 2024

«85% of men will pass through this detention centre»: analysis of the testimonies of those detained in the district police department during the occupation of Kupiansk / O. Syniuk, Ye. Sokurenko, S. Kochmarskyi; Human Rights Centre ZMINA. – Kyiv, 2024. – 44 p.

The report was prepared by Human Rights Centre ZMINA as part of the organisation's work on documenting war crimes.



The report was created within the framework of the project «Resilient Civil Society and Media Respond to the Ukraine War» and is executed with the financial support of the European Union. The content and opinions expressed in this document are the responsibility of the authors and do not reflect the position of the European Union

Contributors to the report:

Onysiia Syniuk, a legal analyst of Human Rights Centre ZMINA

Yelyzaveta Sokurenko, a coordinator of the war crimes documentation department of Human Rights Centre ZMINA

Serhii Kochmarskyi, a documentarian of Human Rights Centre ZMINA

Viktoria Sholokh, documentarian from open sources of Human Rights Centre ZMINA

Yevhen Vasylyev, field mission coordinator of Human Rights Centre ZMINA

Reviewing: Natalia Okhotnikova, human rights adviser of Human Rights Centre ZMINA

ZMINA is grateful to Solomon Brown for editing the English translation of the brief

Cover photo: One of the cells of the detention centre of the Kupiansk district police department

Author of the photo: Serhii Kochmarskyi

This publication contains naturalistic descriptions of incidents or victims that may shock, appal or dismay some readers.

More about Human Rights Centre ZMINA and its activity: zmina.ua, zmina.info

For comments and suggestions: info@humanrights.org.ua

© Human Rights Centre ZMINA, 2024

Content

General information	5
Resume	7
Categories of the illegally detained	12
Circumstances of illegal detentions	14
Conditions of detention in the temporary detention centre of the Kupiansk district police department during the occupation of the city	18
Interrogations with the use of physical and psychological violence	23
A case of death of a detainee as a result of torture	29
Distribution of duties between representatives of the Russian Federation	31
Forced labour	33
Circumstances of release	34
Consequences for mental and physical health	36
Legal qualification	38
Recommendations	43

List of abbreviations used in the report:

ATO/JFO – Anti-Terrorist Operation and Joint Forces Operation (since 2018)

L/DPR – so-called «Luhansk» and «Donetsk People’s Republic»

Mass media – means of mass information

AFU – The Armed Forces of Ukraine

TDC – a temporary detention centre

CC Ukraine – Criminal Code of Ukraine

UN – United Nations

RF – the Russian Federation

SBU – Security Service of Ukraine

FSB – Federal Security Service (Russian)

SFS – State Fiscal Service



Kupiansk district police department
Photo by Yevhen Vasyliev

General information

The city of Kupiansk, Kharkiv Region, was under the occupation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation for six months – from February 27 to September 10, 2022. The location 40 kilometres from the Russian border and the presence of a large railway junction determined the important role of the city for the occupying forces.

In the first days of the full-scale invasion, local head Hennadii Matsehora, now suspected of treason, cooperated with the Russian army and handed over Kupiansk to its control. At the same time, already on March 1, 2022, the residents of the city went to a peaceful protest against the occupation. The participants of the action chanted slogans in support of Ukraine, shouted in the direction of the Russian military: “Go away!” and raised the state flag near the city council building. On that day, Russian soldiers used force to disperse the protesters: they shot into the air, used tear gas and smoke grenades. In addition, representatives of the Russian Federation kidnapped the protest organiser, local deputy and activist Mykola Maslii. Nothing is known about the whereabouts of the man¹.

As in most populated areas of Ukraine that were under occupation, representatives of the Russian Federation deployed the practice of illegal detention and torture of local residents in Kupiansk. According to the media and the testimony of detained people, representatives of the Russian Federation have set up at least four so-called torture chambers in the city², among which is the detention centre of the

1 Mykola Maslii, the deputy of the city council kidnapped by the Russians, could be kept in the Kupiansk TV tower for a certain time / zmina.info, 23.11.2023: <https://zmina.info/news/vykradenogo-rosiyanamy-deputata-miskrady-mykolu-masliya-mogly-pevnyj-chas-utrymuvaly-na-televezhi-u-kupyansku/>

2 KUPIANSK: the history of the occupation of one city / Slidstvo.Info: <https://www.slidstvo.info/kupiansk-istoriia-okupatsii-odnoho-mista/>

Kupiansk district police department at the address: st. Kharkivska, 14. Ukrainian law enforcement officers found³, that the occupying forces started using this premises for illegal detention of people from March 2022. Residents of the city, as well as residents of other settlements of the Kupiansk district, were detained here.

Currently, the commission of crimes against the civilian population in the premises of the temporary detention centre of the Kupiansk district police department is being investigated by the Investigative Department of the Main Directorate of the National Police in the Kharkiv region. The body carries out pre-trial investigations based on the signs of criminal offences provided for in Part 1, 2 Art. 438 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine («Violation of laws and customs of war»). Sixty-eight criminal proceedings were added to the criminal proceedings by the prosecutor of the department of the Kharkiv Regional Prosecutor's Office, which were combined into one⁴.

The pre-trial investigation identified 66 victims, of which 8 were women. According to the confirmation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, five people continue to be illegally detained by representatives of the Russian Federation. According to law enforcement officers, two people died as a result of injuries and torture caused during illegal detention⁵.

Exact information on the number of persons who were detained in the temporary detention centre of the Kupiansk district police department during the six months of occupation is unknown. At the same time, according to the estimates of the victims, at the time of release on September 8, 2022, there were at least 130 people in the detention centre. At the same time, the victims, detained in different periods, note that new detainees were brought to the temporary detention centre almost every day.

The purpose of this report is a detailed study of the illegal detention of civilians in the temporary detention centre of the Kupiansk district police department. Thus, the document singles out the categories of persons who were subjected to illegal detention, analyzed the circumstances and grounds of such detention, the conditions of stay in the illegal place of detention, as well as serious violations of international humanitarian law committed against the victims, in particular torture and other cruel, inhuman or such degrading types of treatment and punishment.

The study also analysed the consequences of illegal detention for the physical and mental health of victims. The report contains a number of recommendations for investigating and bringing the perpetrators to justice.

3 According to the response of the Investigative Department of the Main Department of the National Police in the Kharkiv Region dated 29.11.2023 №30902 -/119-24-2023 to ZMINA's request

4 According to the response of the Investigative Department of the Main Department of the National Police in the Kharkiv Region dated 29.11.2023 №30902 -/119-24-2023 to ZMINA's request

5 According to the response of the Investigative Department of the Main Department of the National Police in the Kharkiv Region dated 29.11.2023 №30902 -/119-24-2023 to ZMINA's request



Rally in Kupiansk on March 1, 2022
Source: Suspilne Ukraine

Resume

The analysis was carried out on the basis of testimonies collected by the method of in-depth interviews with victims detained between April 22 and September 8, 2022 (29), relatives and witnesses (1) during the field missions of Human Rights Centre ZMINA.

In-depth interviews were conducted according to the methodology developed on the basis of international standards for monitoring the observance of human rights and the Istanbul Protocol (Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment) and in compliance with the standards of the Murad Code (A global, voluntary code of conduct for those collecting information from survivors of systematic and conflict-related sexual violence).

In addition, open source data documented by ZMINA in accordance with the standards of the Berkeley Protocol (a practical guide for the effective use of open source digital information in the investigation of violations of international criminal law, human rights law and humanitarian law, developed by the University of California Law School in Berkeley together with UN representatives) were used to analyse the broader context.

Thus, the analysis showed that:

1. Representatives of the Russian Federation, as well as in other regions of Ukraine, continued the practice of illegal detention of specific categories of persons on the territory of the Kupiansk district of the Kharkiv region, in particular (1) active and former military personnel, participants of the ATO/JFO; (2) military relatives, their friends and acquaintances; (3) persons with a pro-Ukrainian position and persons identified by representatives of the Russian Federation as supporting Ukraine, as well as those who refused to cooperate with the occupation authorities. A separate category among those detained were persons detained for minor offences (for example, violation of the curfew regime);
2. The detentions had no legal grounds, took place without following due legal procedure and are violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and may also constitute a war crime or a crime against humanity;
3. Due to the purposeful persecution of the category of people who support Ukraine, a broad and subjective definition of this group by the representatives of the Russian Federation is followed. In addition to former military personnel, persons known for their active civic stance, and those who openly refused to cooperate with the occupation authorities, people who, for example, shouted a patriotic slogan or wore Ukrainian symbols, were subject to persecution;
4. The purpose of the practice of illegal detentions and subsequent violations was to suppress resistance in the occupied territory. This happened due to the detention of active members of the community and those who the representatives of the Russian Federation considered to be such, as well as forcing the detainees to inform on other members of the community in order to weaken the group of people who support Ukraine;
5. Illegal detentions took place on the street, at home and at the workplaces of the victims. In most cases, they were conducted by a group of armed representatives of the Russian Federation, who hid their faces. The victims were not charged. In six documented cases, detention was accompanied by beatings and threats that could constitute ill-treatment;
6. Most cases of illegal detention can also be enforced disappearances – neither the victims nor their relatives were informed of the place where the person was being taken. The practice of keeping detained persons incommunicado from their friends and family has persisted. Both representatives of the Russian Federation and representatives of the occupation administrations refused to officially confirm the whereabouts of the detained persons. The only source of information about them were other detainees who were released. Such actions may constitute enforced disappearances and be qualified as a

crime against humanity. There were two cases when information about the whereabouts and fate of detained persons were used by representatives of the Russian Federation to cause suffering to relatives, which may constitute torture;

7. Taken together, the conditions of detention in the temporary detention center of the Kupiansk district police department may constitute torture. Despite the fact that the premises of the isolator are adapted for the stay of detainees there, the conditions created by the representatives of the Russian Federation did not meet the minimum standards of detention. In particular, among the improper conditions, overcrowding of cells (up to 24 people could be kept in a four-person cell at the same time), unsanitary conditions, heat, lack of air, high humidity, lack of hygiene products, sensory impact (constantly turned on lights), sleep restrictions (prohibition of new detainees to sleep and punishment for sleeping), inadequate nutrition, limited access to water (no drinking water, no shower), inadequate medical care. In addition, some of the detainees were placed in the temporary detention centre, where they were kept for several days under any weather conditions;
8. A repetitive interrogation procedure was followed, which included uniform questions aimed at: (1) obtaining information about former and active military personnel in the community, (2) information about the availability and storage locations of weapons, (3) people related to the resistance movement, and those who were charged with sending information to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, (4) participants of protests in support of Ukraine, active members of the community with a pro-Ukrainian position;
9. Interrogations in the temporary detention center took place regularly, accompanied by psychological and physical torture. Up to 19 out of 30 interviewees, including one woman, were tortured during interrogations;
10. Four cases of threats of sexual violence against detainees were recorded. The representatives of the Russian Federation also used the personal connections of the detainees to increase their suffering – they tortured family members and acquaintances in the presence of each other. In addition, five cases of simulated shooting were recorded;
11. The main types of physical torture were severe beatings and the use of electric shock. For this, representatives of the Russian Federation used stun guns and military field telephone TA-57 (the so-called «tapik»). Beatings were applied to 19 and electric shocks to 18 interviewees. In addition, during the torture by electric shock, representatives of the Russian Federation poured water over the detainees when they lost consciousness, and also deliberately poured water on the places where the electrodes were attached – in order to enhance the effect of the torture. Five cases of sexualized electric shock torture were

recorded. Torture, both psychological and physical, or inhumane treatment, as well as the intentional infliction of severe suffering or grievous bodily harm or harm to health, are serious violations of human rights law and the Geneva Conventions and may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity. The death of detainees as a result of torture may constitute intentional killing, qualified as a war crime or a crime against humanity;

12. Among the representatives of the Russian Federation, who carried out detentions, supervised the detainees, participated in interrogations, and also decided the further fate of the detainees, the distribution of duties and the existence of a hierarchy with FSB employees at the head is observed;
13. Representatives of the Russian Federation established a system of forced labour in the temporary detention centre, in which 14 of the interviewed victims were involved. At the same time, those detainees whom the representatives of the Russian Federation singled out as “political” were mostly not involved in the work. Forced labour, organised in the Kupiansk district police department, does not meet the requirements for the application of forced labour to the civilian population in the occupied territory and is a violation of international humanitarian law;
14. Release from the temporary detention centre took place according to several scenarios: (1) representatives of the Russian Federation receiving the information they needed, (2) discovering the fact that the detainee did not have the necessary information, (3) expulsion from the territory under the control of the Russian Federation, and (4) independent release of the detainees after the Russian military retreated from Kupiansk;
15. Victims complain of both physical and psychological consequences of detention. In particular, among the psychological consequences, the interviewees note insomnia, frequent dreams about past events, flashbacks, anxiety, fear of returning to detention conditions, panic attacks, and a psychological barrier to returning to their hometown. One victim attempted suicide during detention. Another two reported having suicidal thoughts. Among the physical consequences, the victims mention severe headaches, weight loss due to malnutrition and stress, exacerbation of chronic diseases such as ulcers, long-term numbness/loss of sensitivity in the limbs, knocked out teeth, impaired vision, cardiovascular diseases, metabolic disorders (diabetes), dermatological diseases, pain in the places that were most affected during the beating (kidneys, muscles, joints);
16. Nineteen interviewees noted that after their release they were interrogated by law enforcement agencies of Ukraine. However, only four indicated that they knew about the open criminal proceedings, as well as about their pro-

cedural status. Four interviewees did not contact the law enforcement agencies at all;

17. A number of factors repeated in this and previous ZMINA analytical materials indicate the scale and systematic nature of the attack. In particular, the geographical spread of the practice of illegal detentions, enforced disappearances and torture is monitored, as well as the following signs: (1) the identification of a specific group of civilians targeted for attack, (2) the presence of a repeated pattern of illegal detentions and enforced disappearances, (3) the presence of a repeated interrogation scenario, similar interrogation procedures with the distribution of roles between the representatives of the Russian Federation, (4) the repetition of patterns of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishments during detention and during interrogations, (5) the existence of hierarchies between the representatives of the Russian Federation in places of detention.

Categories of the illegally detained

Several categories can be distinguished among persons who were illegally detained by representatives of the Russian Federation and subsequently held in the Kupiansk temporary detention centre.

Members of the ATO/JFO, current and former military personnel were one of the main groups that the Russians purposefully persecuted in the occupied territory. The representatives of the Russian Federation gathered information about such persons from official documents that were at their disposal after the occupation of the settlement. According to the lists of specialised bodies, representatives of the Russian Federation were looking for military personnel, for which they conducted raids on the territory of the district - they went from house to house and detained men⁶.

Another source of information was the interrogation of the local population. Most of the interviewees noted that during the interrogations, the representatives of the Russian Federation asked for the names and locations of the military, in particular former members of the ATO/JFO.

As a result, another group of the local population that became the target of the representatives of the Russian Federation were military relatives, their friends and acquaintances, when the representatives of the Russian Federation found out about such a connection. Most often, this category was accused of cooperating with or helping the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

In addition to the military, representatives of the Russian Federation focused their attention on people who in one way or another showed resistance and had a pro-Ukrainian position. For these reasons, persons who supported Ukraine or whose position was known in the community, and those who refused to cooperate with the occupation authorities were detained. Representatives of the Russian Federation called this category of detainees “political”.

So, at least four people were detained for participating in the pro-Ukrainian protest in Kupiansk, which took place on March 1, 2022. Video from the protest was distributed in mass media and social networks. This was also used by the representatives of the Russian Federation in order to detain participants who were able to be identified by the video.

At the same time, representatives of the Russian Federation subjectively determined manifestations of the «pro-Ukrainian position». In its presence, in addition to persons who expressed it openly or were known as such in the community, former and active military personnel, their relatives and acquaintances were automatically suspected.

In one of the cases, the shout «Glory to Ukraine!» also became a sufficient reason for detention⁷. Anyone who did not express active support for representatives of the Russian Federation could be under suspicion of a pro-Ukrainian position.

It is possible to trace several motives for the persecution by representatives of the Russian Federation of this particular group of persons:

1. suppression of any resistance in the occupied territory; deliberately detained the most active representatives of the community, who could be the driving force of protest moods;
2. the actual belonging of such persons to a group with a pro-Ukrainian position and the desire of representatives of the Russian Federation to weaken such a group.

In particular, representatives of the Russian Federation called their practice of illegal detentions, forced disappearances and torture committed in Kupiansk and Kupiansk district «re-education». And they also claimed that the majority of the male population (according to the interviewees, representatives of the Russian Federation called from 85%⁸ to 95%⁹) should pass through the temporary detention centre.



I say: «What does re-education mean?». He [FSB representative]: «You brought him up here to dislike Russia, you don't know the real history here. He will be told there [on the territory of Russia]. We broke (mentally) people even tougher than him». He [FSB representative] said that if the son was arrested and taken away, it means that he is «pro-Ukrainian», which means that he needs to be re-educated, to explain to the person that he thinks wrongly¹⁰.

Another category of civilians who were detained in a temporary detention centre were those who were detained by representatives of the Russian Federation for «administrative offences» or minor offences – for example, violation of the curfew regime¹¹. This category was held mostly for a short time – from a day to two weeks. Among this category, according to the interviewees, there were minors¹².

7 Testimony of a KPO victim, documented by Human Rights Centre ZMINA, about another detainee

8 The testimony of a victim KHY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

9 The testimony of a victim KCO_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

10 The testimony of a victim KSO, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA, about the son

11 The testimony of a victim KHV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

12 The testimony of a victim KOY_02, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA



One of the cells of the detention centre of the Kupiansk district police department
Photo by Yevhen Vasylyev

Circumstances of illegal detentions

In the vast majority of recorded cases, illegal detention took place at the victims' homes or at their place of work. In such cases, the representatives of the Russian Federation knew the personal data of the detainees and were specifically looking for them. Searches were conducted both during detention at the workplace and at home. If they were detained on the street or at the workplace, the victims were taken home, where they were also searched. Cases were documented when representatives of the Russian Federation seized Ukrainian symbols from detainees¹³.

🗨️ *They were looking for evidence at my house... they were looking for flags, some nationalist leaflets, they were looking for everything related to Ukraine¹⁴.*

In addition, technical devices were seized from the detainees: laptops and phones. Representatives of the Russian Federation checked saved files, photos, subscriptions in social networks and personal correspondence, in particular, restored deleted content. In a number of recorded cases, the information obtained during such an inspection was subsequently used as an additional reason for continued detention in the temporary detention centre.

13 The testimony of a victim KTY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

14 The testimony of a victim KSM, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

One of the interviewees¹⁵ reported that he and his cousin were detained while trying to cross the border with Russia (at that time it was the only possible way for the male population to leave the occupation). The representatives of the border service of the FSB identified the interviewee, probably according to the lists they had.

“The same FSB officers who checked the documents asked: “Are you connected to the military?”, “Do you know Kolya Maslii?”, “Do you have acquaintances in the SBU, AFU”, “Have you been to the Maidan?””¹⁶.

After interrogation at the border, both men’s hands were tied behind their backs, bags were put on their heads, wrapped with tape, loaded into a car and brought to the Kupiansk district. The man said that during the interrogation in the temporary detention centre, the representatives of the Russian Federation also asked about the whereabouts of his wife, a head teacher for educational work, who in particular, taught patriotic education at school, and his son, a member of the ATO. The detainee’s family left the Kupiansk district at the beginning of the full-scale invasion. In one of the occupation telegram channels, the wife of the interviewee was called a «Nazi», and the son was accused of sending data to the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Representatives of the Russian Federation carried out detentions in groups of two to eighteen people. In some cases, representatives of the Russian Federation were dressed in civilian clothes, in some cases - in camouflage, mostly without identification marks, but always with weapons. In one of the cases, the representative of the Russian Federation had the inscription «FSB» on his clothes¹⁷, in the other – «Special forces of Russia»¹⁸. In the absolute majority of cases, the representatives of the Russian Federation hid their faces¹⁹ – by wearing balaclavas or masks covering the lower part of the face and did not introduce themselves.

In addition, detainees were restricted from seeing representatives of the Russian Federation – they put a tight cap and hood on their heads, and forced them to look at the floor. In most cases, the detainees’ hands were also fixed behind their backs with plastic ties, tape or handcuffs.

Detentions were also accompanied by beatings and threats that could constitute ill-treatment. In particular, representatives of the Russian Federation put weapons to the backs²⁰ or heads of detainees²¹, they struck with a butt in the forehead, in the stomach, with a fist in the shoulder, in the legs, in the head, they also kicked. In one

15 The testimony of a victim PHO, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

16 The testimony of a victim PHO, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

17 The testimony of a victim KMV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

18 The testimony of a victim TMS, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

19 The testimony of a victim KTM, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

20 The testimony of a victim KTM, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

21 The testimony of a victim KMS_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

of the recorded cases, teeth were knocked out²². In addition, representatives of the Russian Federation threatened to shoot the detainees if during further questioning they «did not like the answers»²³. Thus, one detainee was beaten for 20 minutes, and then beaten on the way to the temporary detention centre. The detainee was driving, as he was allowed to drive his car, accompanied by representatives of the Russian Federation, they beat him on the head, ribs, legs²⁴.

“ At the moment when I got into the car, my hands were already so thick, because they were beaten so much... I have never seen anything like this. It became scary. And he was beating me all the way. When I arrived, I could not lift my hands. They were completely knackered²⁵.

In none of the cases, neither the detainees nor their relatives were informed about where exactly the victims were being taken, and no charges were brought. In most cases, detention incommunicado (without contact with family, lawyer, etc.) continued during the entirety of the detainment period. Relatives learned about the whereabouts of detainees mainly from other people who were released after the period of detention in the temporary detention centre. Representatives of the Russian Federation hid the facts of the detention of persons, and in response to the request of relatives, they reported that there were no such persons in the temporary detention centre²⁶ or that «they do not provide such information». The representatives of the occupation administration also did not provide the relatives with official confirmation of the place of illegal detention. Indirect confirmation of a person's location was that representatives of the Russian Federation accepted parcels for them. In addition, detentions on the territory of the Kupiansk district were so common that local residents knew exactly where people were being held.

A case was also documented when the representatives of the Russian Federation used the interviewee's personal phone to hide the fact of their illegal detention: for three weeks, the representatives of the Russian Federation communicated with relatives and colleagues on behalf of the victim, claiming that «everything is fine» with them²⁷.

In some cases, representatives of the Russian Federation used information about the whereabouts and fate of detainees as a way to inflict suffering on relatives.

“ I was at all the checkpoints, they told me to go to the police [Kupiansk district department]. When I arrived there, they told me that there was no one there, that they were not arresting anyone. The next day I came again, I understood that

22 The testimony of a victim KTV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

23 The testimony of a victim KHV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

24 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

25 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

26 The testimony of a victim PAV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

27 The testimony of a victim KSV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

they had him somewhere. Neighbours said that they put him in a car with the letter Z and drove away. Then they told me that a lot of people had been brought and that my son was with them - in the police department. I asked if they would let him go. «Yes, of course, he will sit here for a while and then we will let him go». They said that he is a curfew violator, that I can bring things and food. I came the next day, they say that they don't have him and never had him. «How so», I ask. - «We don't have him, that's it». There was another episode. At the beginning of August, when I arrived, one person came out: «What do you want?». I asked about my son. «Wait». He went somewhere, came back and said: «Bring food and some clothes for changing». I collected everything, I arrived, and again: «There is no such person». That's how they were torturing me. Back in May, the «LPR» police told me: «How often can you come to us? The FSB arrested him, go to them and find out». I started going to the FSB. Every day they told me something new, that he is not there and never was, that they let him go on the first day, that he is hiding²⁸.

In another case, the detainee's wife was deliberately falsely informed that her husband had died. She learned directly from the interviewee that he was alive only after he was released²⁹.

According to the information of the Investigative Department of the State Police in Kharkiv region, five people detained in the temporary detention centre of the Kupiansk district police department are still in the illegal detention of the Russian Federation. Their stay in detention was confirmed by the International Committee of the Red Cross³⁰. At the same time, during the interview, the mother of one of the detainees reported that she had not received confirmation of her son's location from any of the authorised bodies or mechanisms³¹. The woman has no information about her son since the day of his illegal detention.

28 The testimony of a victim KSO, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA, about the son

29 The testimony of a victim KTV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

30 The response of the Investigative Department of the Main Department of the National Police in the Kharkiv region dated 29.11.2023 №30902 -/119-24-2023 at the request of ZMINA

31 The testimony of a victim KSO, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA, about the son



Photo by Serhii Kochmarskyi

Conditions of detention

The conditions in which the detainees were held in the temporary detention center of the Kupiansk district police department did not meet the requirements of international humanitarian law and human rights law and may amount to cruel treatment, and in some cases, torture.

The standard procedure was the «registration» of detainees in the detention centre, which was accompanied by beatings³², as well as the use of stun guns. For example, representatives of the Russian Federation resorted to prolonged beatings held with a plastic pipe or a bottle of water – beating on the back, kidneys, limbs, namely on their most vulnerable parts: the inner part of the hands, thighs³³.

Representatives of the Russian Federation combined physical and psychological violence. In particular, in one of the cases, a representative of the Russian Federation broke a detainee's rib during the beating and said that the victim could not be fed, as he would be taken to be shot tomorrow. The detainee was taken to a solitary cell, where he spent two days without food or water³⁴.

One of the detainees was kept for several days in the corridor of the temporary detention centre, handcuffed to the door. At the same time, he was forbidden

32 The testimony of a victim KHV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

33 The testimony of a victim KSV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

34 The testimony of a victim KHV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

to receive food, and water was given only on the second or third request. It was also possible to fulfil natural needs only twice. Three days later, the detainee was placed in a cell and severely beaten³⁵:

“They believed that: “You will drink less, you will go to the toilet less”. I asked for a drink, and they said to me: «How long have you been patient? It’s okay, stay still». It was the same with the toilet: «How long have you endured?» I say: «Two, maybe three hours». They: «It’s okay, stay still».

Other detainees were also chained to doors in the corridor and hung in various positions, including the «swallow» (hands tied behind the back and raised above the head), before being placed in the chamber in this position they were held for several hours^{36 37}.

Some individuals, including 9 interviewees, were kept in a walking courtyard for several days. There was a metal bench on which four people could sit, while there were seven to thirteen in the courtyard. At the same time, some were handcuffed to horizontal bars, making any movement impossible. Detainees were in the yard under all weather conditions: both when the temperature dropped at night and during heat or rain. At the same time, people were in the clothes in which they were detained: mainly in light home clothes, sometimes in underwear³⁸. At least three cases of the detention of women in the walking courtyard have been reported³⁹.

To fulfil natural needs in the walking yard, a bucket had to be used in the absence of privacy. One of the interviewees reported that she was kept there for three days without any opportunity to go to the toilet.

The conditions in the cells created by the representatives of the Russian Federation were also inappropriate.

Overpopulation of cells. The cells in the detention centre of the Kupiansk District Department were designed to hold from one to four people. At the same time, during the occupation, a significantly larger number of people were kept in all of them at the same time, which made proper living conditions impossible. In particular, eight people could be in a cell designed for one person at the same time⁴⁰. There are 6 in a two-bed cell⁴¹, from 12 to 15 in a three-bed cell⁴², from 9 to 24 in a four-bed cell⁴³. The number of detainees was constantly changing, as detainees (mostly for administrative

35 The testimony of a victim KHY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

36 The testimony of a victim KOY_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

37 The testimony of a victim KTM, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

38 The testimony of a victim KSV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

39 The testimony of victims KBA, SLA and KTY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

40 The testimony of a victim KPO, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

41 The testimony of a victim KTM, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

42 The testimony of a victim KOY_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

43 The testimony of a victim KCO_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

offences) were released within a few hours or days and almost immediately replaced by other people. People slept in pairs on bunks, under bunks and in the passage⁴⁴.

Women in the temporary detention centre were kept in a separate cell designed for two people, and later, due to the increase in the number of detainees, they were transferred to a four-bed cell. At different times, from six to eleven of them were in the cell at the same time⁴⁵. According to one of the victims, over three months of her detention, more than 40 women were detained in the cell⁴⁶.

Inadequate/unsanitary conditions. The overcrowding of the cells caused a number of other consequences, including heat, lack of fresh air and increased humidity in the cell. As a punishment, the representatives of the Russian Federation also in some places additionally limited the access of air to the cell: for a period of several hours to a day, they closed the «feeder» [a small window in the door of the cell through which food was passed]. Thus, as the interviewees described, being in a cell added even greater suffering^{47 48}. The lack of air in the cells was such that some detainees fainted after going outside⁴⁹. The women held in the temporary detention centre were also not given proper hygiene products – one of the women was given a piece of gauze upon request during menstruation⁵⁰.

Sensory impact. The light in the cells was on around the clock, and was not turned off even at the request of the detainees⁵¹. In one of the cells, the water supply system was broken, for some time the water dripped constantly, and when asked to repair the system, the representatives of the Russian Federation completely shut off the water and turned on the water supply periodically and at their discretion.

Sleep restriction. The interviewees also described the practice when the guards of the TDC forbade new detainees to sleep. In such cases, the responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the restriction was assigned to other detainees. The guards periodically looked into the cell, and if they saw that a person was sleeping, they entered, put everyone against the wall and beat them. This could happen several times a day⁵².

Improper nutrition. At first, the detainees were fed once a day⁵³, and then twice – in the morning and in the evening. They gave the leftovers of the food provided for the military of the Russian Federation. Therefore, the food was not enough:

44 The testimony of a victim KHY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

45 The testimony of a victim SPS, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

46 The testimony of a victim KTY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

47 The testimony of a victim KOY_02, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

48 The testimony of a victim KMV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

49 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

50 The testimony of a victim SLA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

51 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

52 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

53 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA


a spoonful of pasta per person, sometimes with stew. In addition, according to the testimony of the victims, it was unbearable to eat due to its low quality. Detainees in cells that were given food last, could remain four spoons for twenty people⁵⁴. There was also no variety, sometimes soup or porridge was given once a month. After the Ukrainian military hit the customs building, where one of the headquarters of representatives of the Russian Federation was located, the situation with food worsened – food was again given only once a day⁵⁵. For two or three days, the detainees were not given food at all, even from parcels which were brought by their relatives⁵⁶.

In conditions of inadequate nutrition, the detainees survived thanks to parcels from relatives. However, not everyone was allowed to receive them – in some cases, representatives of the Russian Federation refused to receive parcels for detainees who they called «terrorists»⁵⁷. In addition, they took some of the things and food for themselves⁵⁸. Periodically, food from the parcels was given out already when it spoiled due to storage at high temperature⁵⁹.

Limited access to water. For the first time (month), detainees were given almost no water: 10 litres per 20 people⁶⁰. In one of the cells, due to the lack of a sink, the detainees had to wash dishes in the toilet. They had the opportunity to wash themselves only from bottles in which water was collected⁶¹.

Inadequate medical care. Detainees were mostly denied medical care, so they almost never applied for it, as they understood the futility of the request. The TDC was visited daily by a «nurse» who, according to the detainees, probably did not have proper medical education⁶². In the case when the medicines were handed over by relatives, not all detainees were given them⁶³.

Representatives of the Russian Federation responded aggressively to requests for medical assistance.

 *When we knocked and shouted that a person was unconscious, they could come in, beat both us and that person, they could say: «Well, if they die before morning, lots will be drawn, who will be responsible for them next»⁶⁴.*

Psychological violence. Representatives of the Russian Federation also resorted to a number of psychological abuse and degrading treatment, and – punish-

54 The testimony of a victim KCO_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

55 The testimony of a victim KPO, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

56 The testimony of a victim KSV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

57 The testimony of a victim KMS_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

58 The testimony of a victim KHY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

59 The testimony of a victim KOY_02, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

60 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

61 The testimony of a victim KCO_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

62 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

63 The testimony of a victim KOY_02, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

64 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

ment outside of interrogations. Psychological abuse in their totality can reach the threshold of torture.

As in other places of illegal detention⁶⁵, representatives of the Russian Federation forced detainees to sing the Russian national anthem, «Katyusha», etc. Both men and women had to learn the texts and sing. If the detainee made a mistake or stumbled, he was beaten with a stick, kicked and sent to learn, and later checked again. Sometimes they were forced to sing a hymn to get food⁶⁶. Representatives of the Russian Federation also periodically imposed a condition on those detained for «administrative offences»: if a person sings the national anthem without error, they will be released. If they made a mistake, they were returned to the cell.

One of the most traumatic psychological influences was the fact that they constantly heard how others were being tortured. Interrogations at the TDC were conducted during the day and lasted until the middle of the night⁶⁷. Screams during the torture could be heard in all the cells⁶⁸, since the investigation room and the interrogation room were located on the same floor.

🗨️ *Screaming... It's more nerve-wracking than being interrogated⁶⁹.*

Detainees could not sleep because of the screams of others, as well as because of the expectation that one of them might be taken away for interrogation next⁷⁰.

In one case, which constitutes torture, detainees were forced to cut a tattoo of another prisoner:

🗨️ *They [representatives of the Russian Federation] first burned it with a torch - it didn't work. They put out lighters, poked with keys - nothing came out. They took him to the cell, asked: «Who is the main? «I was appointed the main one in the cell. They say: «If it doesn't disappear until the morning, all of you will have problems». And then the boy himself said: «Guys, cut». We had plastic forks, we lit them on fire with a match, pressed them so that they were hard, and thus tore out the tattoo in pieces⁷¹.*

Two more interviewees told about the case when they were forced to clean the interrogation room, where the detainee had been tortured and forced to cut off the tattoo [swastika]⁷².

65 "Women's cells" of the Kherson torture chamber: analytical report based on the testimony of detainees, p. 23; Torture and ill-treatment of the civilian population in Ukrainian territories under Russian occupation, p.48

66 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

67 The testimony of a victim KCO_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

68 The testimony of a victim KCO_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

69 The testimony of a victim KPO, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

70 The testimony of a victim KHY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

71 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

72 The testimony of a victim KMS_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA



Interrogation room
Photo by Serhii Kochmarskyi

Interrogations with the use of physical and psychological violence

All interviewed victims were interrogated by representatives of the Russian Federation. Most were interrogated three to seven times. In one case, a detainee was interrogated every 2 hours during the first three days⁷³:

💬 *They started beating me with bats, then waited for me to start telling something, but I still couldn't tell them anything. And then they told me, so we will work through a lie detector. That's what they called a stun gun. [...] Of all interrogations, I remember only one without electric shock and beatings.*

Depending on the reason for detention and the information obtained during the first interrogation, detainees were released, continued to be detained without interrogation, or re-interrogated.

73 The testimony of a victim SLA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

In almost all recorded cases, especially those who were detained purposefully, the interrogation scenario was repeated. Representatives of the Russian Federation asked the same questions at each subsequent interrogation with minor changes in wording.

Among the questions posed by the representatives of the Russian Federation, the following motives for the interrogations can be distinguished:

1. obtaining information about the military service of detainees or their relatives - when and where they served, with who^{74 75};
2. receiving information about other former military personnel in the community, participants of the ATO/JFO, active members of the Territorial Defence or the resistance movement, those who send information to the Armed Forces of Ukraine⁷⁶;
3. obtaining information on the availability and places of storage of weapons;
4. obtaining information about other members of the community with a pro-Ukrainian position^{77 78}.

In addition, representatives of the Russian Federation inclined the detainees to denunciation.

The interviewees, in addition to the above-mentioned questions, also mention the requirement to «turn in at least someone» and the condition that in case of denunciation of another member of the community, they will be released. It can be assumed that the purpose of such practice was to spread fear and mistrust among the rest of the civilian population.

Interrogations with torture lasted from half an hour to three. The lack of an answer or the answer «I don't know» provoked an aggressive reaction from representatives of the Russian Federation and increased torture. In most cases, interrogations began with beatings, followed by questions and other torture methods, including electric shocks. Detainees noted that sometimes they could not hear or understand questions due to physical pain⁷⁹.

In one of the documented cases, the interrogation was conducted using a polygraph. During this, the detainee was not tortured, probably in order to obtain undistorted data⁸⁰.

74 The testimony of a victim KOY_02, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

75 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

76 The testimony of a victim KCO_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

77 The testimony of a victim KMY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

78 The testimony of a victim KTY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

79 The testimony of a victim KCO_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

80 The testimony of a victim PHO, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

Psychological violence and intimidation. Representatives of the Russian Federation widely used these methods to obtain information. In particular, during the interrogation, they claimed that they had “already caught everyone” [involved in the incriminated incident], that they «already know everything»⁸¹. They also used the «good and bad policeman» technique: when one of the representatives of the Russian Federation demanded to kill the detainee, and the other convinced that «the person is normal, you need to talk to them normally»⁸².

In order to intimidate, individual representatives of the Russian Federation also did not cover their faces and stated that this was because the detainee would not be released, so they would not be able to recognize anyone in the future⁸³.

The interviewees noted that representatives of the Russian Federation threatened them with murder⁸⁴ and the use of other types of torture, including electric shock⁸⁵, shoot the knee, cut off the fingers⁸⁶, pull out nails, cut off an ear⁸⁷, cut off the skin⁸⁸. They also threatened that they would take us to Russia or the so-called «L/DPR», where they would «speak differently»⁸⁹ or they will hand over the detainees to other representatives of the Russian Federation, known for «greater cruelty».

In three cases, the interviewees were threatened that they would find their relatives and torture them in the presence of the detainee or kill them, and vice versa^{90 91 92}.

Four cases of threats of sexual violence were also recorded – in particular, the threats concerned the penetration of the anus by different objects⁹³, connecting the electric shock to the genitals⁹⁴ and gang rape^{95 96}.

81 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

82 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

83 The testimony of a victim KOY_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

84 The testimony of a victim KHY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

85 The testimony of a victim KOY_02, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

86 The testimony of a victim KGA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

87 The testimony of a victim KDY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

88 The testimony of a victim SLA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

89 The testimony of a victim KSM, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

90 The testimony of a victim KMY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

91 The testimony of a victim KSM, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

92 The testimony of a victim KSV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

93 The testimony of a victim KSV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

94 The testimony of a victim KTM, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

95 The testimony of a victim SLA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

96 Dmytro and Olena from Kupiansk were imprisoned for giving the SBU a photo of Russian equipment: the couple told how they waited for the deoccupation of the city in detention / zmina. info, 25.10.2022: <http://surl.li/oksxr>

One of the detained women was forced to undress for a personal examination in the presence of several male representatives of the Russian Federation⁹⁷.

Torture. Up to 19 out of 27 interviewed persons, including one woman, were tortured during interrogations. Regarding one of the detainees, there is no sufficient information for the period of detention⁹⁸. Torture, as a rule, was used throughout the duration of the interrogation. In some places, the interrogations were preceded by severe beatings, which began mainly in the corridor on the way to the interrogation room, in order to «encourage» the detainees to answer questions.

In addition, torture was used when detainees were asked questions – some interviewees, as mentioned above, were disoriented and unable to answer due to physical pain. Torture could continue even after the interrogations. In particular, detainees could be left in an uncomfortable position for a long time. In one of the cases, the detainee was thrown into a cell without unwrapping the tape from his hands, feet, and eyes, and was left in this position overnight until he was taken to the next interrogation⁹⁹.

Beating. Severe beatings were the most common form of torture – they were used in all 19 recorded cases. Beatings were carried out both with hands and feet, and with different objects – rubber and metal sticks, clubs, butts of firearms. Blows were inflicted on the whole body, with targeted blows on the knees, muscles, back, ribs, and chest. In one of the cases, the detainee's shoes were removed and his feet and heels were beaten, after which he could not stand on his feet¹⁰⁰. In some cases, blows were inflicted on the head – a helmet was put on it, which was beaten with another helmet¹⁰¹ or a book¹⁰².

The beatings were intense: bruises and hematomas did not go away after them for several weeks. On some detainees, they completely covered the side or the whole body. Most of the interviewees who reported being beaten could not stand up after the interrogations – they were dragged to the cell under their arms.



I crawled out of that office on my elbows. I thought that if I don't crawl, then I'm as good as dead¹⁰³.

One detainee was smashed in the head with a butt so that the bones of the skull were visible. The man was not given medical help, he lay for two days without

97 The testimony of a victim TMS, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

98 It is not possible to obtain information regarding the period of detention, as the whereabouts and fate of the detainee are still unknown

99 The testimony of a victim PAV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

100 The testimony of a victim KMY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

101 The testimony of a victim KHY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

102 The testimony of a victim KOY_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

103 The testimony of a victim KMS_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

getting up¹⁰⁴. Another was hit on the back of the head while lying face down on the floor, knocking out two teeth¹⁰⁵.

In addition to inflicting physical suffering, beatings were also used as a means of psychological abuse.

“ There they ask questions for 20-30 minutes, and then they just torture you: «Sit down!» I sat down. They hit a couple of times. «Why did you sit down? Get up, I told you». - «You're a piece of shit! Why did you get up? Lie down!». I was hit under my feet - I had already fallen. You can't get up, because your legs are already blue, your whole body is bruised, you are in shock, in panic, in stress¹⁰⁶.

Most of the detainees were handcuffed during the beating, which squeezed their hands until they became numb¹⁰⁷, and blindfolded.

One case of torture by **suffocation** was recorded – a plastic bag was put on the detainee's head and clamped¹⁰⁸.

Application of electric shock. Almost all persons who were tortured were electrocuted – 18 people, one of whom was a woman. Representatives of the Russian Federation called this process a «lie detector».

“ Using electric shock is their favourite procedure. They constantly electrocuted detainees¹⁰⁹.

Electric shocks were used for electric torture, as well as the military field telephone TA-57. The electric shock was applied to all parts of the body: from the back to the legs. In one case, a detainee was beaten on the heels with a stun gun¹¹⁰.

The representatives of the Russian Federation called the use of the «tapik» (military field telephone TA-57) a «call to Putin». Electrodes were attached to different parts of the body: neck, ribs, abdomen, wrists, ankles¹¹¹, fingers and toes, ears, lips. In addition, during one interrogation, electrodes were connected to different parts of the body so that habituation did not occur and the painful effect of torture was preserved.

Due to the power of the electric shock, the eyes of the detainees went dark, foam came from the mouth, and the body tossed¹¹², burns remained at the plac-

104 The testimony of a victim KCO_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA, about another detainee

105 The testimony of a victim KTM, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

106 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

107 The testimony of a victim KTM, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

108 The testimony of a victim VTS, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

109 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

110 The testimony of a victim KTM, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

111 The testimony of a victim SLA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

112 The testimony of a victim KCO_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

es where the electrodes were connected¹¹³, uncontrollable urination, nosebleeds, numbness of the parts of the body to which the electrodes were attached, and a rise in body temperature occurred. One detainee, after prolonged application of current, had the upper layer of the skin peeled off in the places where the electrodes were attached¹¹⁴.

A number of interviewees noted that during torture with electric shock, representatives of the Russian Federation poured water over them when they lost consciousness. As soon as the person regained consciousness, they continued to torture him^{115 116}. Water was also deliberately poured on the places where the electrodes were attached – to enhance the effect¹¹⁷.

In one of the cases, the detainee, a 62-year-old man, reported that he was given an injection of an unknown substance so that he «would not pass out» during electric torture¹¹⁸.

In five cases, sexualized torture by electric shock was recorded – electrodes were connected to the genitals.

Psychological suffering that reaches the threshold of torture. In a number of recorded cases, persons who have family or friendship ties were simultaneously detained in the TDC. The representatives of the Russian Federation used them to cause additional suffering during torture. So, in one of the cases, two brothers were tortured at the same time^{119 120}.

In another case, a man and a girl who were in a friendly relationship were interrogated at the same time.

Also, the representatives of the Russian Federation used simulations of executions to intimidate them, which could amount to torture, because the detainees were convinced that the executions were real due to their stay in the TDC, interrogations and previous threats. In particular, five cases of simulated shooting were recorded. In three of them, a weapon was pointed at the back of the head of the detainees¹²¹ their faces¹²², another two were shot with blank cartridges¹²³.

113 The testimony of a victim KMS_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

114 The testimony of a victim KMV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

115 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

116 The testimony of a victim KCO_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

117 The testimony of a victim KMV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

118 The testimony of a victim KOY_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

119 The testimony of a victim KTM, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

120 The testimony of a victim KTD, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

121 The testimony of a victim KSV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

122 The testimony of a victim KSM, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

123 The testimony of a victim KMY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA



Kostyantyn Myronov
Photo from open access

© Priv

A case of death of a detainee as a result of torture

According to Ukrainian law enforcement officers, two people are known to have died as a result of physical injuries and torture caused during illegal detention. Thus, ZMINA documented the testimony regarding the death of Kostyantyn Myronov, a former member of the ATO/JFO, who at the time of the occupation of Kupiansk taught anatomy at the local medical college, and also held classes on patriotic education at the institution.

On September 3, 2022, representatives of the Russian Federation detained Kostyantyn Myronov and his girlfriend. During the interrogations, both were accused of passing on information to the AFU and adjusting fire on the customs post, which had been hit by a projectile a few days before.

At first, the detainees were interrogated separately. However, during one of the girl's interrogations, Kostyantyn Myronov was «brought» into the room, who at that time, probably due to previous interrogations, could no longer move on his own.

The man began to be severely beaten in her presence ¹²⁴:



There was a rocket attack in that room, many of them died, they asked for it. The accusations were like, «You can't even imagine how many loved ones we've lost because of you». I saw how two men beat him with bats, they even jumped when they struck.

Kostiantyn was forced to «confess» that he had passed on data to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and also to indicate that the girl had helped him in this.

As a result of regular interrogations, the detainee slandered herself and signed a confession in adjusting the fire at the customs post.

According to the testimony of another detainee ¹²⁵ in the TDC, Kostiantyn Myronov was also tortured with electric shock and limited access to basic needs, in particular, water:



Kostia, well, when I saw him, he was all purple-yellow, there was no living place on him, his legs were swollen, his hands were swollen, well, it was terrible... An electric shock is a matter of course. They didn't let him drink, they said: «Do you want water?». They poured it over and put the bottle next to it. Well, it is clear that a bound person cannot reach it. I even heard Kostia asking: «Give me water, give me water». They didn't give.

A few days after release of detainees, on September 11, Kostiantyn Myronov died in the hospital as a result of physical injuries and torture caused during interrogations.

124 The testimony of a victim SLA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

125 The testimony of a victim KGA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA, about Kostiantyn Myronov



The customs post located next to the TDC building
Photo by Serhii Kochmarskyi

Distribution of duties between representatives of the Russian Federation

From the testimonies of detainees, it is possible to trace the division of responsibilities between representatives of the Russian Federation at various stages – from illegal detention, interrogations and decisions about the future fate of a person.

At first, illegal detentions were mostly carried out by representatives of the so-called «Police of the LPR». Subsequently, a rotation took place in Kupiansk, and regular Russian military personnel appeared. Employees of the FSB of the Russian Federation and/or the Russian Guard probably took part in the illegal detention of those persons who were purposefully taken away¹²⁶. Such detentions were always carried out by persons with covered faces, in balaclavas, well equipped, mostly in military or black uniforms without identification marks.

Representatives of the so-called «L/DPR»¹²⁷, as well as local employees of the district department, who cooperated with representatives of the Russian Federation, provided daily supervision of detainees in the TDC. According to two testimonies, representatives of the Federal Penitentiary Service, namely the special unit «Kedr» were also involved¹²⁸. It is known from the testimony that the representatives of the FSB occupied one of the floors in the building of the customs post «Kupiansk» of the Kharkiv Customs of the SFS at the address: str. Kharkivska, 7, located opposite the district office, and mainly participated in interrogations.

The excesses of the executor, which took place in the TDC, only confirm the existence of a hierarchy and a system of intentional torture aimed at obtaining information and intimidation, which was led by representatives of the FSB. In particular, representatives of the so-called «L/DPR» used arbitrary beatings on detainees outside of interrogations. Such excesses, of which the representatives of the Russian Federation, higher in the hierarchy, were aware, they mostly ignored and did not stop¹²⁹.

Among the representatives of the Russian Federation, a clear hierarchy was formed: the frequency of interrogations, the time of detention of individuals, the questions asked during interrogations were determined by the employees of Russian structures, in particular the FSB. Usually, among the representatives of the Russian Federation, there was someone «responsible» for the person – an investigator, a representative of the FSB, present at each of the interrogations of a specific person, who managed the process. The detainees singled out three representatives of the Russian Federation with the call signs «Cat», «Joker» and «Dozor 7.1» as commanders.

Interrogations were conducted in the presence of several representatives of the Russian Federation: from three to five, who performed different roles. Usually some of them were responsible for beatings and electric shocks¹³⁰. The investigator mostly only asked questions and gave orders regarding torture and the end of the interrogation. At the same time, in several cases, detainees noted that the investigators, in particular «Cat» and «Joker», reacted aggressively to the long-term absence of the answer they needed and joined in the beating^{131 132}. A number of interviewees reported non-violent interrogation during which an unidentified man was present to make decisions about the future fate of detainees^{133 134}.

127 According to the testimony, the representatives of the so-called L/DPR themselves reported that they are from these occupied territories of Ukraine

128 The testimony of a victim KMS_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

129 The testimony of a victim KMY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

130 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

131 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

132 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

133 The testimony of a victim KTY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

134 The testimony of a victim KCO_02, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

Forced labour


In the Kupiansk TDC, representatives of the Russian Federation established a system of forced labour for detainees. Fourteen interviewees reported their involvement. At the same time, those who were suspected of passing on information to the Armed Forces of Ukraine and those who were «political» were mostly not released from the cells¹³⁵.

Forced labour was assigned to some of the detainees as a form of «work». A number of interviewees reported that after being released from the TDC, they had to work a certain number of days. At the same time, people were not given documents until the completion of the «work», and in case of non-appearance they were threatened with violence against the family¹³⁶.

During forced labour, the detainees performed various tasks: carried bricks and sand, cleared garbage, unloaded humanitarian aid. Such work could also include being forced to participate in the robbery of local residents' homes. In one of the cases, the detainees were blindfolded and brought to the house of local deputy Mykola Maslii, who was kidnapped at a protest on March 1, 2022 because of his pro-Ukrainian position, and ordered to remove everything from his house. Some detainees were also involved in digging trenches¹³⁷. After the attack of the Ukrainian troops on the customs building, the detainees were forced to dismantle the rubble and search for the bodies of the dead representatives of the Russian Federation¹³⁸.

Forced labour continued until the task was completed, both for half a day and from morning to evening. At the same time, they could be beaten for poor work performance¹³⁹.

For detainees, forced labour was the only opportunity to go outside, as walks were not provided in the TDC. At the same time, they were forced to perform such a significant physical load in the absence of any support for a healthy physical condition in the TDC, as well as after beatings and torture.

 *This is how they kill people. It's also a kind of torture. When one month they don't touch you at all, the muscles atrophy. Then we were taken out, and there was a humanitarian truck. Sometimes two, sometimes three trucks came, and we had to unload them. And this is called - killing. After [unloading] half the truck, you don't feel anything at all. Everything hurts»¹⁴⁰.*

135 The testimony of a victim KCO_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

136 The testimony of a victim KCO_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

137 The testimony of a victim VTS, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

138 The testimony of a victim KHV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

139 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

140 The testimony of a victim KHV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA



The premises in which the documents signed by the representatives of the Russian Federation on detainees were kept
Photo by Serhii Kochmarskyi

Circumstances of release

It is possible to single out several main circumstances of the release of those illegally detained in the Kupiansk district police department:

1. Obtaining the necessary information by representatives of the Russian Federation
2. Understanding by representatives of the Russian Federation of the fact that the detained person does not have the necessary information
3. The release of a group of detainees in the form of «deportation» from the territory controlled by the Russian Federation and their removal in the direction of the Pechenizke reservoir
4. Independent release of all detainees who were in the TDC on September 8, 2022, after the retreat of Russian troops from Kupiansk.

A group of persons was released from the TDC through «deportation». The interviewees themselves noted that the reason they were called was that they were «spies». So, on August 15, 2022, representatives of the Russian Federation gathered 10 detainees (9 men and 1 woman) in the middle of the night, gave them their be-

longings, put bags on their heads that were wrapped with tape, tied their hands with cable ties and put them all on a bus. The detainees were taken to the Pechenizke reservoir, where it was announced that they were all prohibited from entering the «liberated territory» (Note: the territory under the control of the Russian Federation) for 25 years under the threat of execution. Detainees were given 40 seconds to run out of the bus after their hands were freed and ordered to move to the other side (dam). After the detainees ran out of the bus, they were left without food or water near the reservoir. They reached the territory under the control of the government of Ukraine independently^{141 142 143}.

According to the estimates of those interviewed, at least 130 people detained in the TDC as of September 8, 2022, released independently after the representatives of the Russian Federation left the TDC and the Russian military retreated from Kupi-ansk.

After the attack on the premises of the customs post, where the FSB station was set up, on August 31, 2022, representatives of the Russian Federation began to mass release detainees, but only those who were detained for «administrative offences»¹⁴⁴.

On September 8, 2022, representatives of the Russian Federation closed all the cells and even the «feeders» and left the TDC and the people who were held in it.



I kicked the door, it was around 5 o'clock in the evening - it was quiet. That is, they closed everything tightly and left so that we would suffocate, because at that time there were 21 of us in the cell¹⁴⁵.

Detainees managed to escape from one of the cells. They found the keys to the rest of the cells in one of the offices of the district department and released the others. In addition, some of the detainees, whom the representatives of the Russian Federation left chained in the walking courtyard, were also released.

After release, the detainees also found their documents and things seized during detention [some of them could not find theirs], which were stored in one of the offices. Then they set fire to the documents signed by representatives of the Russian Federation regarding the detainees. According to the testimony of a number of interviewees, they were afraid of repeated detention by representatives of the Russian Federation on the basis of these documents.

141 The testimony of a victim KHY, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

142 The testimony of a victim KOY_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

143 The testimony of a victim KTM, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

144 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

145 The testimony of a victim VTS, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA



Photo by Serhii Kochmarskyi

Consequences for mental and physical health

Improper conditions of detention, ill-treatment, psychological abuse and torture caused a number of consequences for the mental and physical health of detainees. Among the consequences for physical health, you can highlight severe headaches, weight loss due to malnutrition and on the background of stress¹⁴⁶, exacerbation of chronic diseases such as ulcers¹⁴⁷, prolonged numbness/loss of sensation in the extremities¹⁴⁸, knocked out teeth, impaired vision, cardiovascular diseases, metabolic disorders (diabetes), dermatological diseases, pain in the places that were most affected during the beating (kidneys, muscles, joints). Most of the detainees complained of muscle pain in their limbs due to prolonged immobility and irregular exercise.

It is known that at least one detainee, Kostiantyn Myronov, died in hospital a few days after his release as a result of his injuries¹⁴⁹.

146 The testimony of a victim KMV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

147 The testimony of a victim KBA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

148 The testimony of a victim KTM, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

149 The testimony of victims KGA and SLA, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA, about Kostiantyn Myronov

Psychological consequences in almost all detainees include insomnia, frequent dreams about past events, flashbacks, anxiety, fear of returning to detention conditions, panic attacks, and a psychological barrier to returning to their hometown. A number of detainees reported a severe psychological and depressive state that persists to this day. During the stay in the TDC, one of the detainees, who had been brutally beaten for two weeks, attempted suicide. The interviewee was convinced that «he will not get out of detention alive». In response to the man's actions, the representatives of the Russian Federation beat him again, forced him to apologise and threatened that in the next attempt «they will kill him themselves»¹⁵⁰.

Two interviewees reported suicidal thoughts. One had them as a result of torture¹⁵¹, another still periodically thinks about suicide because of what he experienced during illegal detention.

Within the framework of ZMINA's documented testimonies, 19 out of 30 victims were interviewed by representatives of law enforcement agencies of Ukraine. However, only four indicated that they knew about the open criminal proceedings and their procedural status.

In several cases, the victims were interviewed again (or several times) by representatives of the prosecutor's office, the police, and the SBU. This was due to an insufficient level of cooperation between law enforcement agencies responsible for investigating war crimes and between their territorial units, given that the victims were changing their current place of residence. In one of the cases, representatives of one of the departments were aware of the survey of the victim, but they decided to conduct a repeat survey to obtain information directly.

As the victims reported, within the scope of investigative actions, law enforcement officers mainly focused on the identification of persons who could engage in collaborative activities.

Four victims noted that they did not communicate with the law enforcement officers in any way. In one case, the victim decided not to apply again, because none of the three law enforcement agencies to which the victim applied before accepted his statement due to the uncertainty of the representatives of the departments regarding the proper investigation of the case¹⁵².

150 The testimony of a victim KMS_01, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

151 The testimony of a victim KMV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA

152 The testimony of a victim KSV, documented by Human rights centre ZMINA



Kupiansk district police department
Photo by Yevhen Vasylyev

Legal qualification

The detentions of the interviewees by representatives of the Russian Federation, described above, had no legal grounds and took place without observing the proper legal procedure. Such illegal deprivation of liberty is a violation of human rights law¹⁵³ and international humanitarian law¹⁵⁴ and may constitute a war crime¹⁵⁵ or crimes against humanity¹⁵⁶. In addition, representatives of the Russian Federation refused to inform relatives about the fate or whereabouts of the detainees and provided false information. Such actions can be qualified as enforced disappearance and constitute crimes against humanity¹⁵⁷.

Forced labor, which can involve the civilian population in the occupied territory, has a number of limitations. In particular, we are talking about such types of forced labor, the performance of which is necessary to provide food, housing, cloth-

153 Article 9 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Article 5(1) of the European Convention on Human Rights

154 Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention

155 Rome Statute Article 8(2)(a)(vii)

156 Rome Statute Article 7(1)(e)

157 Rome Statute Article 7(1)(i)

ing, transport and medical services and which are not related to the conduct of military operations. In addition, it is provided for the provision of labour guarantees - salary, duration of the working day, clothing and equipment, preliminary training, compensation for accidents at work and illnesses¹⁵⁸.

Forced labour organised by representatives of the Russian Federation in the TDC of the Kupiansk district is also a violation of international humanitarian law¹⁵⁹ and human rights.

The conditions of detention in the temporary detention centre did not meet the minimum standards of detention of persons in places of deprivation of liberty. In particular, regarding the provision of food, drinking water, proper conditions of accommodation in cells (availability of personal space), hygiene standards, lighting and ventilation, walks. In addition, detention in TDC was accompanied by beatings and degrading practices. Detainees were also made to suffer by hearing the torture of others all the time. Taken together, the conditions of detention in the Kupiansk TDC may amount to torture.

Representatives of the Russian Federation used cruel treatment and torture of detainees during interrogations with the aim of intimidation and obtaining information. Deliberately inflicted physical and psychological suffering from prolonged and severe beatings, application of electric shock, sexualized violence, imitation of execution constitute torture.

In addition, the use of anonymity regarding the whereabouts and fate of detainees, as well as the intentional provision of false information in order to inflict suffering on relatives, may also constitute torture¹⁶⁰.

Torture or inhuman treatment, as well as the intentional infliction of severe suffering or grievous bodily harm or harm to health, are serious violations of human rights law¹⁶¹, as well as the Geneva Conventions¹⁶² and may constitute war crimes¹⁶³ or crimes against humanity¹⁶⁴.

The death of the victim as a result of an act or omission by the accused, committed with the intent to kill or to cause grievous bodily harm, which the accused should reasonably have known would result in death, may constitute premeditat-

158 Article 40 of the Fourth Geneva Convention

159 Article 95 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and Article 4 of the European Convention on Human Rights

160 <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/586e6fc44.pdf>, p.13

161 Article 7 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

162 Common Article 3, Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention

163 Rome Statute Article 8(2)(a)(ii), Rome Statute Article 8(2)(a)(iii), Rome Statute Article 8(2)(b)(xxi).

164 Rome Statute Article 7(1)(f)

ed murder¹⁶⁵. Such a killing can be classified as a war crime or crimes against humanity¹⁶⁶.

The contextual element of crimes against humanity is an «attack on the civilian population», which means the repeated execution of the acts provided for in paragraph 1 of Article 7 of the Rome Statute (murder, deportation or forcible transfer of the population, imprisonment or other cruel deprivation of physical freedom in violation of the fundamental norms of international law, torture, enforced disappearance, etc.)¹⁶⁷.

Not taking into account the reports of international institutions for the previous period¹⁶⁸, which mentions the scale and systematicity of crimes committed by representatives of the Russian Federation, the report of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights for the period June-November 2023 describes the continuation of deportation and forced displacement of both adults and children, torture and enforced disappearances¹⁶⁹.

The report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the period August-November 2023 refers to the continuation of documenting cases of torture in the context of the practice of enforced disappearances¹⁷⁰. Both reports again indicate the large-scale and systematic nature of the acts, the presence of repeated patterns of crimes.

In the context of large scale, the attack must be significant and spread to a large number of victims. In the context of systematicity, it refers to the organisation of acts of violence and the low probability that they could have happened accidentally/arbitrarily. It is the «model» of crimes in the sense of deliberate, regular repetition of similar criminal behaviour that indicates a systematic nature¹⁷¹.

165 Kvočka Trial Judgment, 2 November 2001, para. 132

166 Rome Statute, Article 8 (2) (a) (i); Rome Statute, Article 7 (1) (a);

167 Elements of Crimes, Article 7, para. 2-3

168 Report on violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Ukraine (April 1 - June 25, 2022), 4.08.2022 / OSCE: <https://www.osce.org/uk/odihr/523811>; Report of the Independent International Commission for the Investigation of Violations in Ukraine, 15.03.2023 / Independent International Commission for the Investigation of Violations in Ukraine: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/coiukraine/A_HRC_52_62_UA.pdf

169 Fourth Interim Report on reported violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Ukraine, ODIHR, 12.12.2023: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/e/560325.pdf?fbclid=IwAR07rkLLgKRBBmiCceAL82sQeSCnO4wX2iQP7VZVm-gx9iNW5OpKkkHU>

170 Report on Human rights situation in Ukraine, 1 August to 30 November 2023, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 12.12.2023: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/23-12-12-OHCHR-37th-periodic-report-ukraine-en.pdf>

171 Prosecutor v. Jadranko Prlić, Case No. IT-04-74-T, Judgement (TC), 29 May 2013, paras. 41-42

An indicator of large scale and systematicity can also be the fact of geographical spread of actions¹⁷² – repetition of patterns of criminal behaviour in various regions of Ukraine that were under occupation.

In this context, the large-scale and systematic nature of the attack, which includes illegal detention, forced disappearances and torture in the Kupiansk TDC, can be traced to a number of factors:

1. Geographical distribution of practice. Numerous cases of illegal detentions, forced disappearances and torture in places of illegal detention were recorded by ZMINA in Kyiv, Kherson and Kharkiv regions¹⁷³. The uniformity of criminal behaviour is most evident in the Kherson and Kharkiv regions, where representatives of the Russian Federation had the opportunity to implement the system due to the longer occupation.
2. Identifying a specific group of civilians who were targeted for attack. In all areas of documentation, the targets were persons suspected by representatives of the Russian Federation of supporting Ukraine (members of the ATO/JFO, former military personnel, volunteers, active residents of communities, owners of Ukrainian symbols).
3. The presence of a repetitive pattern of illegal detentions and enforced disappearances – concealment of faces by representatives of the Russian Federation during detentions, non-disclosure of the grounds for detention, concealment of the place of detention.
4. The presence of an interrogation script, in which questions are repeated both within the interrogations of different detainees in the same illegal place of detention, and in different illegal places of detention. They are aimed at obtaining information about the position and activities of the detainee, identifying other people in the community who have a pro-Ukrainian position.
5. Interrogations have a similar procedure with a specific indication of the roles of representatives of the Russian Federation. Detainees' faces are covered, they are taken to a room set aside for interrogations, in which several representatives of the Russian Federation are present. One of them is an «inves-

172 ICC, Prosecutor v. Ruto, Koshey and Sang", Decision on the confirmation of charges", ICC-01/09-01/11, 23 January 2012, para. 176-177.

173 Torture and ill-treatment of the civilian population in the Ukrainian territories that were under Russian occupation (on the example of Kyiv, Kharkiv and Kherson regions): analytical report / B. Petruniuk, O. Hnatiuk, T. Pechonchyk; Human Rights Centre ZMINA. – Kyiv, 2023, "Torture chamber at school": an analysis of the testimonies of detainees in the village of Bilyayivka, Kherson region" / O. Syniuk, E. Sokurenko; Human Rights Centre ZMINA. – Kyiv, 2023; "Women's cells" of Kherson torture chamber: analytical report based on the testimonies of detainees / O. Syniuk, E. Sokurenko, N. Okhotnikova; Human Rights Centre ZMINA. – Kyiv, 2023.

tigator» who conducts the interrogation and asks questions, the others are responsible for beatings and application of electric shocks.

6. Repetitive patterns of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment during detention. Improper conditions of detention (lack of proper sanitary conditions, medical care, sufficient food and drinking water, overcrowding of cells, etc.), «rituals» during detention, in particular, forcing to learn and sing the national anthem of the Russian Federation and other Russian songs under the threat of punishment.
7. Repetitive patterns of torture during interrogations. Detainees in various places of detention were systematically subjected to prolonged beatings, electric shocks, sexualized violence (in particular, electric shocks to the genitals) and threats of murder, mutilation, sexualized violence, as well as threats to relatives of the detainees. There is also a repeated practice of using personal connections between detainees to increase suffering – torture in their presence, as well as simulated executions.
8. The existence of a hierarchy between representatives of the Russian Federation in places of illegal detention in the occupied territories of Ukraine, which is reproduced in various regions and is headed by FSB officers.

Recommendations

To law enforcement agencies of Ukraine

1. Properly, thoroughly, urgently and comprehensively investigate the facts of the illegal detention by representatives of the Russian Federation of citizens of Ukraine, as well as their illegal detention in the premises of the temporary detention centre of the Kupiansk district police department at the address: st. Kharkivska, 14, during the occupation of the city of Kupiansk, Kharkiv region, and cases of enforced disappearance of persons whose fate is still unknown; facts of torture and cruel and inhumane treatment, including sexualized violence and two deaths from torture, both in accordance with national standards of investigation and in compliance with international standards for proper investigation, in particular with regard to the requirements for the effectiveness, timeliness and thoroughness of investigations into cases of torture, including such, that caused deaths and illegal detention of civilians, based on available means and opportunities.
2. Properly inform the victims about the opening and progress of the investigation as part of the criminal proceedings in the cases regarding their illegal detention in the Kupiansk TDC and other violations against them, in particular torture, cruel and inhumane treatment, as well as ensure that the status of the victims is properly granted in the future to inform about the course of proceedings of the relatives of the two victims of torture and ill-treatment, as well as the relatives of five persons who are still in the illegal custody of the Russian Federation.
3. Organize a search for a person who has been subject to enforced disappearance and whose fate is still unknown, in cooperation with other authorized bodies.
4. To improve coordination between law enforcement agencies that conduct pre-trial investigations into cases of illegal detention, enforced disappearances and torture and cruel and inhumane treatment, with the aim of avoiding duplication, re-traumatization of victims, as well as applying a victim-centric approach and giving due attention to the identification of persons, who could commit collaborative activities, as well as persons who could commit war crimes, and ensuring the rights of victims to justice; to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the implementation of the powers of the prosecutor's office in the field of criminal prosecution for the commission of international crimes for 2023–2025.

To the state authorities of Ukraine

1. Ensure the proper functioning of the national system of rehabilitation of civilians who suffered as a result of torture, ill-treatment, enforced disappearances, which will include medical and psychological rehabilitation, social support, etc.
2. Conduct a broad joint information campaign among the target audience about the rights of persons deprived of personal freedom as a result of armed aggression against Ukraine and their families, as well as action algorithms for realising these rights and obtaining additional guarantees.

To International organisations and partners

1. Condemn the large-scale and systematic practice of illegal detentions, forced disappearances, torture, ill-treatment, detention in conditions that violate human dignity, committed by representatives of the Russian Federation against the civilian population in the occupied territories of Ukraine.
2. Intensify efforts for the unconditional and immediate release by the Russian Federation of all civilians who are still held in any places of detention.
3. Increase sanctioning and institutional pressure on the Russian Federation to stop its practice of large-scale and systematic crimes against the civilian population, including those described in this and previous reports of Human Rights Centre ZMINA.
4. Call on the Russian Federation to ensure unimpeded and immediate access of the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international organisations to Ukrainian civilians held in places of detention both in the occupied territory and in the territory of the Russian Federation.
5. Call on the International Committee of the Red Cross and representatives of other international organisations to take an active part in the search for Ukrainian civilians held in places of detention, in particular, to conduct regular monitoring visits to places of detention in the occupied territories and in Russia, as well as to establish a process of exchanging letters, providing clothes, medicines, etc.
6. Promote the dissemination of information about the crimes against the civilian population described in this and other reports, committed by representatives of the Russian Federation in the occupied territories of Ukraine.

