

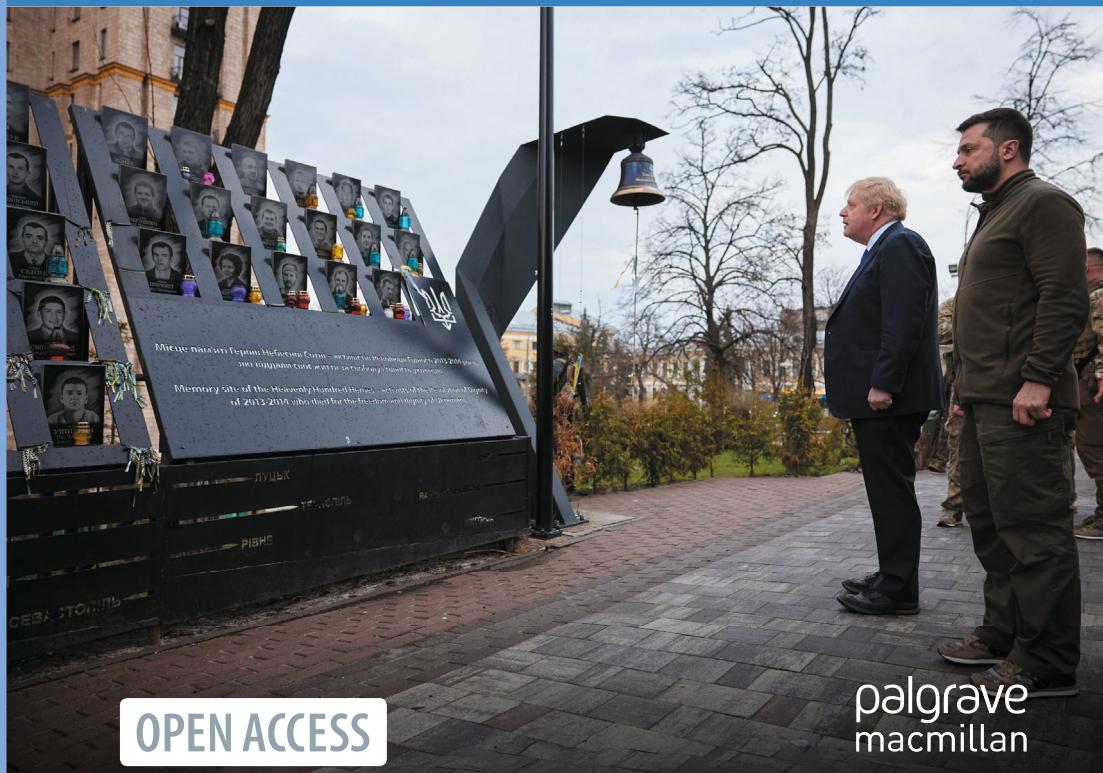


RETHINKING POLITICAL VIOLENCE

The Maidan Massacre in Ukraine

The Mass Killing that Changed the World

Ivan Katchanovski



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Ivan Katchanovski 
School of Political Studies & Conflict
Studies and Human Rights Program
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, ON, Canada



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Cover illustration: President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Boris Johnson at the Maidan Massacre site. Source: President of Ukraine (2022, April 9), Flickr

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“Il est défendu de tuer; tout meurtrier est puni, à moins qu'il n'ait tué en grande compagnie, et au son des trompettes; c'est la règle.” [It is forbidden to kill; therefore all murderers are punished unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets; it is the rule].¹

Voltaire

*Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.*²

John Adams at the Boston massacre trial

¹ Voltaire. (1817). *Complete works of Voltaire: Philosophical Dictionary*. Chez Th. Desoer, 788. There was a Maidan activist playing his trumpet during the Maidan massacre. He came under live ammunition fire from the snipers in Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina. (See Video A).

² Diggins, J. P. (Ed.). (2004). *The Portable John Adams*. Penguin Books, 255.

To my mother

PREFACE

This book analyzes the Maidan massacre of the protesters and the police during the “Euromaidan” mass protests in Kyiv in Ukraine on February 20, 2014. This massacre is crucial case of political violence in Ukraine and the world because it led to the overthrow of the Ukrainian government and ultimately to the start of the civil war in Donbas, Russian military interventions in Crimea and Donbas, the Russian annexation of Crimea, and conflicts of Russia with Ukraine and the West which Russia escalated dramatically by launching the illegal invasion and war with Ukraine in 2022.

This is the first scholarly book which analyzes comprehensively the Maidan massacre in Ukraine. It is based on more than 10 years of my research of this massacre and trials and investigations of this mass killing.

I am a Ukrainian and Canadian political scientist. I teach at the School of Political Studies at the University of Ottawa. Previously, I was Visiting Scholar at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University, Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Politics at the State University of New York at Potsdam, Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto, and Kluge Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Kluge Center at the Library of Congress. I received my Ph.D. from the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University under the direction of Seymour Martin Lipset, one of the greatest political scientists and political sociologists.

My academic publications include 4 books, 12 book chapters, and 20 articles in peer-reviewed journals, as well as this book and two forthcoming books concerning the Russia-Ukraine war and its origins and modern Ukraine that will be published by major American and British academic presses. I am one of the most cited political scientists who specialize primarily in politics and conflicts in Ukraine. My research-based publications, interviews, and comments appeared in more than 3,000 media reports in over 80 countries.

I am a life-long supporter of liberal democracy, human rights, and peace in Ukraine and was one of the first to publicly call for the European Union accession of Ukraine. I attended in 1988 the first small opposition rally in Kyiv in some 80 years since Ukraine became Soviet. I was born in Western Ukraine and educated in the Kyiv National Economic University, Central European University, and George Mason University. I faced expulsion from the university in Kyiv in 1990 and was prevented from pursuing graduate education in the Soviet Union because my undergraduate thesis, which was in Ukrainian, was based on theories of Max Weber and Western economists and concluded that the Soviet system was bound to collapse.

I presented my studies of the Maidan massacre at the following academic conferences: The Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association in San Francisco, September 3–6, 2015, the 22nd Annual World Convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities in Columbia University, New York, May 4–6, 2017, the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in Boston, August 29–September 2, 2018, the Regimes and Societies in Conflict: Eastern Europe and Russia since 1956 conference by the Institute for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Uppsala University and the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies in Uppsala, Sweden, September 13–14, 2018, the Virtual 52nd Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, November 5–8 and 14–15, 2020, and the virtual 10th World Congress of the International Council for Central and East European Studies, August 3–8, 2021.

Parts of my open-access articles in *Russian Politics*, *Cogent Social Sciences*, and *Journal of Labor and Society* peer-reviewed journals, a forthcoming open-access Routledge book, and, with publisher's permission, my article in *Canadian Dimension* are republished in this book with updated, revised, and greatly expanded content. Most of the book content was previously not published. I received no outside financing for my

research of the Maidan massacre, with the exception of small travel and publication grants and crowdfunding making my articles open access. I am grateful to all those who supported my academic study of this crucial massacre that changed Ukraine and the world.

Ottawa, ON, Canada

Ivan Katchanovski

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: The Massacre That Changed Ukraine and the World

The chapter describes importance of the Maidan massacre of the police and the Maidan protesters in Kyiv in Ukraine on February 18–20, 2014, and its role in the overthrow of the Ukrainian government and ultimately in the start of the war in Donbas, the Russian annexation of Crimea, and conflicts of Russia with Ukraine and the West that Russia escalated dramatically by launching the illegal war with Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The question is whether the Yanukovych government, the Maidan opposition, in particular, the far-right, or any “third force,” such as Russia, was involved in the mass killing of protesters and the police. Methodology and data combine content analysis of thousands of videos, photos, and audio recordings of the massacre in Ukrainian, Russian, English, and Polish with analysis of several hundred testimonies of witnesses and wounded Maidan activists and results of forensic ballistic and medical examinations by Ukrainian government experts. The analysis of the primary data includes about 1,000 hours of video recordings of the Maidan massacre trial, nearly 1,000,000-word trial verdict, and over 2,500 other court decisions. This chapter describes the theoretical framework of rational choice and the Weberian theory of rational action and develops the moral hazard theory of the state repression backfire.

1.1 THE MAIDAN MASSACRE AND ITS IMPACT

The mass killing of 74 Maidan protesters and 17 police and Internal Troops members in Ukraine during the mass “Euromaidan” protests on February 18–20, 2014, and wounding of respectively over 300 activists and about 200 police and Internal Troops members is a crucial case of political violence. This mass killing of the protesters and the police led to the overthrow of the democratically elected and pro-Russian government of Viktor Yanukovych and gave the start of a civil war in Donbas, Russia’s military intervention in Crimea and Donbas, the Russian annexation of Crimea, and an interstate conflict between the West and Russia and between Ukraine and Russia. Russia drastically escalated these conflicts by launching its illegal invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The Russia-Ukraine war also escalated into a proxy war between the West and Russia (see Black & Johns, 2015; Katchanovski, 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2017, 2022a, 2023a, 2023b, Forthcoming; Kudelia, 2016; Hahn, 2018; Sakwa, 2015).

This book uses the theory of rational choice, a Weberian theory of instrumental rationality, and state repression backfire theories and analyses a variety of evidence to determine whether the Yanukovych government, the Maidan opposition, or any “third force” was involved in the mass killing of protesters and the police. The research question is which party or parties of the conflict massacred Maidan protesters and the police.

The Maidan massacre was immediately attributed to government snipers and the Berkut police by the Maidan opposition, Western leaders, and the media in Ukraine and the West. The far-right commander of the same special Maidan company of snipers called from the Maidan stage on the evening of February 21, 2014, to reject a signed agreement, which was mediated by foreign ministers of France, Germany, and Poland and a representative of the Russian president. He issued a public ultimatum for President Viktor Yanukovych to resign by 10:00am the next day, justified it by blaming Yanukovych and his forces for the massacre, stated that his Maidan company was responsible for the turning point of the Euromaidan, and threatened an armed assault if Yanukovych would not resign (Yakshho, 2014). The commander of the Maidan Self-Defense said that this ultimatum was a decision by “institutional bodies of the Maidan” and that it was adopted by a military council set up by the Maidan Self-Defense and the Right Sector on February 21, 2014 (Kalnysh, 2015).

The Maidan massacre undermined the legitimacy of Yanukovych as president of Ukraine and the legitimacy of the incumbent government, police, and security forces and their monopoly on the use of force. The massacre prompted a part of the Party of Regions deputies to leave their faction and support the Maidan opposition and the parliament vote on February 20 to withdraw government forces from downtown Kyiv and subsequent votes to dismiss then President Yanukovych and his government, even though this was unconstitutional. Many deputies were forced to vote or their cards were used to vote for them. For instance, the commander of the far-right-linked group of the Maidan snipers admitted that his group forced certain members of the parliament to participate in the votes to dismiss Yanukovych and his government and to elect the Maidan leaders in their place (Katchanovski, Forthcoming; Kovalenko, 2014).

An agreement signed on February 21, 2014, by Yanukovych, the Maidan opposition leaders, and representatives of France, Germany, and Poland stipulated withdrawal of the government forces from downtown Kyiv, disarmament of the Maidan activists, early presidential elections, and the investigation of the Maidan massacre with involvement of the Council of Europe. But this agreement was violated by the Maidan opposition, which seized control over the presidential administration, the Cabinet of Ministers, the parliament, and other government buildings following the withdrawal of the government forces.

Then US Vice President Joe Biden revealed in his memoirs that during the Maidan massacre he called Yanukovych and told him that “it was over; time for him to call off his gunmen and walk away” and “he shouldn’t expect his Russian friends to rescue him from this disaster,” that “Yanukovych had lost the confidence of the Ukrainian people,” and that “he was going to be judged harshly by history if he kept killing them.” Biden wrote that “the disgraced president fled Ukraine the next day — owing to the courage and determination of the demonstrators — and control of the government ended up temporarily in the hands of a young patriot named Arseniy Yatsenyuk” (Biden 2017).

US President Barack Obama stated that “we had brokered a deal to transition power in Ukraine” after the massacre and before Yanukovych fled, but the US president or other American government officials did not release any specific information about the nature of this involvement (PRES, 2015).

Russian President Vladimir Putin and other Russian leaders as well as the Russian media called the overthrow of Yanukovych as a fascist or Nazi coup. They justified support of separatism and annexation of Crimea by protection of ethnic Russians from the Ukrainian ‘fascists’ or ‘Nazis’ and by the Russian national security interests to prevent it from losing control of the main Black Sea naval base and its falling under control of NATO.

Not only Russian President Vladimir Putin but also then US President Barak Obama stated that the Russian annexation of Crimea was a reaction to the violent overthrow of the Yanukovych government with the US involvement. Obama said that “Mr. Putin made this decision around Crimea and Ukraine, not because of some grand strategy, but essentially because he was caught off balance by the protests in the Maidan, and Yanukovych then fleeing after we’d brokered a deal to transition power in Ukraine” (PRES, 2015). After initially denying the Russian military intervention, Putin admitted in his 2015 documentary interview that he proposed his plan to “return” Crimea and authorized the covert Russian military intervention on February 23, 2014, following the overthrow of Yanukovych (see Katchanovski, Forthcoming).

The violent overthrow of the pro-Russian Yanukovych government gave a significant boost to separatism in Crimea. The Russian government used this overthrow to reverse its previous policy and start backing both pro-Russian separatists and the annexation of Crimea. Yanukovych fled from Eastern Ukraine to Russia and then to Crimea on February 22, 2014, and the Russian military there on instructions from the Russian government helped him to escape again to Russia (Katchanovski, 2015, Forthcoming).

Previous studies show that conflicts between Russia and Ukraine and Russia and the West started with the violent overthrow of the relatively pro-Russian government in Ukraine by means of the Maidan massacre and assassination attempts against then President Viktor Yanukovych (see Bandeira, 2019; Black & Johns, 2015; Katchanovski, 2016a, 2016b, 2020, 2023a, 2023b, Forthcoming; Hahn, 2018; Mandel, 2016; Lane, 2016; Sakwa, 2015). The violent overthrow of the Yanukovych government escalated into the civil war in Donbas with pro-Russian separatists and an international conflict between Russia and Ukraine and the West and Russia. Russia escalated the conflict by conducting military interventions in Crimea and Donbas and annexing in the violation of the international law Crimea, which was populated primarily by ethnic Russians, and by launching the illegal invasion and the war in Ukraine (see

Katchanovski, 2015, 2016a, 2022a, Forthcoming; Kudelia, 2016; Hahn, 2018; Sakwa, 2015).

The violent overthrow of the relatively pro-Russian government was a tipping point in the conflicts in Ukraine and between the West and Russia over Ukraine. President Putin used this overthrow and its backing by the governments of the US and EU countries to radically change his policy towards Ukraine. The Russian government started to pursue annexation of Crimea with the help of direct military intervention since the end of February 2014 and then annexed Crimea in March 2014 in a violation of international law (see Katchanovski, 2015).

The Maidan massacre that resulted in the overthrow of the Yanukovych government also spiraled into the separatist rebellion in Donbas in Eastern Ukraine. The overthrow of the government led to a power vacuum in the Donetsk and Luhansk Regions, which were until then strongholds of Yanukovych and his Party of Regions.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, was illegal and extreme escalation of conflicts of Russia with Ukraine and the West and the civil war in Donbas that followed the Western-backed violent and illegal overthrow with involvement of the oligarchic and far-right elements of the Maidan opposition of the pro-Russian government in Ukraine by means of the Maidan massacre and assassination attempts against Viktor Yanukovych. The Russia-Ukraine war also escalated into the proxy war between the West and Russia in Ukraine (see Katchanovski, 2022a, Forthcoming).

Ursula von der Leyen, the EU Commission President, stated in 2023 that “Today, war is back in Europe. But for many Ukrainians, this conflict began already ten years ago. It began when peaceful protesters, just waving the European flags in Maidan Square, were shot dead by snipers” (Keynote, 2023). Putin, for instance, in his Tucker Carlson interview in 2024, made similar statements linking the Russian invasion of Ukraine to the Maidan massacre (Carlson, 2024).

The identification and prosecution of those who perpetrated and organized the Maidan massacre could have helped to prevent or resolve peacefully the subsequent conflicts that it triggered, including the violent overthrow of the Yanukovych government, the Russian annexation of Crimea, the war in Donbas, and the Russia-Ukraine war (see Katchanovski, 2015, 2022a, 2022b, 2023a).

1.2 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This book combines different social science research methods and analysis of vast amount of various type of data. It uses content analysis of all publicly available videos, photos, and audio recordings of the Maidan massacre on February 18–20 in English, Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, and other languages with an analysis of several hundred testimonies concerning this massacre based on qualitative interview methodology. The manifest and latent content analysis covers over 2,000 videos and recordings of live Internet and TV broadcasts of the massacre in nearly 50 countries, news reports, and social media posts by over 120 journalists covering the massacre from Kyiv, more than 6,000 photos, and close to 30 gigabytes of publicly available radio intercepts of snipers and commanders of the Security Service of Ukraine and Internal Troops.

The analysis is also based on nearly 1,000 hours of official video recordings of the Maidan massacre trial and the Yanukovych treason trial, the nearly 1,000,000-word text of the Maidan massacre trial verdict in the official online Ukrainian court decisions database. The data includes information concerning GPU investigations of this massacre of the protesters and the police in over 2,500 court decisions. These court decisions are publicly available in the official online Ukrainian court decisions database. The names of people being investigated are omitted in these decisions. Media interviews of prosecutors, Maidan victims' lawyers and Berkut lawyers, and various media reports about the Maidan massacre trials and investigations are also examined.

This study analyzed interviews and statements by several hundred witnesses in media and social media. Most of these testimonies are by eyewitnesses, mostly Maidan protesters, and Western and Ukrainian journalists. Testimonies of indirect witnesses concerning Maidan snipers are primarily Maidan protesters, politicians, and pro-Maidan journalists. Such “statements against interest” relayed by indirect witnesses are accepted in criminal law and trials in the US, Canada, and other Western countries (see Martin, 1994). Since it would be in rational self-interest for Berkut officers and the Yanukovych government officials, who are charged with the Maidan massacre, to deny their responsibility whether they are guilty or not, the analysis does not rely on their testimonies.

The analysis also employs field research and photos by the author at the site of the Maidan massacre in downtown Kyiv in July 2014, and numerous visits before the massacre to the Maidan and most surrounding

buildings, such as Hotel Ukraina, the Main Post Office, Zhovtnevyi Palace, Dnipro Hotel, and Kozatsky Hotel. A multimethod methodology combining content analysis of videos, audio recordings, and photos of the massacre with analysis of qualitative interviews with witnesses makes the case study and its findings much more reliable than typical scholarly studies. Specific testimonies concerning specific events, in particular, killings and wounding of specific protesters and locations of the shooters, were corroborated by other evidence, such as other testimonies, video and audio recordings of these events, and results of forensic medical and ballistic examinations by government experts of the same specific events. The same concerns other types of evidence such as videos. In addition, the evidence is evaluated using other standard criteria in scholarly methodology, such as validity, specifically, face validity and replication.

This study also introduced a digital event reconstruction methodology for scholarly research on political violence. Digital event reconstruction methodology, in particular, of mass killings and other cases of political violence, is used in international criminal justice and by non-academic researchers such as Bellingcat (see Zarmsky, 2021). It is revealing that Bellingcat did not present an analysis of this massacre despite stating in February 2015 that they were working on such investigation (Bellingcat 2015). The failure by Bellingcat to examine the Maidan massacre was another dog that did not bark.

Seven online video appendixes include brief relevant compilations of segments of videos of the February 20 massacre and the Maidan massacre trial (see [Video 2023a](#), [2023b](#), [2023c](#), [2023d](#), [2023e](#), [2023f](#), [2023g](#)). They are available on the author's YouTube channel. Numerous videos of the massacre were synchronized based on the matching visual and audio content of videos, in particular, speeches from the Maidan stage, and on time-stamped video recordings, such as recordings of live TV broadcasts, Internet streaming, and security cameras. These video appendixes also contain maps that show the locations of the government forces and buildings with snipers, locations, and times of killing and wounding of specific Maidan protesters and policemen. The locations and positions of the snipers are determined based on their videos, photos, and testimonies of wounded protesters and witnesses.

The timing and video synchronization in these video compilations, including the times and locations of killings and wounding of the specific Maidan protesters, have some minor exceptions consistent with the time-stamped compilations of videos of the massacre by the SITU architectural

company and Taliionis group, which are based on their computer synchronizations. The Taliionis video compilation of the Maidan massacre was presented as evidence by the prosecution and Maidan lawyers during the trial (see Vysota, 2017a, 2017b). This compilation was produced by an anonymous group with funding from the Prosecutor's General Office (Katchanovski, 2019). However, both SITU and Taliionis omitted the initial part of the massacre on February 20, in particular, the killing and wounding of the police, and many videos regarding Maidan snipers that were included in the present study.

The multimethod research and analysis of all publicly available data sources enhance reliability and validity of the analysis and data. Only findings that are corroborated by at the very least two independent sources, excluding those with vested interest, are used. Typically, findings rely on much greater number of such independent sources.

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study relies on the rational choice theoretical framework and the Weberian theory of rational action and state repression backfire theories. The rational choice theory views people as acting in a calculated and self-interested manner, and this theory was applied for various specific political events (see, for example, Bates et al., 1998). However, rational choice assumes that people have perfect information to make such decisions and that all of their actions are rational. In contrast, the Weberian theory of social action regards instrumentally rational type of action as one ideal type of action alongside value-rational, traditional, and affectual types of action, and that such actions can be interpreted and understood by scholars. The instrumentally rational type of action involves “the attainment of the actor’s own rationally pursued and calculated ends” (Weber, 1978, 24–25).

While rational choice treats all actions as rational and calculated, Weber recognized other types of actions, such as affective or emotional (Weber, 1978, 25). Irrational actions, particularly emotions and mistakes, can also occur during violent conflicts and revolutionary events (see Beissinger, 2022). For example, an examination of the Maidan massacre by a pro-Maidan journalist emphasized feelings of hate between protesters and the police (Koshkina, 2015).

The Ukrainian and Western media and governments-promoted narrative of the Maidan massacre appears irrational from both rational choice

and Weberian instrumentally rational action perspectives. Yanukovych and his associates lost all of their power and much of their wealth, and fled from Ukraine as a result of this mass killing, since this massacre of protesters undermined his and his government's legitimacy, even among the many deputies of his Party of Regions who joined the opposition and voted to remove him from the presidency. The same problem concerns the irrational retreat of the police from their position at Maidan and the mass killing of the protesters by the police, since Berkut and the internal troop units had nonlethal weapons to stop unarmed protesters and it was more rational to use live ammunition or snipers to deliver warning shots or target armed protesters and the Maidan leaders, rather than to kill advancing protesters. Similarly, the repeated attempts by protesters to advance on the very small and relatively unimportant part of Instytutska Street also seem irrational and hard to explain from these theoretical perspectives, because a large number of people going under constant fire would amount to a collective mass suicidal action. While some of the government leaders, policemen, and protesters might have been driven by value-rational actions, such as being motivated by ideology; affectual actions, based on emotions; or miscalculations in their instrumentally rational actions, it would be anomalous for all different actors to do this at the same time.

The dominant narrative promoted by the Ukrainian and Western governments and, with some exceptions, the Ukrainian and Western media concerning the Maidan massacre is consistent with state repression backfire theories. State repression backfire means that attempts to use violence to suppress protests instead produce a backlash against the state in response to such violence. This means defeating vastly superior state forces by peaceful protesters in an asymmetric conflict (see, for example, Anisin, 2014, 2019; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Hess & Martin, 2006; Martin, 2007; Sharp, 1973).

The backfire requires that state repression be perceived as completely unjustifiable, excessive, or disproportional, and that information about state repression be communicated to the public and other actors, such as foreign governments (see Martin, 2007). Examples of such state repression backfires include the Bloody Sunday massacre of anti-government protesters by the police, which spurred the Russian Revolution in 1905, and the Jallianwala Bagh (Amritsar) massacre of pro-independence protesters by the British Indian Army, which spurred the

pro-independence movement in India led by Mahatma Gandhi (see Anisin, 2014, 2019).

State repression backfire theories suggest that the Maidan massacre of unarmed anti-government protesters in Ukraine was an extreme form of state repression by the Yanukovych government and its forces and was aimed at suppressing anti-government mass protests on the Maidan. However, the state repression of peaceful Maidan protesters by means of their unprovoked massacre supposedly backfired after it was highly publicized by media and social media in Ukraine and the West. The mass killing of the protesters ostensibly produced a massive public outrage and a backlash against the incumbent government, delegitimizing its use of force and leading to Yanukovych and his government leaders, who were blamed for the massacre of protesters, fleeing from Ukraine to avoid prosecution or other retaliation to order this mass killing.

State repression backfire also implies that the incumbent government has rational incentives to cover up state violence and those responsible for such violence to prevent or minimize the backfire. If the Yanukovych government, its police and security forces, or any pro-Yanukovych “third force” did perpetrate this mass killing one would expect cover-up by them and speedy and effective investigations and the prosecutions by Maidan governments. It was in the rational self-interest of the Maidan governments, whose legitimacy was ultimately based on this massacre, to conduct effective and speedy investigations and prosecutions of this one of the most documented cases of mass killings in the history of the world.

However, previous studies have failed to consider that there is a moral hazard in such mechanisms of state repression backfire. The mechanisms of the repression backfire can be exploited by opposition or pro-opposition actors in their own self-interest based on rational calculations of expected costs and benefits. The provocation of government violence against protesters or the covert staging of such violence and attributing it to state repression can be rational from the perspective of theories of rational choice or Weberian instrumentally rational actions for actors driven by self-interest and not concerned with ethical considerations.

The moral hazard contains an incentive for the opposition to produce a transformative event that could not only create significant media coverage and public outcry against the incumbent government inside and outside of the country, but also dramatically increase popular mobilization and domestic and international support, eventually resulting in concessions or regime transition. Provoked or staged violence by pro-opposition actors

has the power to backfire to a government by undermining its legitimacy and its use of security, police, and military forces, thus defeating them in an asymmetric conflict. This greatly increases the chances that government police, security, and military forces and high-ranking commanders, officials, and politicians will defect from the incumbent government. Such provocation of state violence or staging of false-flag violence means a very high-stake and high-risk game. The incentive to minimize risk in case of failure and detection of exposure implies that the use of provocation and staged false-flag violence would be exceptional and rare, and would be done covertly and with subsequent cover-up.

The moral hazard of the state repression backfire in the case of the Maidan massacre would mean that certain elements of the oligarchic and far-right Maidan opposition provoked the mass killing of the protesters, for instance by killing and wounding the police, or covertly staged the mass killing of the protesters themselves in order to blame the violence on the incumbent government leaders and their security or police forces and seize power in Ukraine as a result of this transformative event. This would also mean very strong incentives for the Maidan governments to cover such provocation or staged violence and stone wall investigations of mass killing on the Maidan.

There is evidence of such precedent of provoked and staged violence in Romania during the anti-communist “revolution” in 1989, which became a transformative event in Romanian history. The former Romanian president, prime minister, and a number of other leaders of the “revolution” were charged by Romanian prosecutors in 2018 and 2019 with crimes against humanity for using deliberate disinformation and diversion right after they seized power in 1989 to provoke false-flag mass killings that resulted in 863 deaths. The prosecution charges state that they used such orchestrated killings and other violence to legitimize their power and execute the Romanian communist government and party leader Ceausescu for these mass killings in a mock trial that they helped to stage. These and other leaders of the new Romanian government and military commanders reportedly provoked and staged the killings of supporters of the new government by other supporters of the new government, including in the military, by literally using false flags, deliberate diversions, and misinformation that Ceausescu snipers from the security services and his other loyalists, called “terrorists,” were killing supporters of the new government (Romanian, 2018).

A similar state repression backfire can involve executions, assassinations, poisoning, arrests, beatings, or torture by opposition leaders, activists, and protesters. However, such repression also involves moral hazard. For instance, videos and testimonies of various Maidan activists and eyewitnesses show that violent dispersal of Maidan protesters on November 30, 2013, was deliberately provoked by Maidan opposition leaders, the far-right Right Sector, and the head of the Yanukovych administration. His TV channel filmed and publicized it along with other Ukrainian and foreign TV and other media as unprovoked police violence against students on the Yanukovych order. Orchestrated police violence was used to trigger mass Maidan protests against Yanukovych and his government (see Katchanovski, 2020).

The moral hazard theory of state repression backfire, rational choice, and Weberian rationality-based analysis can be applied not only to the analysis of the Maidan massacre in Ukraine. Such a theoretical framework can also be used to conduct theory-based and evidence-based scholarly analyses of possible cases of false-flag violence in Ukraine and other countries. There is a similar moral hazard in interstate violence and conflict backfires. Similarly, there is a moral hazard in humanitarian intervention that involves perverse incentives for political actors to engage in risky and fraudulent actions against their own state to elicit violent state repression and humanitarian intervention by foreign states in response (Kuperman, 2008).

Cases of false-flag violence included violent attacks staged by Nazi Germany and disguised as Polish attacks in the German territory, for instance, in Gleiwitz. They were used by Nazi Germany as a pretext to invade Poland and start World War II and for propaganda purposes to justify this invasion (see, for instance, Davies, 2006, 152). A false-flag shelling with reported casualties by Soviet border guards near the village of Mainila was used by the Soviet Union as a *casus belli* for a war with Finland in 1939. This shelling was staged by Soviet forces on orders of Soviet leadership and was falsely blamed on shelling by Finland to create a pretext for the war (Spencer, 2018).

There is a documented history of such false-flag operations in politics and conflicts in Ukraine and other countries, specifically during

World War II, the Cold War, and since the Cold War.¹ For instance, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army units often used disguises of Soviet partisans or Soviet military and security forces to carry their killings of Polish and Ukrainian civilians in order to hide the UPA responsibility and impute these killings on their adversaries. The Soviet secret police created many fake UPA units to locate and neutralize actual UPA units and their sympathizers among the local population in Western Ukraine after the Soviet Union regained its control of this region at the end of World War II (see Statiev, 2010).

The Soviet KGB created fake underground organizations in Ukraine as a part of its tactic against different factions of the OUN and the US and British intelligence services that used the OUN during the Cold War. Various academic studies and documents of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) show that the US government was involved during the Cold War in 1953 in organizing false-flag violent attacks in Iran as a part of the US-led overthrow of a democratically elected government and turning this country into a US client state run by an authoritarian government (see Abrahamian, 2013; Gasiorowski, 1991). Some researchers and journalists argue that clandestine networks, which were organized during the Cold War by the governments in West European countries to form underground resistance during their potential occupation by the Soviet Union and which included many far-right elements, were involved in various false-flag attacks (Ganser, 2005).

The dioxin poisoning of Viktor Yushchenko helped to mobilize popular support for the “Orange Revolution” and win him the 2004 presidential elections, whose results were initially falsified in favor of Yanukovych. While the opposition and the media initially presented this as an assassination attempt by the Yanukovych side or the Russian government, the case has not been solved. After becoming president, Yushchenko indicated that politicians or oligarchs with whom he was previously allied might have been involved (Katchanovski, 2008).

Some scholars and journalists presented the Moscow apartment bombings in 1999 as a false-flag operation carried out by the Russian domestic security agency in order to create a pretext for the second Russian war in then de facto independent Chechnya and increase popular support

¹ In various cases, especially relatively recent, it is difficult to come to definite conclusions if certain events constituted false flag operations or not, because of lack of publicly available data to answer research questions or test various research hypotheses.

for Vladimir Putin before the presidential elections (see, for example, Dunlop, 2012). While such hypothesis cannot be excluded, the second war in Chechnya then already started with invasion or radical Islamist militias in Chechnya of the Dagestan region of Russia and the Islamic terrorists carried out several similar large-scale attacks during the first and second Chechen wars in Budenovsk, Makhachkala, Moscow, and Beslan and later claimed responsibility for the Moscow apartment bombings (see Sakwa, 2005).

Similarly, while Western governments and international organizations concluded that a chemical attack near Damascus in Syria in 2013 was most likely perpetrated by the Syrian government, there were claims that this was a false-flag attack by Islamic rebels in order to draw a direct US military intervention in the Syrian civil war. Some journalists argued based on various evidence that the massacres of opposition protesters in Venezuela and in Vilnius in Soviet Lithuania were falsely attributed to the government forces but were perpetrated by snipers from the opposition forces in order to frame the governments and to overthrow them (see Jones, 2009; Sapozhnikova, 2018).

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, various government and opposition parties and leaders in Ukraine often used political technologies against their political opponents, including false-flag political parties, newspapers, and advertisements, specifically during election campaigns (see Wilson, 2005). Ukrainian politics has been a high-stakes game because the power it gives allows rent seeking for politicians and oligarchs via the enrichment of themselves and their personal and political networks via corruption, insider dealings and advantages over political and business rivals. Power also grants de facto immunity from prosecution.

There are numerous “conspiracy theories” of false-flag operations which are generally promoted by political activists and amateur researchers. For example, they dismiss the overwhelming evidence that 9/11 attacks in the US were organized and carried out by Islamic terrorists and claim without sufficient evidence that these attacks were a false-flag operation.

Similarly, the Ukrainian government and media claimed that separatists in Donbas have routinely used false-flag attacks by shelling cities and towns under their control. Similar allegations about false-flag attacks by Ukrainian forces were often advanced by separatist and Russian media concerning shelling of cities and other areas controlled by the central government. However, studies and OSCE mission reports indicate that

such claims generally either lacked evidence or relied on fake evidence (see Katchanovski, 2016a).

Various separatist and Russian politicians and media claimed that a downing of a Malaysian MH17 passenger plane in Donbas in 2014 was a false-flag attack. However, publicly available evidence, which was reported in the media, the social media, and a trial in the Netherlands, indicates that the plane was shot down with a missile by separatists from a Russian-supplied Buk because it was mistaken for a Ukrainian military plane. Such evidence includes photos and videos of a Buk with antiaircraft missiles near the time and estimated place of its missile launch and the location of the Buk and launch spot in the separatist-controlled areas, SBU intercepts of phone calls of separatist commanders concerning the Buk and the shot-down plane (see Katchanovski, 2016a; Forthcoming).

There were also numerous claims of false-flag attacks during the Russia-Ukraine war. However, contrary to claims by the Russian Defense Ministry and Donbas separatists, there is no confirmed evidence of false-flag bombings of the Mariupol maternity hospital and the Mariupol theater by the Azov Regiment or other Ukrainian forces. The same concerns claims by the Ukrainian government that the shelling of Donetsk and the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant were false flags by the Russian forces. There is no corroborated evidence of systematic false-flag shelling or bombing of civilians by the Russian, separatist, and Ukrainian forces. Similarly, contrary to the Russian government claims of staged killings in Bucha, analysis of UN and Amnesty International reports, forensic expert reports, videos, satellite images, eyewitness reports, media investigative reports, and other sources shows that at least dozen civilians and territorial defense members were summarily executed or shot indiscriminately by individual Russian soldiers or Russian units during the Russian occupation of Bucha and suggests that at least many of several dozen other shot civilians and territorial defense members in Bucha were also victims of such Russian war crimes, while most of about 400 victims were killed by shelling (see Katchanovski, 2022a; Forthcoming).

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CHAPTER 2

Conflicting Narratives of the Maidan Massacre in Ukraine

This chapter examines different narratives concerning the Maidan massacre of the Maidan activists and the police on February 18–20, 2014, and previous scholarly studies of this massacre. The dominant narrative promoted by the Ukrainian and Western governments and with some exceptions the media attributed the Maidan massacre of the protesters to the Yanukovych government and his security forces and Berkut anti-riot police. It was uncritically accepted by some scholars. In contrast, most previous scholarly studies, which analyzed it specifically, found that this was a false-flag operation with involvement of elements of the Maidan oligarchic and far-right opposition.

2.1 CONFLICTING GOVERNMENT NARRATIVES OF THE MAIDAN MASSACRE

The dominant narrative promoted by the governments in Ukraine and the West attributed the Maidan massacre of the protesters on February 18–20, 2014, to the Yanukovych government and his security and police forces and generally disregarded killings of the police on the same day and in the same place. The official investigation by the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine (GPU) charged the special Berkut police company with the massacre of the Maidan protesters on February 20 on the orders of President Viktor Yanukovych and his heads of the Security Service

of Ukraine and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The GPU arrested and charged two Berkut commanders and three members of this police unit with terrorism and the murder of 48 out of 49 killed Maidan protesters and attempted murder of 80 out of 172 wounded protesters on February 20, 2014, on Yanukovych's orders. Shortly before the 10th anniversary of the massacre, Yanukovych, his heads and other senior officials and commanders of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Berkut anti-riot police were charged in absentia for the massacre of the Maidan protesters on February 18–20, 2014. The head of SBU in the Kyiv Region, the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and commanders and members of Berkut units from Kharkiv and Lviv were arrested and charged with the massacre of the Maidan activists on February 18, 2014. However, the Maidan massacre trial verdict by a Kyiv district court verdict in 2023 stated that there was no evidence of any order by Yanukovych and his government ministers to kill the Maidan activists on February 18–20 (Katchanovski, 2024).

Then President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, the head of the National Security and Defense Council Oleksandr Turchynov, and the head of the SBU Valentyn Nalyvaichenko alleged in February 2015 that Vladislav Surkov, an aide of Russian President Vladimir Putin, was personally coordinating foreign “snipers” on the Maidan but presented no supporting evidence. However, Serhii Leshchenko, a member of the Poroshenko’s faction in the parliament, revealed that Surkov arrived in Kyiv by plane after the massacre was already over. The Prosecutor General of Ukraine and the head of its department in charge of the Maidan massacre investigation stated later that they did not have evidence about such Surkov’s and Russian snipers’ involvement in the massacre (SBU, 2015; Shershen, 2015).

Similarly, Andrii Parubii, who became after the overthrow of Yanukovych the head of the National Security and Defense Council and then the speaker of the Ukrainian parliament, claimed that Russian and Belarusian snipers massacred the protesters and that they were located on the roofs of the presidential administration and the National Bank, but he was not certain if they were in Hotel Ukraina (Kalnysh, 2015). The government investigation and the Maidan massacre trial verdict in 2023 determined that there was no participation of Russian snipers or agents in this massacre (Katchanovski, 2024).

The Western governments and organizations, such as the European Union (EU), either explicitly or implicitly, by threatening sanctions,

blamed the Yanukovych government and the government forces for the massacre of the Maidan protesters when and after it happened and before any investigation was conducted. For instance, Joe Biden, then US vice president, spoke to Yanukovych on February 20, 2014, right after the massacre and demanded a withdrawal of the security forces, specifically snipers and paramilitary units which he said were most responsible for the violence and told Yanukovych to leave presidency and Ukraine (Biden, 2017).

However, Biden stated in his official address to the Ukrainian parliament that “snipers on the roofs” massacred the protesters (The Obama, 2015). The US ambassador to Ukraine told Biden during their visit to the massacre site in 2015 that “snipers” were on surrounding buildings (Baker, 2015). US Secretary of State Antony Blinken also stated that the Maidan protesters were massacred by snipers from the buildings: “but actually being there on the ground and sort of putting yourself where these people had been, and looking up at the buildings where the snipers had been shooting down at them gives you a pretty palpable feel for what people had done to stand up for their own democratic right to choose the future of their country” (Secretary, 2023). Biden, Blinken, and the US ambassador to Ukraine blamed the Yanukovych government forces for the massacre. But their statements that the Maidan activists were shot by snipers located in surrounding buildings contradicted the GPU investigation that protesters were massacred by the Berkut police on the ground and not by any snipers in surrounding buildings.

The Prosecutor General of Ukraine stated in June 2014 that he gave videos of the Maidan massacre to the FBI to enhance their quality (Report, 2015a). However, the US and other Western governments did not release their intelligence assessments and other information concerning this massacre, and results of such reported involvement of the FBI in the Maidan massacre investigation also were not revealed.

The Prosecutor General of Ukraine investigators, the Maidan victims lawyers, and with some exceptions, the Ukrainian and Western media denied that Maidan snipers massacred Maidan activists. On November 19, 2014, the Prosecutor General Office claimed during its press conference that their extensive investigation produced no evidence of “snipers” at Hotel Ukraina, Zhovtnevyi Palace and other locations controlled by the Maidan protesters.

However, in a leaked intercepted telephone call with the EU foreign affairs head, the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs referred to one

of the Maidan doctors, in particular, Olha Bohomolets, pointing to the similarity of the wounds among the protesters and police, which served as an indication that the massacre was organized by some elements of the Maidan opposition (Bergman, 2014). Lawyers representing two Berkut policemen stated in court on August 3, 2015, that the prosecution case was falsified and that relatives of victims should ask Andriy Parubii and Petro Poroshenko about those who gave an order to massacre protesters. Parubii was the leader of neo-Nazi Patriot of Ukraine in the 1990s and the head of the Maidan Self-Defense during the “Euro-maidan,” and he became the head of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine and the speaker of the Ukrainian parliament after the Maidan. Poroshenko, an oligarch and one of “Euromaidan” leaders, became president of Ukraine in May 2014.

The Western governments and organizations generally ignored the Maidan massacre trials and investigations even though this mass killing was one of the most serious human rights violations in contemporary Ukraine and Europe overall and it had crucial political significance beyond Ukraine. Many top Western officials paid tribute to the killed protesters on the site of the massacre during their visits to Ukraine. Such Western governments’ stance concerning the Maidan massacre investigations and trials contrasts with their various public statements and other forms of involvement concerning other politically important criminal cases and trials, such as the Yuliya Tymoshenko trial during the Yanukovych presidency, cases of corruption in the Ukrainian government after the “Euromaidan,” and the successful US administration pressure to remove Viktor Shokin as the GPU head.

Similarly, the EU did not show interest in investigations of this mass killing even though in a leaked intercepted telephone call with the EU foreign affairs chief, the Estonian minister of foreign affairs referred to Olha Bohomolets, the head of the Maidan doctors team, pointing out similarity of the wounds among the protesters and policemen, and indicating that some Maidan leaders hired “snipers” and stonewalled the investigation. The European parliament rejected 17 requests by one of its members to include investigations of the Maidan and Odesa massacres on its agenda (Evroparlament, 2017).

Videos of killings and woundings of many Maidan protesters and shooting by the Berkut special company, along with videos and photos of Omega unit snipers of the Internal Troops and audio recordings of Alfa unit snipers of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), were presented

by the government and the media in Ukraine and the West as definite evidence that the police massacred the protesters. Statements, media interviews, and reports by numerous Maidan protesters and Ukrainian and Western journalists have attributed the massacre to government snipers on the ground and in various surrounding buildings. Similarly, numerous bullet holes in trees, electric poles, and Hotel Ukraina walls from the side of the Berkut and government snipers were presented by the prosecution and the media as clear evidence that they shot protesters.

Conversely, ex-president Yanukovych and former top officials of his government, who fled to Russia following the massacre, as well as the Russian government and media, stated that the Maidan massacre was a part of a coup d'état or a fascist coup by some of the Maidan leaders, radical elements of the Maidan opposition, and the US government. Yanukovych, his ministers, and Berkut commanders denied that they had ordered the massacre and stated that the protesters and the police were shot by Maidan snipers. However, they did not produce specific evidence in support of their claims. Yanukovych along with his heads of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Internal Troops, and the Security Service of Ukraine, and Berkut commanders were then charged in absentia for ordering the Maidan massacre of the protesters. However, as noted no such orders were revealed, and the Maidan massacre trial verdict stated that there was no evidence of such orders (Katchanovski, 2023a, 2023b, 2024).

For instance, Yanukovych made such claims in 2017 in his letters to the US President Donald Trump, leaders of Germany, France, Poland and Russia, and the Council of Europe and the European parliament. In these letters, he named such People's Front leaders as Oleksandr Turchynov (the acting president after the Yanukovych overthrow and then the head of the National Security and Defense Council), Andriy Parubii (the head of the Maidan Self-Defense and then the head of the Ukrainian parliament), Serhii Pashynsky (the head of the presidential administration under Turchynov and then the head of the National Defense and Security committee of the Ukrainian parliament), and Arsen Avakov (then the Minister of Internal Affairs) as organizers of the Maidan massacre. Yanukovych stated in his interviews, in his Ukrainian and Russian court testimonies, and in his letter to Trump and other foreign leaders that he had documents and witnesses in support of his claims. But he did not make such evidence public citing potential threats to witnesses in Ukraine.

He called for international investigation of this mass killing and stated that he would then provide such evidence (Pismo, 2017).

An edited version of a BBC interview with Yanukovych was misrepresented by BBC and the Ukrainian media as an admission of his and his police forces responsibility for carrying out the Maidan massacre. However, the transcript of the full Yanukovych interview published on the BBC Russian website shows that he did not admit his and his police forces responsibility for carrying the Maidan massacre and repeated his previous statements about a “coup” by “radicals” but regretted his failure to prevent the massacre (Viktor, 2015; Yanukovych, 2015).

Oleksandr Yakymenko, the SBU head under Yanukovych, testified in a Russian court concerning the “Maidan coup,” that the SBU identified by name several Maidan snipers who massacred the police and protesters, and that they included some Georgians and a former SBU Alfa officer, who then reportedly worked in the Fatherland Party security. He also named Volodymyr Parasiuk, who headed the special Maidan company, established in the Music Conservatory with help of the Right Sector, and his father as Maidan “snipers.” The ex-SBU head stated that during the Maidan massacre on February 20 the SBU located 10 snipers in the Music Conservatory, obtained their photos, and then tracked five of them entering Hotel Ukraina but lost track of other five snipers (Pokazaniya, 2016).

Andriy Klyuyev, the former head of the Yanukovych administration, stated in the end of 2016 that one of the Maidan leaders hired snipers from Georgia and the Baltic States. He identified Pashynsky as this leader and one of the Georgian snipers identified in a protocol of his interrogation by senior Right Sector activists. Reported position of this “sniper” matches a sole uninhibited Maidan area building, which is located near Dnipro Hotel and was identified in Katchanovski (2015a, 18–19). Klyuyev also stated that Turchynov, Parubii, and Pashynsky organized the massacre of the police and the protesters and used the Right Sector and leaders of Maidan parties, including far-right Svoboda, in the dark (Eks-glava, 2016). However, he did not provide specific evidence in support of his statements.

The Russian government made similar claims based primarily on statements of Yanukovych, his government ministers, and self-admitted Georgian snipers. It did not produce specific evidence in support of their claims. For example, Putin stated that “the neo-Nazi regime” “had taken

hold in Ukraine after the 2014 coup,” “that was a bloody, anti-state and unconstitutional coup” (Presidential, 2023).

Some international organizations examined the Maidan massacre trial and investigations in their reports, but they did not conduct their own investigations of this mass killing and ignored academic studies of the massacre. They did not question the official investigation conclusions that the government forces on the orders of the Yanukovych government were responsible for the massacre of the protesters and relied on the investigation findings.

An International Advisory Panel of the Council of Europe report in 2015 found that the investigation was stalled, in particular by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the GPU. The report revealed that contrary to the public statements, the official investigation had evidence of “shooters” killing at least three protesters from Hotel Ukraina or the Music Conservatory and that at least 10 protesters were killed by unidentified “snipers” from rooftops of buildings. The initial prosecution charges against the Berkut policemen for killing 39 protesters simply omitted the killings of the other 10 protesters, even though at least 8 of them were shot dead at the same time and place. However, the Council of Europe commission, which did not conduct its own investigation, repeated the official investigation conclusions that Berkut policemen were responsible for killings of the absolute majority of the protesters (Report, 2015a).

Interpol rejected GPU requests to put ex-president Yanukovych, a number of his ministers, and the commander and members of the Berkut special company on its wanted list on murder-related charges for the Maidan massacre because this international police organization deemed that these charges constituted political persecution (Tucker, 2015). The Ukrainian parliament asked the International Criminal Court (ICC) immediately after the overthrow of Yanukovych to investigate this and other cases of political violence during the “Euromaidan.” However, the GPU reportedly informed the court representatives in the fall of 2014 that the Ukrainian law enforcement agencies were not interested in assisting such an ICC investigation (see Katchanovski, 2015a, 8). The ICC did not pursue the Maidan massacre case and other cases of political violence during the “Euromaidan.”

In spite of accusations of their involvement in the Maidan mass killings to seize power in Ukraine, oligarchic and far-right Maidan leaders and organizations were hailed by Western and Ukrainian politicians and the

media as heroes and defenders of democracy. They were invited for government visits and talks at universities in the West.

The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded in 2022 to the Center for Civil Liberties. This Ukrainian NGO, which is funded by the Western governments and foundations, run the Euromaidan SOS during the Maidan and after the Maidan. It attributed the Maidan violence, including the Maidan massacre, to the government forces and advocated for the prosecution of the Berkut policemen for the Maidan massacre in Ukraine. A report by Euromaidan SOS, other Maidan organizations, and lawyers of the killed protesters in June 2015 concluded that the government investigation was ineffective and was stonewalled.

The Maidan-led government used the Maidan massacre as a source of its legitimacy and widely commemorated this mass killing and its victims among the protesters. The killed protesters were posthumously awarded Hero of Ukraine titles by President Petro Poroshenko, and his government established February 20 as a day in their honor.

2.2 THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE MAIDAN MASSACRE

The Ukrainian and Western mainstream media, with some notable exceptions, explicitly or implicitly attributed the Maidan massacre to the Berkut police or government “snipers,” dismissed the false-flag massacre as a conspiracy theory, and generally repeated the Ukrainian government statements and prosecution charges at face value (Schwartz, 2018). For example, the New York Times stated for the 10th anniversary of the massacre in 2024 that “in the uprising’s violent, final days police killed more than 100 protesters” (Kramer, 2024). However, the mainstream Western media often follows their reporting concerning conflicts in foreign countries, in particular, Ukraine, based on uncritical indexing of the narratives of their own governments or political elites and the reporting is biased by political factors, such as relationship of foreign countries with the Western countries (see Boyd-Barrett, 2016; Katchanovski & Morley, 2012).

Several dozen journalists from more than dozen countries reported in the media or the social media about witnessing snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, including shooting of Maidan protesters by these snipers, cited eyewitnesses among Maidan protesters about such snipers, or based their reports on such testimonies. For example, journalists from such major Western and Ukrainian media

as ABC, CNN, New York Times, BBC, Guardian, ARD, Bild, Spiegel, La7, TT News Agency, TVP, 1+1, 5 Kanal, ICTV, Novyi Kanal, 24 Kanal, and Kyiv Post reported about witnessing snipers in Hotel Ukraina, cited Maidan protesters about snipers there, or based their reports on such testimonies. Journalists from ITV, TVP, Spiegel, 1+1, ICTV, and other Western and Ukrainian media similarly reported witnessing themselves or cited Maidan protesters about witnessing snipers in other Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, such as Bank Arkada, Zhovtnevyi Palace, the Main Post Office, and Muzeinyi Lane and Horodetsky Street buildings (see Chapters 3 and 5).

With just some exceptions, these reports without any evidence presented these snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings or areas as Ukrainian government snipers or implied that they were the government snipers. But soon after the massacre, with some partial exceptions, these and other major media outlets referred to snipers in these Maidan-controlled locations as “a conspiracy theory,” denied their existence, or omitted this and other evidence of such snipers.

The New York Times concluded that the police forces and Yanukovych himself fled because of their fear that protesters could use weapons that were seized during the attacks on the police and SBU headquarters in several regions of Western Ukraine but did not report evidence of the Maidan snipers and assassination attempts agents Yanukovych (Higgins & Kramer, 2015). Similarly, the Daily Beast reported that presented videos and photos of the armed SBU Alfa unit are proof that the Alfa snipers killed the protesters, even though the photos and videos were made at the SBU headquarters after the massacre had already unfolded and the Maidan government investigation found that Alfa snipers did not fire a single shot during the massacre (Dettmer, 2014).

The Western mainstream media with some exceptions, primarily involving a testimony by Yanukovych, did not cover the Maidan massacre trials and investigations. Google news searches produced no reports of major revelations from these trials and investigations or evidence of the massacre of the protesters by “snipers” from the Maidan-controlled buildings and the massacre of the police by the far-right organizations.

Ukrainian media reports generally, with some notable exceptions, presented the Maidan government and GPU prosecution version of the massacre. This coverage, with some exceptions, omitted major evidence revealed by these trials and investigations that suggested the massacre of the protesters by shooters in the Maidan-controlled buildings and

the massacre of the police by the far-right. While the Ukrainian media reports during and soon after the massacre contained various evidence of “snipers” in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations, such reports have since become very rare even though the February 20th massacre trial revealed much more such evidence. A book by a pro-Maidan Ukrainian journalist concluded that the Maidan massacre was organized by Yanukovych aides and carried out by the government units, but it mostly relied on results of government investigation and interviews with Maidan politicians (see Koshkina, 2015).

The Ukrainian media and with a few exceptions Western media presented at face value the Maidan massacre trial verdict in October 2023 and the conviction in absentia of three Berkut policemen for the killing of 35 out of 49 of the Maidan protesters as a definite proof that they massacred all protesters. Many media misrepresented the Maidan massacre verdict as a definite proof that there were no Maidan snipers and did not report testimonies by the absolute majority of wounded Maidan protesters, videos, and forensic ballistic examinations at the Maidan massacre trial in Ukraine concerning the snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings. Similarly, they did not report parts of this trial verdict concerning the shooting of many protesters and Western journalists by snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas and the lack of evidence of the massacre order by the Yanukovych government and Russian involvement.

There has been a virtual blackout of the Maidan massacre trial verdict’s parts concerning snipers in the Maidan activists-controlled Hotel Ukraina in the Ukrainian media and, with a few notable exceptions, the Western mainstream media. All Ukrainian media reports omitted the verdict’s parts concerning such snipers and many media outlets even claimed that the verdict disproved existence of such snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations.

The Western media, with a few notable exceptions, also omitted this crucial information. Moreover, Cathy Young in her opinion piece in a partisan neoconservative site Bulwark misrepresented the Maidan massacre trial verdict, branding the revelations about Maidan snipers operating in Hotel Ukraina a “conspiracy theory” and claiming, falsely, that the verdict did not indicate that Maidan protesters were shot from the hotel or other Maidan-controlled locations, and that it did not disprove involvement by Russian snipers. Young has further falsely claimed, contrary to the verdict, that Hotel Ukraina was not controlled

by the Maidan activists and has propagated instead an actual conspiracy theory that police in the hotel could have shot the protesters. Her claims in these regards are contrary not only to the verdict but also to a statement from the far-right Svoboda Party about taking control of the hotel prior to the massacre, to videos of Maidan snipers shooting at protesters and a BBC crew from the hotel, to testimonies both by hotel staff and by the Maidan unit commander in charge of guarding the hotel, and to other evidence presented in scholarly publications. Young even denied that verdict references to shooting from Hotel Ukraina direction meant shooting from this hotel. She also falsely claimed that the Berkut policemen were convicted for the murder of 40 out of 48 Maidan activists.

There were a few major exceptions in the Western media reporting of the Maidan massacre. In contrast to the dominant narrative, Monitor, a German TV program, presented evidence of its investigation, showing that snipers were based in Hotel Ukraina and that the Ukrainian government investigation was manipulated (Monitor, 2014). The BBC investigation produced similar findings. Investigative reports by the BBC and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung almost a year after the massacre confirmed the presence of armed protesters at the Music Conservatory and their shooting of the police at Maidan (Gatehouse, 2015; Schuller, 2015). The BBC report also reported a statement of a unidentified GPU prosecutor that he examined a version that both police and the protesters were killed by the same shooters. A Reuters investigation in 2014 reported that the prosecution case against Berkut members was problematic because it relied primarily on videos and photos and misrepresented or ignored some key pieces of such evidence (Stecklow & Akymenko, 2014).

Italian, Israeli, and US TV documentaries and Macedonian TV showed in 2018–2020 testimonies of seven former members of the Georgian military. They stated that they were members of the Maidan snipers groups, which included snipers from Georgia, the Baltic States, and Parasiuk-led group in Hotel Ukraina and the Music Conservatory, and that they were ordered by Maidan leaders and ex-Georgian leaders to massacre both the police and the protesters and assassinate then President Yanukovych and that they witnessed such massacre by the Maidan snipers or were involved themselves (InsideOver, 2017a, 2017b; MichaelRCaputo, 2022; Stephan, 2018).

In contrast, the Russian media coverage was dominated by the false-flag theory of the massacre. But the media in Russia, with some exceptions, also did not report the revelations from the Maidan massacre trial and investigations. The Russian media often relayed statements about this massacre by Yanukovych and his former government members, who found refuge in Russia, and by self-reported Georgian snipers. However, the Russian media with some exceptions followed the government narratives and was under various forms of direct or indirect government control.

The Western and Ukrainian media with some exceptions also reported at face value claims by the Maidan activists and Maidan opposition leaders that a female Maidan medic was wounded during the massacre, that Tetiana Chornovol was beaten in retaliation for her participation in Euromaidan protests, that Dmytro Bulatov was kidnapped and crucified, that Yanukovych ordered the violent dispersal of Maidan protesters on November 30, 2013, and that the first three Maidan activists were killed by the government forces in January 2014. The media attributed these cases of political violence to the Yanukovych government, his forces, or pro-Yanukovych “titushki” and omitted evidence that they were staged.

2.3 MISREPRESENTATION OF THE MAIDAN MASSACRE BY WIKIPEDIA

The dominant representation of the Maidan massacre in English-language, Russian-language, and Ukrainian-language Wikipedia is generally based on the dominant narrative by the Western and Ukrainian media and the Ukrainian government investigation that the Berkut police and government snipers massacred the Maidan protesters on the Yanukovych government orders. They generally excluded academic studies of the Maidan massacre and labeled them “conspiracy theories” (Euromaidan, 2024; Maidan, 2024). It is revealing that there are no specific articles concerning the Maidan massacre in English-language, Russian-language, and Ukrainian-language Wikipedia. It is noteworthy that Wikipedia omitted findings of academic studies and the Maidan massacre trial verdict that Ihor Kostenko, a Maidan activist and a Wikipedia editor, was killed by sniper fire from the Maidan-controlled area (Katchanovski, 2024).

The same Wikipedia editors, who misrepresented the Maidan massacre and whitewashed the evidence of involvement of the far-right in this

massacre, also smeared scholars who researched this massacre and whitewashed in various Wikipedia articles the contemporary and historical far-right in Ukraine, including the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, their collaboration with Nazi Germany, their ideology and leaders, their “Glory to Ukraine. Glory to the Heroes” greeting, and their involvement in the mass murder of Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians. The same concerns the ideology, symbols, and involvement in violence by such neo-Nazi organizations, as Azov movement and the far-right Right Sector (Katchanovski, Forthcoming).

Such Wikipedia editors, who misrepresented the Maidan massacre and whitewashed the contemporary and historical far-right in Ukraine, in particular, Nazi collaborators, included Nangaf, Wise2 (Prohoshka, Slav70), Bobfrombrockley, Lute88, My Very Best Wishes, and Volunteer Marek. The last five were identified in various publications and online sources, respectively, as far-right Svoboda-linked activist Svyatoslav Gut, Ben Gidley, Tsetsilia Cecilia Tsypina, Andrei Lomize, and Radek Szulga. The last two were also identified as involved in the Wikipedia’s intentional distortion of the Holocaust in Poland (see Grabowski & Klein, 2023). The Wikipedia editor Wise2, who also edited under names of Prohoshka and Slav70, propagated “scientific anti-Semitism” and whitewashed the involvement of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) in the 1941 Lviv pogroms during the Nazi occupation of Ukraine, justifying it on the basis of “Jewish collaboration.”

The Maidan massacre was also deliberately misrepresented by several dozen identical or nearly identical English-language websites on all major social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, VKontakte, YouTube, Reddit, etc.) and various forums, such as Ukrainska Pravda forum. Such use of multiple fake accounts and pages to mislead people is unauthentic compared to typical social media users and suggests that this was an organized disinformation campaign with likely involvement of Svoboda. These websites were created with involvement of the same Svyatoslav Gut, a far-right immigrant activist linked to Svoboda (see Katchanovski, 2021a).

Another such Wikipedia editor, who uses the handle My Very Best Wishes, whitewashed the fact that monuments in Canada to the Galicia Division and Roman Shukhevych are in fact commemorating a division of the Waffen-SS and a Nazi collaborator. This editor also falsely claimed on Wikipedia’s biographical page on Elon Musk that he was involved in the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

2.4 PREVIOUS ACADEMIC STUDIES OF THE MAIDAN MASSACRE

Despite its intrinsic significance to the politics and conflicts in Ukraine and between Russia and Ukraine and the West, the Maidan massacre has been the central subject of only a few academic studies. Most of them found that the far-right and oligarchic elements of the Maidan opposition, in particular Fatherland, the Right Sector and Svoboda, were involved in the false-flag Maidan massacre of the protesters and the police (see Katchanovski, 2015a, 2016a, 2016b, 2020, 2023a, 2023b, Forthcoming).

The first academic study of the Maidan massacre concluded that it was not a failed attempt by the government to suppress the “Euromaidan” protests but a successful false-flag operation, which was organized and covertly conducted with involvement of elements of the Maidan oligarchic and far-right opposition and concealed groups of “snipers” in order to win the asymmetric conflict during the “Euromaidan” and seize power in Ukraine (Katchanovski, 2014a, 2015a). Its updated and revised version, which analyzed even greater volume of various kinds of data and was published in a peer-reviewed journal, produced similar conclusions (Katchanovski, 2023b).

Another peer-reviewed article presented more evidence of far-right involvement in the Maidan massacre, in particular public admissions by some members of the far-right organizations in killing and wounding the police and court decisions revealing GPU investigations of such involvement (Katchanovski, 2020). Another study in a peer-reviewed journal examined the Maidan massacre trial and investigations and their implications for the Russia-Ukraine war and relations. It found that “the absolute majority of wounded Maidan protesters, nearly 100 prosecution and defense witnesses, synchronized videos, and medical and ballistic examinations by government experts pointed unequivocally to the fact that the Maidan protesters were massacred by snipers located in Maidan-controlled buildings” (see Katchanovski, 2023a).

Katchanovski (2015a) study was used by the GPU in their investigation of the Maidan massacre. An earlier version of the video appendix of the author with over 80 witness testimonies concerning snipers in Maidan-controlled buildings and areas was admitted as evidence and presented during the Maidan massacre trial in Ukraine (Katchanovski, 2019a; Sudova, 2021, 24:29).

There is not a single scholarly study of the Maidan massacre that was based on the analysis of primary sources and disproved major findings of scholarly studies by the author. Major findings of original studies by Katchanovski (2014a, 2015a, 2016a) were replicated by Hahn (2018). He stated that “independent investigations by numerous organizations and a plethora of video and audio evidence support Katchanovski’s findings: Germany’s Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, a BBC documentary film, a documentary film by Beck-Hoffman, among several others” and “moreover, the trial’s revelations, Maidan regime General Prosecutor Office (GPO) court appeals, and resulting court decisions began to undermine the Maidan myth and support Katchanovski’s version of events...” (see Hahn, 2018).

Many other academic studies also stated or regarded as plausible, in particular based on studies by the author and other sources, that the Maidan massacre was perpetrated with the involvement of the Maidan opposition, in particular the far-right (see, for example, Bandeira, 2019, 206–207; Cohen, 2018a; Hahn, 2018; Lane, 2016; Mandel, 2016; Sakwa, 2015, 90–92).

The author’s previous academic studies of the Maidan massacre were cited overwhelmingly favorably by over 100 other scholars and experts (Google Scholar, 2024). They include the following noted scholars and experts who accepted the findings of these studies or wrote positively about them in their academic and media publications: David Lane (Cambridge University), Jeffrey Sachs (Columbia University), Jack Matlock (Duke University and the former US Ambassador to the Soviet Union), Richard Sakwa (University of Kent), Stephen F. Cohen (New York University), Anatol Lieven (Quincy Institute), Volodymyr Ishchenko (Free University of Berlin), Nicolai Petro (University of Rhode Island), Ray Taras (Tulane University), Suzanne Loftus (Quincy Institute), Oliver Boyd-Barrett (Bowling Green State University), Gordon Hahn (Center for Terrorism and Intelligence Studies), Glenn Diesen (University of South-Eastern Norway), Luiz Alberto Moniz Bandeira (University of Brasilia), David Mandel (UQAM), Michael Dunford (University of Sussex), Dieter Segert (University of Vienna), Greg Simons (Uppsala University), Mikhail Molchanov (University of Victoria), J. L. Black (Carleton University), Illia Kononov (Carleton University), Asier Blas Mendoza (University of the Basque Country), Jacques Sapir (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales), W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Kees van der Pijl (University of

Sussex), John Ryan (University of Winnipeg), Samir Saul (University of Montreal), Michel Seymour (University of Montreal), John Foster (former Canadian diplomat and World Bank official), and Alfred de Zayas (former UN Independent Expert) (Favorable, 2023).

For example, Jeffrey Sachs, University Professor at Columbia University and the former adviser to three UN Secretaries-General, wrote that “Professor Ivan Katchanovski of the University of Ottawa has written powerful academic studies, reviewing the evidence of the Maidan Uprising and finding that most of the violence and killing originated not from Yanukovych’s security detail, but from coup leaders themselves, who fired into the crowds, killing both policemen and demonstrators” (Sachs, 2023). David Lane, Professor at Cambridge University, noted that “not only the 2014 audiotape of the Estonian foreign minister who opined that this was the work of groups within the Maidan, but also the detailed research of Ivan Katchanovski shows quite convincingly that the deaths were the work of right wing agitators” (Lane, 2016).

Similarly, Stephen F. Cohen, Professor at New York University, stated that “it was long said that the snipers had been sent by Yanukovych, but it has now been virtually proven that the shooters were instead from the neofascist group Right Sector among the protesters on the square (see, for example, the reports of the scholar Ivan Katchanovski)” (Cohen, 2018b). Alexander R. Sich, Professor at Franciscan University of Steubenville, wrote that “moreover, a report by the International Advisory Panel, set up by the Council of Europe, presented evidence corroborating the conclusions of Katchanovski’s study—including accusations that the Ukrainian investigation of the “snipers’ massacre” on the Maidan was deliberately and systematically falsified and stonewalled at the highest level in Ukraine, in particular by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Prosecutor General office, as a part of the cover-up” (Sich, 2015). Jack Matlock, Visiting Scholar at Duke University and the former US Ambassador to the Soviet Union, wrote that “in fact, most of the sniper fire came from buildings controlled by the demonstrators” citing “Ivan Katchanovski, “The Maidan Massacre in Ukraine: Revelations from Trials and Investigations,” NYU Jordan Center News” (Katchanovski, 2021b; Matlock, 2021).

The number of such scholars and experts who accepted the findings of the Katchanovski’s original studies of the massacre or wrote positively about them in their publications exceeded dozens of times a few negative ones, which were largely politically motivated and ad hominem by those

who openly supported Maidan, including the illegal overthrow of the Ukrainian government, and accepted at face value claims by the Maidan leaders and the media.

As Sich (2015) noted, “unfortunately, apart from Marples, most responses have indeed been *ad hominem* attacks directed against Katchanovski.”

For instance, Taras Kuzio relied on such false claims and *ad hominem* attacks, which he also directed at many other scholars (see Carl, 2022; Marples, 2020). His Twitter page profile included a Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) member with the red and black flag (Twitter, 2022). The Ukrainian Insurgent Army was organized by the far-right Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (Bandera faction) (OUN-B), and a large part of their leaders and members collaborated with Nazi Germany and were involved in the mass murder of Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians (see Himka, 2021; Katchanovski, 2015b, 2019b; Rudling, 2011). The far-right Right Sector regarded itself as a successor of the UPA and the OUN-B and used their red and black as its official symbol.

Kuzio, David Marples, and William Risch published their criticism in non-academic and non-peer-reviewed online publications. Marples, history professor, changed his original views since his blog post in October 2014 concerning the first draft of the Maidan massacre paper, which was presented by the author at the Ukrainian Studies seminar at the University of Ottawa. He wrote subsequently that “responsibility for the 100 murders in Maidan” remained unclear and attributed the killings mostly to “snipers firing from the rooftops of nearby buildings” (Marples, 2020).

The claims by the critics that the academic studies by the author were politically motivated, that there were no Maidan snipers, that this was “a conspiracy theory,” that Hotel Ukraina was not controlled by the Maidan opposition, that only forensic ballistic experts can determine which party of the conflict shot the Maidan activists, that the investigation by the Prosecutor General Office was taking long time because resource constraints and the large number of victims are shown to be false in this book, in previous peer-reviewed journal articles, and in various other publications by the author.

The author is a Ukrainian and Canadian political scientist originally from Western Ukraine and attended the first Ukrainian opposition demonstrations and rallies in Kyiv in 1988–1991. The author faced expulsion from the Kyiv National Economic University in 1990 and

was prevented from pursuing graduate education in the Soviet Union for writing the final undergraduate thesis (in Ukrainian) because it was based on theories of Max Weber and Western economists and concluded that the Soviet system was bound to collapse. The author is a life-long supporter of liberal democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and peace in Ukraine and publicly called before, during, and after the Euromaidan for the European Union accession of Ukraine, and opposed the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 (Dyer, 2022; Katchanovski, 2007, 2014b, 2018). However, it is professional and ethical duty of scholars to rely on evidence and not on political views or other considerations.

Similarly, the absolute majority of wounded Maidan protesters, several hundred witnesses, videos, government ballistic forensic experts, and the Maidan massacre trial verdict confirmed that many Maidan activists were shot from Hotel Ukraina and that this hotel was controlled by the Maidan forces, in particular, the far-right Svoboda Party, which also stated before the massacre that it took this hotel under its “guard” and “control” (see Katchanovski, 2023a, 2023b, Chapter 3, 4, 5, 6). The entire department of the Prosecutor General Office in Ukraine was created to investigate violence during the Maidan, in particular, the Maidan massacre. This was one of the most documented cases of mass killing in history with thousands of eyewitnesses, primarily Maidan activists and Ukrainian and foreign journalists and video recordings of the massacre.

Another study corroborated the findings of the far-right involvement in the massacre of the police and argued that the violence was initiated by the Maidan protesters, who killed and wounded many policemen, and maintained, based on secondary sources, that the Berkut police then in response massacred the protesters (Kudelia, 2018). Ishchenko (2016, 2020), based on an analysis of a database of major protest events during “Euromaidan,” found significant involvement of the far-right in violence but did not specifically examine the Maidan massacre.

In contrast, some other studies of the “Euromaidan” attributed the massacre of the protesters to the Berkut anti-riot police or snipers from the Security Service of Ukraine and Internal Troops (see, for example, Marples & Mills, 2015; Wilson, 2014). However, they were not based on a comprehensive analysis of this crucial case of political violence and uncritically accepted claims by the Maidan politicians and the Ukrainian and Western media concerning the massacre perpetrators and organizers. The Maidan opposition leaders during and immediately after the massacre publicly accused the government snipers from SBU Alfa and Internal

Troops Omega units and the special Berkut company of perpetrating the massacre of the protesters on the Yanukovych orders.

Wilson (2014) stated citing Maidan activists and Ukrainian media reports that government snipers, led by Internal Troops and SBU Alfa commanders, massacred Maidan protesters from the government buildings and Hotel Ukraina and Kozatsky Hotel and one of the snipers was killed in Hotel Ukraina. However, the Internal Troops and SBU Alfa commanders, named as being in charge of the massacre, were not charged by the prosecution in Ukraine and some of them continued to serve in commanding positions after the Maidan. The evidence, such as statements of Svoboda leaders before the massacre about taking Hotel Ukraina under their control, videos, and testimonies of Maidan protesters and the hotel staff, showed that Hotel Ukraina and Kozatsky Hotel were under the Maidan control during the massacre (see Katchanovski, 2015a, 2020, 2023a, 2023b).

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

Similarly, many previous studies, which uncritically relied on narratives of the Ukrainian and Western governments and the media and ignored primary sources, represented the Euromaidan as a popular movement, which turned into a revolution, and which was a political protest against the authoritarian government, especially its reliance on violence, and by support of integration of Ukraine into the European Union. They also attributed violent attacks of the presidential administration and the parliament as response to the government violence and political repressions or as provocations by the Yanukovych government or Russia. They regarded the role of the far-right organizations during the Maidan as insignificant or marginal (see, for example, Marples & Mills, 2015; Wilson, 2014).

Killings of Armenian, Georgian, Jewish, and Polish protesters and the presence of the Right Sector during funeral of Oleksander Shcherbaniuk, a Jewish protester, were mentioned in about dozen stories in major US, Israeli, and Scandinavian media as evidence of the diversity of the

protesters, their massacre by the government snipers, and tolerant or moderate nature of Right Sector, an alliance of radical nationalist and neo-Nazi organizations (Elgot, 2014; Snyder, 2014).

However, the previous studies did not examine in depth and in detail all publicly available evidence revealed during more than 10 years after this massacre by Maidan massacre trials and investigation, and in the media, and social media. The nearly 1,000,000,000-word Maidan massacre trial verdict issued in October 2023 is not examined by previous studies. There is not a single previous book-length study of the crucial massacre in Ukraine. Since this crucial case of political violence is highly politicized, academic analysis of the revelations from the trials and investigations could help to determine which party of the “Euromaidan” conflict was involved in this mass killing. This book fills this gap and analyzes in depth systematically and comprehensively all publicly available evidence of this crucial massacre in Ukraine.

Over 100 Western media outlets, including popular American, Danish, Dutch, German, Spanish, and Swiss, reported or cited the Maidan massacre studies by the author, overwhelmingly favorably. Their number is dozens of times higher than the few Western and Ukrainian media, which reported negatively concerning these Maidan massacre studies, such as above-mentioned misrepresentation by Cathy Young in Bulwark. They include the following popular American, Austrian, Canadian, Danish, Dutch, German, Greek, Italian, New Zealand, Norwegian, Spanish, and Swiss media outlets, which reported positively concerning these studies by the author: The Nation, Huffington Post, Courthouse News, Jacobin, Consortium News, Counterpunch, Grayzone, Truthout, Canadian Dimension, Il Fatto Quotidiano, Limes, Panorama, Wired Italy, CTXT, Diario16plus, El National, Der Standard, Ekathimerini, Jyllands-Posten, La Razon, Ny Tid, SCOOP, and Weltwoche.

For example, Lev Golinkin (2016) wrote in The Nation magazine:

The darkest evidence of the far right’s involvement comes from Ivan Katchanovski, a professor at the University of Ottawa, who researched the events of February 20, 2014, “Maidan snipers massacre” when mysterious gunmen killed over 50 people. In addition to being the crucial turning point that led to Yanukovych’s abdication, the massacre is the climax of Winter on Fire. Katchanovski argues, with considerable forensic and other evidence, that far-right groups not only provoked fighting by shooting at the police but also carried out the murder of Maidan protesters in a false-flag operation. The Kiev government has been unable to provide a definitive explanation to what happened that day.

Wired Italia magazine noted that “although the direct responsibility for the massacre has never been fully ascertained, Ivan Katchanovski, a Ukrainian-Canadian political scientist at the University of Ottawa, has for years collected overwhelming evidence showing that the snipers were not affiliated with Yanukovych’s government, but far-right agents” (Mossetti, 2023). A Spanish CTXT article referred to “The most convincing academic study of that massacre, by Professor Ivan Katchanovski of the School of Political Studies at the University of Ottawa” (Poch, 2022). A publication in El Nacional (Spain) stated “all the available information, gathered over the years by the political scientist, Dr. Ivan Katchanovski, is what has been presented at the trial and considered as valid evidence by the court. The result of their investigation has been confirmed by the sentence, noting that the policemen killed and wounded, like the vast majority of protesters (both dead and wounded), were attacked by snipers in buildings and areas controlled by Maidan activists” (Talegón, 2023).

Similarly, more than 50 Ukrainian media reported concerning these Maidan massacre studies by the author, overwhelmingly favorably. Such popular media of differing political orientation that reported positively included the following: Apostroph, Avers TV, Kommentarii, Kontrakty, 112, NewsOne, RBK Ukraine, Strana, and Ukraina Moloda (see, for example, Ivan Katchanovski, 2016; TRK, 2019). However, the Ukrainian and Western media overwhelmingly propagated the narratives that the massacre was perpetrated by the Berkut police or government snipers and often omitted author’s previous scholarly studies of the Maidan massacre (Baldwin, 2023).

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CHAPTER 3

Video Reconstruction and Content Analysis of the Maidan Massacre on February 20, 2014

This chapter presents video reconstruction and the content analysis of the Maidan massacre in Ukraine using over 2,000 videos and recordings of live Internet and TV broadcasts of the massacre in nearly 50 countries, news reports and social media posts by some 120 journalists covering the massacre from Kyiv, over 6,000 photos, and nearly 30 gigabytes of publicly available radio intercepts of snipers and commanders of the Security Service of Ukraine and Internal Troops. Synchronized videos show that specific times and directions of shooting by the Berkut policemen did not coincide with specific times and directions of killings of specific protesters. Snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings aiming or shooting at the Maidan protesters are filmed in at least 14 videos, including 10 videos in which these snipers were identified as Maidan opposition snipers, in particular far-right linked. At least 26 videos show groups of Maidan snipers and spotters, in particular, from the far-right special armed Maidan company, moving into, looking for, changing, or leaving shooting positions in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. Positions of activists and locations and directions of the wounds in forensic medical examinations match directions from Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. There are over 100 testimonies and reports by Maidan activists, journalists, and policemen during the massacre itself about Maidan snipers or snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings.

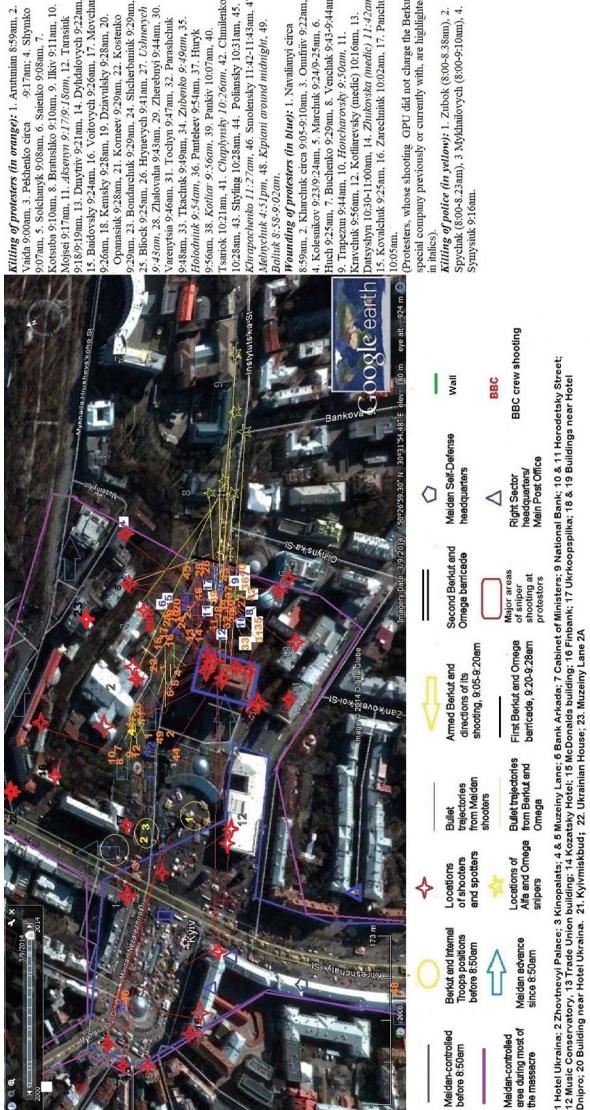
3.1 THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SNIPERS' MASSACRE OF THE POLICE AND THE PROTESTERS ON THE MAIDAN IN UKRAINE

The content analysis of synchronized videos, photos, audio recordings, and media and social media reports shows that the cease-fire agreement, which was signed by then President Viktor Yanukovych and leaders of the Maidan opposition parties around midnight on February 20, 2014, was broken early in the morning on that day. The Berkut and Internal Troops units were then in standoff with the protesters on the Maidan (the Independence Square) in downtown Kyiv (see Video, [2023a](#) and Map [3.1](#)).

Shortly after midnight on February 20, Dmytro Yarosh, the leader of the far-right Right Sector, announced that his organization did not accept a truce agreement with Yanukovych and would undertake decisive actions against the government forces by force (Ukrainska, [2014](#)). The Right Sector alliance, which was organized at the start of the Euromaidan, included then radical nationalist Tryzub named after Bandera and UNA-UNSO and neo-Nazi Social National Assembly (SNA) and its paramilitary branch Patriot of Ukraine, the neo-Nazi White Hammer, and neo-Nazi football ultras groups, such as White Boys Club. Neo-Nazi SNA, Patriot of Ukraine, and football ultras organized the Azov battalion after the Odesa massacre on May 2, 2014 (see Katchanovski, [2016, 2020](#)).

STB and 112 Ukraina TV videos show snipers covertly shooting from the Music Conservatory shortly before 8:00 am. A BBC investigation included photos by a Ukrainian photographer showing several Maidan snipers armed with hunting rifles and either a Kalashnikov assault rifle or its hunting version inside the Music Conservatory shortly after 8:00 am. A recording of a live 112 Ukraina TV broadcast at 8:00 am referred to shooters at the conservatory. Another live report at 8:37 am states that shooters from the conservatory wounded at least five policemen on the Maidan. A video shows a Berkut policeman facing the conservatory and shouting about pellets hitting the Berkut police on the Maidan, and that the deadly gunfire is from above. In their radio communications, the Internal Troops units, stationed at Maidan, made urgent requests for ambulances at 8:08 am (Katchanovski, [2015](#); Video, [2023a](#)) (Fig. [3.1](#)).

A speaker on the Maidan stage announced circa 8:20 am that Maidan activists had just caught a sniper, and that this sniper was taken to the Maidan headquarters. A statement from the Fatherland Party on February



Map 3.1 Maidan massacre map (based on Google Satellite Map)

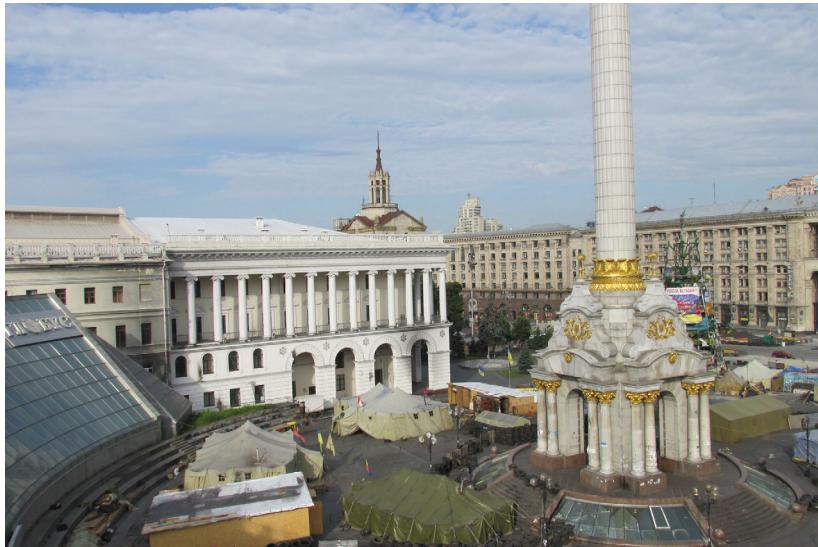


Fig. 3.1 Music Conservatory and the Main Post Office on the Maidan (Independence Square) (Photo by the author)

20, 2014, also said that the Maidan protesters were shot from the roof of the Music Conservatory by government forces and that the shooting stopped after the Maidan activists climbed to the roof (Batkivshyna, 2014).

Videos also show that the Music Conservatory was located in Maidan-controlled territory, with many protesters filmed near its entrance and the Maidan-facing parts of the building. A Maidan stage speaker asked at about 8:00 am “dear friends” in the Music Conservatory to suppress the fire on its balcony. A special Maidan company commander and three of its members admitted in their Ukrainian media and BBC interviews and during interrogation that their unit was based on the conservatory building at the time of the massacre and shot at the police (Chapter 4; Gatehouse, 2015; Gordon, 2020; Ivan, 2016).

A GPU investigation and the Maidan massacre trial verdict confirmed these public admissions (Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023). The commander and many of its members, whose list was leaked from the investigation, were members or had other links to far-right organizations, such as the

Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, the Right Sector, and Svoboda, and were primarily from Galicia in Western Ukraine (Kto, 2020).

A not-broadcast CNN video footage shows approximately 8:20 am, the commander and members of the special armed Maidan company moving with their firearms to the Maidan barricade, taking positions behind the Maidan barricade facing the police and the Internal Troops on the Maidan while using unarmed Maidan protesters as human shields. Their appearance was followed by sounds of many gunshots. At the same exact place and around the same time, members of the special armed Maidan company were filmed, in particular shooting from hunting rifles in the direction of the Berkut police and Internal Troops facing them on the Maidan. A recording of a live broadcast also showed one member of the special armed Maidan company giving them to another on the same barricade a Kalashnikov-type firearm (Video, 2023a, 05:03).

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



Fig. 3.2 Hotel Ukraina (Photo by the author)

evacuated from the Maidan, and this is followed by a warning from the Maidan stage about a sniper in Hotel Ukraina. At a similar time, a speaker on the Maidan stage said that someone was shooting from this hotel. He asked “our guys, who had been in the hotel until recently,” to check this (Video, [2023a](#), 00:01:19). These videos provide evidence that snipers in Hotel Ukraina shot the Maidan protesters, and that the Maidan forces controlled the inside of this hotel and had the ability to report or neutralize any snipers there if they were from government forces or any third force. (Fig 3.2).

The synchronized videos show how Internal Troops and the Berkut were shot, fell to the ground, and evacuated in the same area of the Independence Square (Maidan) around the same time. In their radio communications, the internal troop units on the Maidan made urgent requests for a life support vehicle at 8:21 am, an ambulance at 8:29 am, two ambulances at 8:39 am, and five ambulances at 8:46 am (see Katchanovski, [2015](#); Video, [2023a](#)). This timing is consistent with the casualties of police and Internal Troops. Various media reports, for instance, by correspondents of several TV channels in the Maidan area and a statement by the Internal Affairs Ministry on the morning of February 20 stated that the police units on the Maidan were shot with live ammunition from the Music Conservatory.

The Berkut anti-riot police and internal troop units, which were besieging, storming, and blocking the Maidan for almost three months, hastily abandoned their positions on the Maidan and fled between 8:50 am and 9:00 am. Videos and radio communications by the internal troop units contain urgent retreat orders at 8:49 am and 8:50 am. Large numbers of Berkut and Internal Troops servicemen were fleeing the Maidan area at haste minutes before and after 9:00 am. A Berkut officer stated during this retreat that the police came under live ammunition fire from Maidan “snipers” and that then “snipers” appeared on the third floor from the top of Hotel Ukraina. Several other fleeing Berkut and Internal Troop members and TV correspondents on the ground made similar statements (Video, [2023a](#)).

The content analysis suggests that both the police and the Maidan protesters on the Maidan were shot in the early morning by snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, such as Hotel Ukraina and the Music Conservatory, and that the police and Internal Troops then retreated and fled from the Maidan as a result of the casualties among their units. These findings are corroborated by numerous testimonies

of wounded Maidan protesters and Berkut policemen, commanders of government sniper units, eyewitnesses among the Maidan protesters and journalists, government investigations, forensic examinations by government experts, and the Maidan massacre trial verdict.

The Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine investigation determined that one Berkut officer was killed on the Maidan from a Music Conservatory direction and two from Maidan barricades direction between 8:00 am and 9:10 am, two of whom were shot from a Kalashnikov-based Saiga hunting carbine by a member of a special Maidan company. He earlier admitted in Ukrainian media interviews shooting the police from the Music Conservatory and Maidan barricades and killing two policemen from such a firearm (Ivan, 2016). In addition, the government investigation determined that 39 policemen were wounded by firearms on the Maidan from 5:30 am until the police retreat, and that 10 Maidan protesters were wounded on the Maidan by live ammunition in the morning of February 20 before 9:00 am from sectors other than government-controlled, but nobody was charged for their wounding.

The synchronized video compilation shows that, following the retreat of the police unit crowds of protesters, the absolute majority of whom were unarmed started around 8:50 a.m. to advance from their positions on the Maidan up Instytutska and Hrushevsky streets. Their advancement was guided by commands announced from the Maidan stage over loudspeakers. They relayed orders by Maidan leaders and company commanders of Maidan Self-Defense. Specifically, a Maidan announcer relayed orders for protesters to advance to Zhovtnevyi Palace heights and stay at these positions. This order for protesters was issued from the Maidan stage, even when the Berkut police briefly advanced to the Zhovtnevyi Palace area and started shooting (see Video, 2023a).

The synchronized and time-stamped videos show that three protesters were killed before about two dozen police officers from the special Berkut company first appeared from a bus and started shooting with Kalashnikovs and pump rifles a few minutes after 9:00 am. This means that the special Berkut company policemen, who were charged with killing these three protesters, could not physically shoot them and that they were killed by someone else. The Maidan massacre trial verdict confirmed this (see Chapter 8).

For example, French BFMTV TV shows killing of Bohdan Vaida at 9:00 am. Both Berkut lawyers and the Maidan massacre trial verdict suggested that he was shot from a Maidan-controlled area via a ricochet

from a police water cannon truck based on deformed pellets that hit an obstacle and back to front, left to right, and somewhat top to bottom direction of pellets in left side area of his head (Video, [2023a](#), 12:25).

Similarly, the videos suggest that Maidan snipers were shooting protesters there at around the same time. A Polish TVP TV correspondent reported at 9:01 am right after these three protesters were killed near him that a sniper shooting both the police and protesters appeared. He pointed to the Maidan in the Music Conservatory direction. A warning was made from the Maidan stage at 9:04 am for protesters not to shoot other protesters in the back, several minutes after these three protesters were killed (see Video, [2023a](#), 13:05).

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

However, the content analysis shows that the purpose of the Berkut company's brief advance was to enable a retreat of internal troop soldiers remaining in Zhovtnevyi Palace, whose main entrance was seized by the protesters a few minutes after 9:00 am. This finding was confirmed by the Maidan massacre trial verdict (Chapter 8). The limited advance of two dozen members of the Berkut special company to Zhovtnevyi Palace and their swift retreat along with a large number of policemen can be seen in various videos. Synchronized videos show that Berkut gunshots from Kalashnikovs and their direction coincide with visible impacts on the ground and pavement before the protesters. There is no evidence that Berkut actions in this case were affective or emotional (see Video, [2023a](#)) (Fig. 3.3).

Unbroadcast Polish TV video shows that the killing of Bohdan Solchanyk at 9:08 am coincides with a gunshot by a Berkut policeman in the ground direction several meters in front of this protester, but it also coincides with another quieter gunshot. While his killing by a ricochet by this Berkut policemen cannot be excluded, a steep wound



Fig. 3.3 Zhovtnevyi Palace (Photo by the author)

direction in the forensic medical examination and various evidence that snipers in the Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina and Zhovtnevyi Palace were shooting and killing protesters near Solchanyk around the same time, such as Sainko, suggest that he could have been shot by such a sniper (Video, 2023a, 15:52). The Maidan massacre trial verdict stated that he was shot by the Berkut policeman unintentionally via a ricochet and did not convict this Berkut member for his killing.

The government investigation did not use forensic ballistic experts to determine directions from which Solchanyk and the absolute majority of other Maidan activists were shot from, even after being ordered to do so by the trial. This was a rational choice to cover up snipers in the Maidan-controlled locations since one need not to be a forensic expert to determine that activists could not be shot from Berkut barricade direction on the ground if their wound locations and directions, specified by government forensic medical experts, are from steep and opposite or sideways directions (see Chapter 6).

A Radio Svoboda video from Hotel Ukraina shows Andrii Sainko killing at 9:08 am. His position in the video with Hotel Ukraina on his

right and the Berkut in front along with forensic medical examination determined a steep right to left wound direction in upper front chest on the right and a steep top to bottom wound channel to the backbone. This points towards the top of Hotel Ukraina (Video, [2023a](#), 16:33). Volodymyr Kotsiuba was killed at 9:10 am. His position in the video and a forensic medical examination found that he was shot in the right front of his head at a steep angle from top to bottom and right to left point, to a gunshot from a Maidan-controlled building, such as Right Sector headquarters or the Music Conservatory, which were located in that direction. The defense lawyers and the Maidan massacre trial verdict also suggested that he was shot not by Berkut but from the Music Conservatory. The Berkut police members were filmed not shooting at the specific time of his killing (Video, [2023a](#), 16:44).

Oleksii Bratusko was then killed near Kotsiuba. His position with the Maidan-controlled area on his right and the location and steep direction of a wound on the right side of the neck, which is 9.5 cm higher than on the left shoulder blade, suggest a gunshot from a building in the Maidan area and do not match Berkut positions on the same ground level (Video, [2023a](#)). Bohdan Ilkiv is killed nearby at 9:11 am. Forensic medical and original ballistic examinations determined that he was shot at a steep direction from the same weapon as Saienko and at least 9 other protesters, including Mykola Shymko who was shot near Solchanyk (Sudova, [2016a](#)). His position in the video and the wounds location and direction are consistent with shooting of Ilkiv from Hotel Ukraina. Maidan protesters testified at the Maidan massacre trial and investigation that they were shot and saw snipers in this hotel and in Zhovtnevyi Palace (see Chapter 5). Specific times and directions of Berkut shooting do not coincide with killings of Ilkiv and other protesters in this area.

At 9:10–9:11 am, within minutes of the killing of several protesters, an announcer on the Maidan stage publicly warned the protesters about two to three snipers on the pendulum floor of Hotel Ukraina. This matches the 11th floor facing the massacre area shortly before, during, and after that time. A video operator from the 5 Kanal was filmed within minutes telling the journalist from this channel that there is sniper in a Hotel Ukraina window. This video was not broadcast but was shown at the Maidan massacre trial. A Berkut officer stated during this retreat that the police came under live ammunition fire from Maidan “snipers” and that then “snipers” appeared on the third floor from the top of Hotel Ukraina, e.g., 11th or 9th floor (Video, [2023a](#)).

At the time of the killings of these activists, the commander and a member of the special armed Maidan company walk with a Kalashnikov-type weapon in front of the Maidan stage from Trade Union building direction in the Music Conservatory direction without any apparent concern for the snipers in Hotel Ukraina and Zhovtnevyi and for the advancing and firing Berkut.

Similar warnings concerning snipers in this hotel, in particular that they kill protesters, were relayed from the Maidan stage several times during the massacre. Such warnings were also made about snipers in Zhovtnevyi Palace when it was under the control of Maidan protesters.

The content analysis shows that specific times and directions of shooting by members of a Berkut unit of about 20 policemen, who are charged with their killings and attempted killing, and specific times of killings and wounding of specific Maidan protesters did not coincide in the videos, which filmed both simultaneously, for example, in a long German ARD TV video and in synchronized videos (Nove, 2017). This crucial long ARD video, which like synchronized videos demonstrates visually that the Berkut policemen did not shoot at least the absolute majority of killed and wounded protesters, was not shown by this German public TV broadcaster. The Berkut policemen at the exact times of the killings and wounding of the absolute majority of these protesters are filmed standing, moving, taking cover behind barricades, not aiming their AKMs towards these protesters, and there is no visible gunshot smoke or recoil of their firearms. It was physically impossible to shoot them without aiming at their Kalashnikovs in the specific protesters and making gunshots at the same time when the protesters were seen falling to the ground when there were sounds of specific gunshots (see Video, 2023g).

In contrast, Berkut lawyers and the government investigation determined that the time and direction of killing of Mykola Symysiuk, a Berkut special company member, at 9:16 am match shooting by a Maidan activist from a hunting rifle in photos and in a video that shows him running away to cover behind the protesters (Video, 2023a, 18:27). This investigation found that this Berkut policeman was killed by pellets from a similar Maidan direction and that another Berkut policeman, who was wounded around the same time, was the last police casualty of the massacre.

Vasyl Aksenyn was mortally wounded at 9:17 am when he faced Berkut, but the wound was steep and from the right to left direction. His wife testified that he apparently said that he was shot from Hotel Ukraina. His son stated in a Ukrainian media interview that his father was

shot from this hotel, based on the wounds locations and directions (see Chapter 4). Ivan Tarasiuk, Vasyl Moisei, and Ihor Pekhenko were then killed in the same area near Zhovtnevyi. Forensic medical examinations determined that based on their wounds they were shot from steep directions from significant height, which matched the eyewitness reports about snipers in Maidan-controlled buildings. Videos show Berkut members were then on the same ground level as these shot activists (see Video, 2023a). The Maidan massacre trial verdict also suggested that based on steep directions and locations of his wounds and his reported position Pekhenko was shot from the upper part of Hotel Ukraina (see Chapter 8).

Bullet holes from the side of this hotel appeared then in the same area on Zhovtnevyi Palace columns. A number of Maidan protesters testified that they witnessed there snipers in Hotel Ukraina or were shot there from the hotel (Chapter 5).

A BBC video shows killing of Ihor Dmytriv at 9:21 am. Another video shows killing of Andrii Dyhdalovych near him. The content analysis of synchronized videos of killings of Dmytriv and Dyhdalovych visually illustrates that the specific times of their shooting did not match the specific times of Berkut shooting in the same and/or other synchronized videos. The synchronized videos in both this study and the SITU model show no policemen or their firearms visible from behind the Berkut-manned barricade at the time of killing Dmytriv. They also show the same concerning the Berkut police and no signs of a gunshot, such as flash and recoil, of an Omega sniper behind the same barricade at the time of killing Dyhdalovych (see Video, 2023g).

Forensic medical examinations found that Dmytriv was shot in his right side from right to left very steep direction when he faced Berkut in front of him. An appearance and the location of a bullet hole on the right edge of his shield point to Bank Arkada. Similarly, a steep front to back wound direction from his chest to the back in forensic reports and appearance of a bullet hole in another shield suggest that Dyhdalovych was shot not from the ground level but from Bank Arkada. Ivan Kulish, who was filmed then approaching Dyhdalovych, said that he saw a sniper on the roof of Bank Arkada and that Dyhdalovych was killed by a sniper from this building. Synchronized videos show that the Berkut policemen and an Omega sniper at the specific time of the killing of these two Maidan activists were not even shooting (see Video, 2023g).

A synchronized and time-stamped videos also showed that Berkut policemen behind a Berkut barricade were not shooting at all during

the wounding of Sviatoslav Kolesnikov on a pedestrian bridge. He and a forensic government expert, based on the steep bullet direction in the activist's shoulder and in a chair that he used to cover himself from this hotel, stated that Kolesnikov was shot from the upper part of Hotel Ukraina. At the time of his wounding, Maidan activists were filmed hiding under the same bridge along with other protesters and pointing out that snipers in Hotel Ukraina were shooting in their direction (Video, 2023g).

Oleh Sukhinsky, who was in a lilac cover and was filmed being wounded nearby at 9:24 am, said in his Ukrainian media interview shortly after the massacre that he saw that he was shot from Hotel Ukraina (Video, 2023a; Chapter 4). Another activist in blue clothing was wounded in the same area and the same time as this and many as many other protesters. The government investigation determined based on their testimonies and investigative experiments that he along with about half of other Maidan activists was wounded from other sectors than Berkut and did not charge anyone (Video, 2023a; Chapter 8).

Oleksandr Huch, the Volhynian company of the Maidan Self-Defense commander, stated that he thought based on his position that he was shot from the Cabinet of Ministers building. However, his position in a Norwegian NRK TV video, which was not shown at the trial, the ricochet impact seen in this video, and his wound location and its steep direction suggest that he was shot from a Muzeinyi Lane building on the left and somewhat in front of him. An on-site investigative experiment by the government forensic experts, including a ballistic expert, determined that Huch was shot from a sector of fire which included Muzeinyi Lane buildings (Video, 2023a, 24:40).

Serhii Kemskey was filmed in the Belgian VTM TV video advancing towards the Berkut in front of him and then falling to the ground after being shot. The right to left and steep top to bottom directions of his one wound and another wound in his back, as specified in forensic medical reports, show that he was shot from a Maidan-controlled area, such as Hotel Ukraina. According to defense lawyer statement during the trial, a Maidan eyewitness testified for the investigation that he saw a sniper shooting from the second floor of Hotel Ukraina and killing Kemskey a few meters away from himself (Video, 2023b). But the prosecution and the verdict claimed that Kemskey was killed by Berkut even though this was physically impossible.

Mykola Dziavulsky was killed near Kemsky from a steep left to right and front to back direction, as specified in the forensic medical examination, while he also faced Berkut. This points to his killing from a Muzeinyi Lane building, which was located on his left somewhat ahead. Wounded protesters in this group also testified about snipers in Muzeinyi Lane area (see Video, 2023d, Chapter 5). Valeriy Opanasiuk in the same group and place with his back to the Berkut barricade was killed soon afterwards in front heart area from a steep front to back and left to right direction, which matches Hotel Ukraina. And Anatolii Korneev was killed in the same spot when he faced Berkut with Hotel Ukraina on his right. His position in the Belgian VTM video and his steep right to left wound direction in the forensic medical examination point to the gunshot from Hotel Ukraina from which this video was filmed. Oleksandr Shcherbaniuk in the same group was killed in his left chest area with bullet exiting in the left back side area in a steep angle. This is consistent with a sniper shot from the green Bank Arkada building and not from the Berkut barricade in front of him. Other four protesters were killed and many wounded there within five minutes (see Video, 2023a; Map 3.1).

Total 10 protesters were killed there shortly before 9:30 am (see Map 3.1). His position in the video and the wound direction in a forensic medical report made public during the trial indicate that Serhii Baidovsky was killed at 9:24 am from Hotel Ukraina. He was wounded in his left chest side from a top to bottom direction and slightly from a back, while seconds before and after he was gravely wounded, he was filmed from Hotel Ukraina with this hotel on his left side (Jus, 2015; Sudova, 2015).

A wounded activist, who was filmed with a flag near these killed activists, testified that he was shot in the same spot and time from Hotel Ukraina. Another Maidan activist eyewitness testified about a sniper on its 2d floor. Kovalchuk also testified that he was wounded there from this hotel. Maidan activists during this killing spree were wondering if the shots were from this hotel. Windows were open on the 6th, 9th, and 11th floors of the hotel, and one wounded protester testified during the trial that a sniper on the 6th floor of Hotel Ukraina shot a couple of protesters. At the end of this killing spree, one protester said that it was necessary to go with a Kalashnikov assault rifle to check the hotel (see Video, 2023a, 26:10; Chapter 5; Video, 2023g).

Ihor Kostenko was killed there behind a tree at 9:29 am when he and other activists near him were looking to Hotel Ukraina. He was filmed shortly before and after with his right shoulder towards Maidan. This

position and a forensic medical examination conclusion that he was shot in right shoulder with bullet exiting in the left shoulder point to a shot from a Maidan-controlled area direction. The Maidan massacre trial confirmed this (see Chapter 8). Serhii Bondarchuk was killed there at 9:29 am while carrying away another protester. A forensic medical examination found that his wound location and its steep direction suggest that he was shot not by Berkut on the ground but from a Maidan-controlled building, in particular, Hotel Ukraina (Video, 2023a).

The Berkut policemen, who were charged with the killing all these protesters, were behind a barricade in front of the protesters and on similar ground level with them, and therefore could not have physically shot these activists. These policemen were filmed running away amid bullets impacting their barricades. This means that they were also under fire from the Maidan snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings. The Spilno TV streamer specifically stated that the Berkut policemen were shooting and were themselves under fire and then retreated to the truck barricade (see Video, 2023a).

Unbroadcast segments of the most famous video of the Maidan massacre, which was filmed by the Belgian VRT News TV and revealed at the Maidan massacre trial, show two Maidan protesters luring a group of other protesters to advance towards Berkut shortly before they would be massacred there. One of them in a gas mask was filmed in about 40 minutes entering Hotel Ukraina along with the far-right-linked group of snipers (see Video, 2023a, 2023c).

There was no other rational reason to lead protesters there after dozen protesters were killed and many more were wounded in the same area on the other side of Instytutska Street minutes before. A protester is heard shouting to the other activists in this group not to go ahead because snipers from the hotel were shooting [taking down] all protesters together, and that there were gunshots visible from the hotel. This video then shows a bullet hitting a tree in the direction of this group of Maidan protesters at 9:38. They looked back towards Hotel Ukraina after this shot. One of them pointed his hand towards the hotel and shouted about gunshots from the hotel, and that they shot to take down the protesters and asked the shooters there not to shoot at them. This suggests that they knew that snipers in the hotel were from the Maidan opposition. The Maidan massacre trial verdict confirmed that this gunshot was from Hotel Ukraina (Chapter 8).

Almost all of the dozen protesters in this group, including Oleh Ushnevych, were killed or wounded several minutes later (see Video, 2023c). Six wounded protesters from this group testified at the Maidan massacre trial and the investigation that they were shot from Hotel Ukraina and buildings on Horodetsky Street and Muzeinyi Lane, witnessed snipers in this hotel, or were told by other protesters about snipers there (see Chapter 8).

The video shows that Eduard Hrynevych was killed in the head at 9:41 am seconds after these warnings concerning Hotel Ukraina snipers. A Volyn TV documentary, his apparent position with his back towards the Berkut barricade and his face and his shield towards the hotel, and a testimony that bullet entered the left temple area of his head above an eye and exited in the back of the head point towards Hotel Ukraina as most likely covert location of the shooter that killed him. Anatolii Zhalovaha was killed near him two minutes later. The forensic reports by government experts for the investigation found that the entry wound was in the back right area of his head and the exit wound in his forehead when he was filmed facing the Berkut barricade with his back to the Maidan-controlled area, including Hotel Ukraina somewhat to the left and back (Sudova, 2016b). This is consistent with Hotel Ukraina shooter (Video, 2023a).

Synchronized videos show that specific times of gunshots by the Berkut policemen and their aiming direction in synchronized videos do not coincide with specific times and locations of killing of at least 39 out of 49 protesters. There is lack of video data in 10 other cases of the killed protesters. In several cases when such times coincide, there are gunshots of different sounds, while Berkut Kalashnikovs did not aim at the specific activists who were shot. Synchronized videos show several hundred different sounding gunshots when Berkut was filmed not shooting and before the arrival of government snipers. This means that while unintentional shooting of some protesters by the Berkut police from ricochets cannot be completely excluded based only on videos, there is also evidence of their shooting by snipers from other locations.

The content analysis shows that Berkut physically could not shoot protesters from behind a truck barricade because they were in blind spots below the Berkut line of fire from over the top of the truck body. Because the height and width of the MAZ truck were approximately three meters, it was physically impossible for Berkut policemen, who were entirely behind this truck or standing on the concrete pieces with only their heads and hands visible from the behind the truck barricade to shoot protesters

below in front of this truck. The latter could only shoot parallel to the top of the truck or above (see Video, [2023a](#), [2023g](#)). This is consistent with bullet hole locations on the second floor of the hotel and above and their absence on the first (ground) floor.

The group of the Maidan activists tried to take cover at 9:43 am behind a concrete wall. This wall shielded them from the Berkut barricade in front of them. The videos and on-site examination by the author show that it was physically impossible to kill Oleh Ushnevych from the Berkut barricade because of the concrete wall that shielded from the Berkut barricade (Video, [2023a](#), 33:06). And forensic examinations for the government investigation and the Maidan massacre trial verdict determined that Ushnevych was killed from Hotel Ukraina by a bullet from a handgun (Chapter 8).

Roman Tityk testified at the investigation that he was wounded near him from this hotel based on his wound location. This is consistent with his position in the video of his shooting and wound locations in forensic medical examination. Volodymyr Venchak testified at the trial that this group, including himself, was shot there in the back from Hotel Ukraina. Serhii Trapezun, who was wounded carrying Ushnevych, also said in his interviews and investigation testimony that he and group were shot from the back and sides, i.e., Hotel Ukraina and Horodetsky Street and Muzeinyi Lane, and that he saw snipers on the 2nd floor and the roof of Hotel Ukraina when he was wounded (Chapter 4 and 5).

Volodymyr Zhrebnyi was killed near them at 9:44 am with his left side turned towards the hotel. A French photographer's photo of chips in bullet holes in his wooden shield point to gunshots from the back, i.e., the hotel. The forensic examinations determined that his entry wound in his left jaw with exit wound in right side of the neck was at a very steep angle and that he was shot from the upper floors of Hotel Ukraina. The verdict confirmed such shooting direction (Video, [2023a](#); Chapter 8).

Trapezun pointed out that Roman Varenytsia in front of him was also killed from the back, i.e., from Hotel Ukraina. Their visible trajectories in the video and forensic medical reports show that two bullets hit him at steep angles which point to the gunshots from Hotel Ukraina at 9:46 am. A bullet impacted a tree near Varenytsia from the Maidan-controlled area direction, most likely from Zhovtnevyi Palace, since the visual examination of this tree and its photos and videos does not show any entry or exit hole on the opposite side that matches this bullet's impact and the location of this bullet hole. A Maidan stage speaker warned at that very

time that there is a sniper shooting on Zhovtnevyi Palace (Video, 2023a) (Fig. 3.4).

Content analysis of videos frame by frame reveals an apparent bullet trace from a steep back direction, which matches Hotel Ukraina, and apparent bullets hitting the same tree from Muzeinyi Lane or Kinopalace direction and then wood chips flying from the opposite side of the tree (see Video, 2023c). The visual examination of this tree and its photos and videos shows small size bullet holes from Muzeinyi Lane/Kinopalats direction and larger bullet holes on the opposite side of the tree, which matches the video content analysis and typical pattern of exit holes larger than entry holes. The same content analysis and on-site visual examination by the author show bullet impacts on the same tree from the Hotel Ukraina direction, which match the visible steep bullet impacts during the killing of Varenytsia. The failure of the government investigation to determine directions of these bullet holes by forensic ballistic experts also suggests that the gunshots were from the Maidan-controlled buildings.



Fig. 3.4 Gunshot impact marks from the directions of Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina, Zhovtnevyi Palace/Kinopalats and Muzeinyi Lane on the tree (Photo by the author)

There are also a couple of bullet holes on the Berkut barricade side of this tree (see Video, [2023c](#); Chapter 6).

Roman Tochyn was killed there at 9:47 am while his right side of the head was turned towards the Berkut barricade. A forensic report stated that he was shot in the right side of his head with the bullet exiting lower in the left side of the head, but it revealed that the wound on the right was much larger than on the left, in contrast to a typical pattern. A deadly gunshot from the Berkut barricade, Muzeinyi Lane, Bank Arkada, or via a ricochet from Hotel Ukraina cannot be excluded in this case since the evidence is contradictory. Exact locations of his killer could have been easily established based on the bullet hole locations in his helmet and his shield, but both of them “disappeared.”

A French TF1 TV shows a protester shouting circa 9:46–9:50 am about snipers in the top part of Hotel Ukraina to a Svoboda deputy near Hotel Ukraina entrance. A Belgian TV shows another protester circa 9:47–9:49 am shouting about snipers in the hotel in this hotel lobby. The seemingly irrational absence of any reaction concerning the snipers in the hotel by the Svoboda deputy and the Maidan commander, who guarded the hotel, becomes rational if they knew that the snipers were from the Maidan opposition. The choice of this hotel by Svoboda deputies to treat the wounded Maidan activists in spite of the snipers in the hotel shooting the activists suggests the same (Video, [2023a](#)).

Yuri Parashchuk was killed in the same area at 9:48 am. His position in the video facing the Berkut barricade, the wound location in the back of his head and its top to bottom direction in the forensic medical examination, and the single bullet hole in the top back area of his helmet in videos of his killing and afterwards suggest that he was shot from the top of Bank Arkada in front and to the right of him. A Berkut lawyer at the Maidan massacre trial stated that the on-site investigative experiment, which was conducted by government forensic experts with the participation of a Maidan victims’ lawyer, determined that the gunshot direction was from Bank Arkada. He said that Parashchuk was in a blind zone of the Berkut barricade (Video, [2023g](#)).

The SITU model of shooting of Dmytriv, Dyhdalovych, and Parashchuk claimed that they were shot from the Berkut barricade shifted the wound locations from sides and back to front and made their steep directions practically horizontal, contrary to the exact locations of the wounds in the forensic medical examinations and videos. The Maidan victims’ lawyer commissioned the SITU architectural company

model with the fabricated results (Video, [2023g](#), 05:09). Similarly, the SITU model, like the government investigation, failed to show that the specific times and directions of Berkut shooting coincided with the times of killings and wounding of specific Maidan protesters. Although the SITU model site contains precisely synchronized videos using computer software, these videos are shown separately (Euromaidan, [2018](#)). Since omitting such clear proof of the massacre of specific protesters by Berkut would have been irrational, the failure to show such evidence confirms that it does not exist.

Roman Huryk was killed near that wall at 9:56 am. His position and steep right to left direction bullet holes in his white helmet in a video shown at the trial indicate that he was killed from Bank Arkada because it was located in that very direction. The prosecution did not present his helmet as evidence. Wounds on sides of the neck and their steep direction suggest that Evhen Kotliar was killed from the same building, while an on-site investigative experiment for the prosecution found that he was shot from Hotel Ukraina. He was shot within 2 seconds after Huryk was killed a couple of meters away.

A female Maidan medic in a BBC video and a protester in a French photographer video pointed out the roof of Bank Arkada as the location of snipers within minutes of killing of these three activists (Video, [2023a](#)) (Fig. 3.5).

His position in the video, an on-site investigative experiment, and his wound locations and directions in the forensic medical examination and the bullet hole in his blue helmet suggest that Ustym Holodniuk was killed in the same area at 9:54 am in a right back side of his blue helmet with the exit wound in front area of the head from Muzeinyi Lane direction.

Berkut policemen were taking cover from the live ammunition fire from the direction of the Maidan-controlled areas at the time when Holodniuk and Huryk were killed, in addition to several other casualties among the protesters there (see Video, [2023a](#)).

Volodymyr Movchan was filmed being dragged away after his wounding in the head there. Volodymyr Honcharovsky, who was wounded in his back at the same spot at 9:50 am, said that the protesters were shot from behind. The government investigation determined, based on testimonies and investigative experiments, that these two protesters were among about half of Maidan activists, who were wounded from

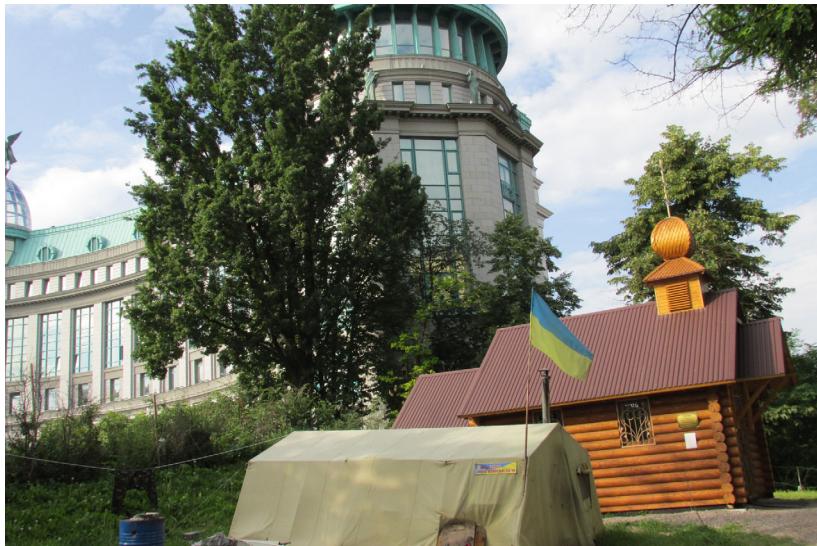


Fig. 3.5 Bank Arkada (Photo by the author)

other sectors than ones occupied by the Berkut police area and did not charge anyone (Video, 2023a; Chapter 6 and 8).

A forensic medical report, which identified Yuri Kravchuk's entry wound in his left knee and exit wound in left thigh, and his position in the video suggest that he was shot at 9:56 am from this hotel. He testified and a forensic expert determined that he was wounded twice from Bank Arkada (Chapter 5).

At the time of the massacre of these activists, Maidan speakers from the Maidan stage relayed warning by protesters about a snipers coordinator on nearby Trade Union building and asked to check if he was from the Maidan or not. A Maidan stage speaker also said that “our guys” captured one of female snipers. A protester pointed in the direction of that Horodetsky Street building and said that activists were shot from its roof window.

Warnings were also relayed from the Maidan stage at 10:01 am about “three snipers” visible on the roof of Zhovtnevyi Palace. An ICTV reporter on the ground referred to these “snipers” shooting from Zhovtnevyi Palace. A Polish TV video showed within minutes a Maidan activist

near a roof window of Zhovtnevyi Palace. Protesters reported that this was one of locations of “snipers” who massacred the protesters. A Polish reporter was filmed on the top floor of Zhovtnevyi Palace at 10:16 am, and on its roof with a group of apparent Maidan spotters several minutes later. He said that this building was occupied by the Maidan for a few dozen minutes. He proceeded to its library, which was also occupied by protesters. A caption of a photo taken by a photographer in the Zhovtnevyi Palace library soon afterwards stated that protesters told him that it was used by a “sniper” to shoot at the Maidan protesters (Video, 2023a).

There were no Berkut policemen shooting or any signs of a gunshot visible from the truck barricade at the time of the wounding of Roman Kotliarevsky, a Maidan medic, in a German ARD TV video at 10:16 am. A National Bank security camera video, which is precisely synchronized with the German and CNN videos of his wounding based on the matching content and timestamps of the security camera video, shows that the Berkut police were hiding at that time behind the truck barricade and did not aim their Kalashnikovs in the direction of Kotliarevsky. The prosecution and Maidan victims lawyers claimed during the trial that this Maidan medic was wounded by a Berkut policeman from this barricade. Kotliarevsky testified during an investigative experiment that he was wounded from Bank Arkada because of the top to bottom direction of his wound and its location on the back of his right thigh. A wound X-ray showed that the bullet was at a steep angle. A government ballistic expert also determined that the fire sector was from Hotel Ukraina to Bank Arkada (see Video, 2023g).

In essence, the content analysis reveals that prosecution, like numerous media reports, claimed that invisible police shot these protesters from invisible weapons. The lack of such literally smoking gun of the Berkut policemen visible at the time, place, and direction of killings and wounding of the absolute majority of the Maidan protesters is “the dog that did not bark.” Such an absence of a reaction that was supposed to happen but did not occur represents revelatory evidence.

The bullet holes identified in government forensic expert reports, videos, and photos from the directions of Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings are in the areas, heights, and directions that match the shooting of the protesters. Visual reconstruction based on similar data shows that the Berkut police and Omega were generally shooting above protesters on the second and higher floors of Hotel Ukraina and in electric poles, and trees. It also shows that they did

not target Maidan protesters because of the lack of bullet holes on the first floor of Hotel Ukraina, which was located behind several dozen protesters who were killed and wounded in that area. Forensic examinations by government investigators did not report a single bullet hole on the hotel's first (ground) floor that was located at the height of the protesters (Chapter 6).

The video shows the wounding of Ivan Halamai (Video, 2023a). The forensic medical examination found that he was shot in his right buttock area from back to front direction with the bullet ending in his right leg significantly lower. The locations and the steep direction of the bullet wounds, his position in the video at the time of his shooting, and the steep slope of the bullet in an X-ray in the upper left leg pointed to a gunshot from the top of Bank Arkada and not from the Berkut barricade.

A forensic medical examination revealed that Volodymyr Chaplynsky was shot dead from a steep angle in his left neck with bullet exiting much lower in right shoulder. Zelenyi Front video showed that his left side was towards Bank Arkada when he started to run at 10:26 am. The same video and the ABC News video showed that his left side was towards Hotel Ukraina when he fell to the ground when there was another gunshot. A French photographer filmed killing of Viktor Chmilenco in the same area at 10:28 am. His wound locations and their steep angle point to the gunshot from the hotel. A forensic report revealed that he was shot by “Springfield” bullet that did not match caliber of weapons used by Berkut but is used in hunting (Video, 2023a; Chapter 6).

A Maidan activist said after carrying his body that Leonid Poliansky was killed from Hotel Ukraina when he stood near him. The victim was an ethnic Pole. He was killed on the Maidan-facing side of the hotel at 10:31 am (Video, 2023a).

At least 10 videos and photos showed Maidan snipers and spotters in Hotel Ukraina and Zhovtnevyi Palace during the massacre of the protesters. There were more than 100 testimonies and reports in the media and the social media about such snipers during the massacre itself. They also showed that these buildings were controlled by Maidan forces at that time. There were protesters, including armed ones from the far-right-linked special Maidan company, inside and outside of these buildings within or around the same time, and on the same floors and the roof that snipers were filmed or reported by several hundreds of protesters and journalists during and after the massacre (see Video, 2023a; Chapter 4 and 5).

For instance, a Ukrainian ICTV video showed at 10:25 am a sniper hiding behind the curtains of a window on the 11th floor of Hotel Ukraina and firing in the direction of Maidan protesters. An ICTV reporter stated in this video that snipers from Hotel Ukraina were shooting the advancing protesters in the back. A BBC video showed a sniper firing at 10:28 am in the direction of the BBC television crew and the protesters there from an open window on the same 11th floor of the hotel, and the protesters running for cover and shouting “snipers” while pointing towards the hotel. The BBC correspondent in his news report and in his tweet identified the shooter as having a green helmet worn by Maidan protesters. The government investigation revealed that one of the far-right Svoboda leaders lived in this hotel room at the time of the massacre (see Video, [2023c](#), 06:23). A Maidan protester from this BBC video testified at the trial that he was told by other protesters that this was “our sniper.” He said that he saw a sniper in another Hotel Ukraina room window, giving visual signs to the protesters to avoid revealing these snipers (Video, [2023c](#); Chapter 5).

Just a few minutes before this, CNN and Spilno TV videos recorded on the same 11th floor voices of a group of Maidan protesters talking about searching for positions to shoot (see Video, [2023a](#), 52:14). The Spilno TV reporter said in his online stream that these were armed Maidan protesters, in particular, with “AKM” Kalashnikovs, hunting weapons, and Mosin rifles. He testified at the trial that the same armed Maidan group was entering the same hotel room on the same 11th floor around the time when he streamed from this room around 9:35 am (see Chapter 5). This is evidence that the Maidan group members either included snipers who shot the Maidan protesters, or that they regarded snipers who shot the protesters, specifically during the same time and from the same Hotel Ukraina floor, as not hostile and therefore did not stop them from massacring the protesters.

Videos show that the Maidan forces not only controlled the entrances and exits to Hotel Ukraina before, during, and after the massacre of the protesters, but also that armed Maidan groups were on the same floors that protesters and journalists identified as locations of snipers around the same time. In particular, they were filmed by BBC, CNN, and Spilno TV on the 11th floor, particularly in the room of one of the Svoboda Party leaders. Snipers were reported in the room of another Svoboda leader, Iryna Farion, and in another room on the same hotel floor. Many other Svoboda deputies lived on this floor, and videos showed that they stayed

in the hotel during the massacre. The far-right Svoboda Party, a Maidan Self-Defense commander in the hotel, and the hotel staff stated that Hotel Ukraina was seized and guarded by the Maidan forces since the end of January 2014 (Video, 2023b).

In its official statement, the far-right Svoboda Party stated that its activists took Hotel Ukraina under their control and guard on January 25, 2014. A similar statement was made by the Svoboda leader on the Maidan stage (Maidan, 2014; VO, 2014). A Svoboda deputy stated that all (38) Svoboda parliament members, most of whom lived in the hotel, were in this hotel when the massacre started (Braty, 2017, 217).

A BBC video showed one of Svoboda leaders along with a few Maidan protesters guarding the entrance to the stairways and elevators in the hotel shortly after 9:51 am (Video, 2023a, 36:50). Armed Svoboda activists were filmed in this hotel by BBC. Guardian journalists reported that armed Svoboda activists told them that there were snipers in the hotel and showed them empty Kalashnikov bullet boxes in Hotel Ukraina (Traynor & Salem, 2014).

A group of Maidan protesters with at least one handgun, an axe, and a long tennis bag, which is a convenient way to hide and carry weapons, broke into a hotel room on the 14th floor of the hotel around 10:12 am. French Itele, AFP, and Ukraina TV videos showed the commander and members of the far-right-linked special Maidan company, who were armed with a Kalashnikov-type firearm and hunting rifles, running into the hotel at 10:18 am and then taking an elevator to the 10th floor. Among them, running was the same protester in a gas mask, who shortly before was filmed luring the group of protesters, and then returning to the hotel unharmed after they were massacred (Video, 2023a, 37:52, 44:27).

The commander and a few members of this group were filmed in Ruptly and German TV videos when one of them was shooting from a hunting rifle from the 14th floor of Hotel Ukraina at 10:20–10:22 am. Ruptly and ZDF videos showed the commander and members of the special Maidan company accompanied by one of the Svoboda leaders when at least one of them was shooting in the direction of the protesters from the same 14th floor of Hotel Ukraina and then moved to a lower floor because of the presence of journalists (Video, 2023a, 45:33). A time-stamped Facebook post by a Spilno TV reporter at 12:40 pm stated that there were snipers on the 14th floor who were shooting protesters

on the Maidan. Protesters also testified that there were “snipers” on the 14th floor of the hotel (Spilnobachennia, 2014).

A Ruptly reporter showed that he was grazed by a bullet, while armed Maidan activists were at that time filmed on the same 14th floor of Hotel Ukraina. The holes in the hotel window from a bullet that hit the Ruptly reporter point to an apparent gunshot from a Berkut position. The investigation found at least 12 bullets on the walls of such top floors and on the roof of Hotel Ukraina. This is consistent with the Berkut police shooting at snipers or suspected snipers in this Maidan-controlled hotel (Video, 2023a).

Video (2023a), media and witness reports, and statements from the Maidan stage show that there were several searches for snipers in Hotel Ukraina by groups of Maidan protesters during the massacre from around noon until the evening of February 20. They reported that no snipers were found, but the positions of snipers were found, and witness reports about snipers in the hotel continued despite these comprehensive searches. Synchronized videos show only members of the armed group of snipers from the special armed Maidan company not only entering the hotel at 10:16 am, but also exiting it without any interference at around 11:00 am and in the late afternoon. It was rational for Maidan activists who searched the hotel to assume that snipers were not from the Maidan units and only search for government snipers. There were a few warnings made from the Maidan stage in the afternoon and evening on February 20 about snipers in Hotel Ukraina after the repeated searches did not identify any snipers there (Video, 2023a).

Similarly, videos and photos showed Maidan protesters inside, near entrances, on the roof, and in the roof window of Zhovtnevyi Palace during the same time as announcers on the Maidan stage relayed warnings about snipers there, particularly massacring protesters. A Maidan activist said that snipers were shooting from Zhovtnevyi Palace and buildings behind it.

A Polish journalist video showed snipers on the roofs of the Main Post Office, which was then the Right Sector Headquarters, and the directly adjacent Finbank building shortly after Smolensky was killed, and a female Maidan medic was photographed and filmed as wounded in the same area of the Maidan. A protester stated that he witnessed both of them being shot from the Main Post Office building (see Video, 2023a, 01:11:16). Videos, testimonies reported by a Ukrainian journalist, her medical records, and her own de facto admission indicated that

her wounding was staged with involvement of the Maidan Self-Defense leadership, and her neck wound was in fact a result of a prior surgery (Chapter 4 and 5).

Similarly, the Kozatsky Hotel was the headquarters of the Neo-Nazi Patriot of Ukraine, which joined the Right Sector during the Maidan. The Patriot of Ukraine organized and led the Azov battalion during the war in Donbas. Maidan protesters reported that there were snipers in this hotel, which was located on the Maidan, for almost the entire duration of the massacre (Fig 3.6). Videos and photos show Maidan protesters inside the hotel searching for snipers (see Video, 2023a).

Videos and photos also showed that Maidan protesters were near Bank Arkada, Horodetsky Street, and Muzeinyi Lane buildings when protesters pointed to the snipers there (see Video, 2023a). This means that it was possible for protesters, in particular armed ones, to enter these buildings and neutralize these snipers, and that it was not possible for snipers to exit the buildings without being noticed by the protesters.

There are more than 80 videos or testimonies during the massacre itself, primarily by the Maidan protesters and journalists from Ukraine and



Fig. 3.6 Hotel Kozatsky (on the right) (Photo by the author)

many other countries, about snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. For instance, Oleksii Butorin said in a 1+1 interview during the massacre that eight protesters were killed from Hotel Ukraina in half an hour. He witnessed one shot from the hotel. Another protester said that he witnessed a protester next to him being killed at 10:31 am from Hotel Ukraina. Protesters at 10:25 a.m. pointed to shooting by snipers from the pendulum floor of Hotel Ukraina. This indicates either the 11th floor in the hotel wings or the 13th floor in its central part (Video, 2023a) (Fig. 3.7).

Protesters including a teenage protester were filmed running away at 10:30 am after a warning by other activists that they [snipers] were behind, i.e., the Maidan-controlled area, in particular, Hotel Ukraina. This teenage protester stated in his media interview that they came under live ammunition fire from Hotel Ukraina and in his Maidan massacre trial testimony that protesters were referring to Maidan snipers shooting Maidan activists. This information was not included in the



Fig. 3.7 Main Maidan massacre epicenter in front of Hotel Ukraina (Photo by the author)

Oscar-nominated documentary Winter on Fire, which featured the video of this teenage activist (Video, 2023a; Chapter 5).

A protester at 10:30 a.m. pointed to a “sniper” shooting from the 9th floor of the hotel. A different Maidan activist said that another protester was killed from Hotel Ukraina when he stood near him. Two protesters stated that “snipers” on Hotel Ukraina shot protesters in the back and also pointed out snipers in the buildings on Horodetsky Street or Bank Arkada. The news report of the 1+1 TV channel stated that Maidan Self-Defense reported that snipers from Hotel Ukraina roof were shooting protesters. The 24 Kanal reported that snipers Hotel Ukraina were shooting protesters. An announcement from the Maidan stage reported “confirmed information” from the Maidan Self-Defense about three snipers on Bank Arkada (see Video, 2023a).

Maidan protesters in an NBC video warned about snipers on the roof of Hotel Ukraina, but the NBC did not report this. The ABC News journalists falsely reported during the massacre that government snipers took positions on the upper floors of Hotel Ukraina where these American and many other journalists were staying. But the ABC News report showed the far-right-linked company of Maidan snipers arriving in the hotel.

A Maidan protester said in a Finish TV interview in the hotel lobby that snipers on Hotel Ukraina roof were shooting protesters. A female Maidan medic pointed in a British Channel 4 video that there were three snipers on the right in the area of Bank Arkada and Hotel Ukraina and two snipers on the left in the area of Muzeinyi Lane and Zhovtnevyi Palace. But the report included an incorrect translation of her. Another video shows protesters during the massacre pointing out “snipers” positions in Bank Arkada, Zhovtnevyi Palace, and Muzeinyi Lane buildings. Another protester said that a steep direction and wound locations of a shot protester pointed to Hotel Ukraina (Video, 2023a).

A French TV journalist and the Spilno TV streamer on the 11th floor pointed in the recording of the online stream shooting by snipers in Hotel Ukraina. The Spilno TV streamer was told in 10:55 am in presence of a French TV crew that the Maidan Self-Defense with Kalashnikovs carried away one or two snipers from the 11th or the 10th floor of the hotel. The Spilno TV streamer in Hotel Ukraina said that there were shots from open windows in another wing of the hotel during the day, and said that he saw them closing after the gunshots. He said that he saw shooting from one of the side hotel rooms, specifically a toilet on the 9th or 10th floor, and reported that there was a search for this sniper in the evening

in the hotel. A Maidan stage speaker relayed at 10:59 am a warning from protesters about three snipers shooting protesters from Hotel Ukraina (Video, 2023a).

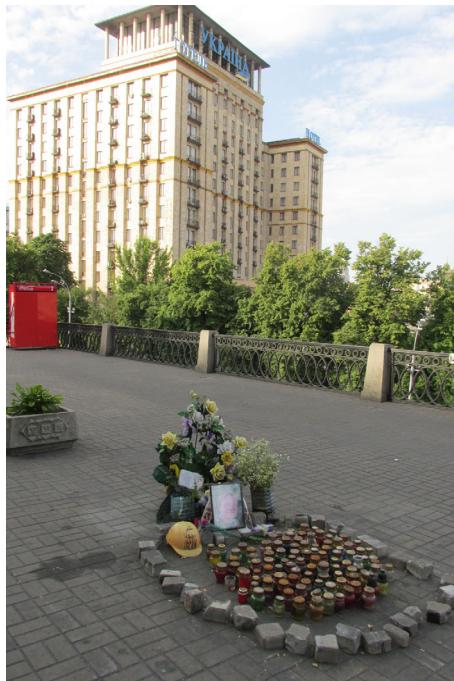
Two armed protesters tried to search for “snipers” on the upper floors and on the roof of Hotel Ukraina, but they were refused entrance by the hotel security and the Maidan guards. Some armed special Maidan company members left the hotel in presence of Svoboda deputies and journalists, while an unidentified person was interrogated on his knees. His black clothes and balaklava matched some descriptions of Hotel Ukraina snipers in testimonies of wounded Maidan protesters. The CNN and Vice News videos show armed members of the special Maidan company near Hotel Ukraina circa 11:00 am. They said that there was a sniper in Hotel Ukraina who shot at the Maidan protesters (Video, 2023a).

When Serhiy Melnychuk was killed at 4:51 pm, several protesters and a Bild journalist near him all stated that he was shot from Hotel Ukraina. A female Maidan medic on the Maidan and Spilno TV journalists inside the hotel stated the same (Video, 2023a, 01:16:55). His wife, who was near Melnychuk during his death, testified at the trial and BBC and Hromadkse TV interviews that the gunshot was from this hotel. A forensic expert, based on the position of Melnychuk and his wound locations and directions in forensic medical examinations, made the same determination (Chapters 4 and 5) (Fig. 3.8).

In their intercepted radio communications, the SBU Alfa commanders reported that hostile snipers were moving to Hotel Ukraina (Video, 2023a, 46:24). Their intercepted radio communications show that SBU Alfa snipers were deployed in the Cabmin building only after 10:30 am, attempted to locate snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings, and did not massacre the protesters. SBU Alfa snipers radio communications reported suspected snipers or spotters on the roofs of Kinopalats and Horodetsky Street buildings.

A government sniper was only filmed on the Cabmin building around noon after all but one protester were already killed. The synchronized videos show that the Omega unit of snipers arrived at the Berkut barricade area and received permission to use live ammunition against snipers in Maidan-controlled buildings circa 10:37 am after all but three protesters were already killed. Omega snipers then aimed their rifles not at the protesters, but at Hotel Ukraina windows far above the protesters (Video, 2023a, 58:56).

Fig. 3.8 Makeshift memorial to Serhiy Melnychuk on the site of his killing (Photo by the author)



The killings and wounding of protesters in the Instytutska Street area facing the Berkut, Alfa, and Omega positions practically stopped after the arrival of government snipers. The only exception was the killing of Oleksandr Khrapachenko at 11:27 am (see Video, 2023a, 01:08:17). The prosecution initially found that he was killed from Hotel Ukraina, but then charged special Berkut company members on their barricade and, in 2020, an Omega sniper in the Cabmin Club with his killing. Video (2023a) shows that it was physically impossible because forensic medical and ballistic examinations revealed that he was shot by a rusted expanding hunting bullet in the back at a steep top to bottom direction when he faced Berkut and Omega in front of him. Black smoke covered him from the Cabmin Club and Berkut barricade. Two protesters testified that he was shot from Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings. For example, Pastushok testified that Khrapachenko was shot from the left

wing of Hotel Ukraina and that the protesters were shot at from Hotel Ukraina when he carried Khrapachenko (Chapter 5).

A salvo of gunshots at 11:32–11:33 am matched sounds of coordinated shooting by a group of snipers in their intercepted radio communication that was recorded by a Maidan protester on the Maidan. One of these snipers talked about an apparent Transcaucasian accent, which is consistent with media interviews by several Georgian snipers (Video, 2023a, 01:09:19). Their open communication about shooting, in contrast to the use of code terms by the SBU Alfa snipers in their radio communication, and the Maidan Self-Defense and GPU refusals to locate and identify these snipers suggest that they were from the Maidan opposition side. A Maidan activist said that he gave this intercepted communication recording to a Maidan Self-Defense company commander, but he ignored it, and communications of this group of “snipers” continued until the next day.

The Radical Party leader stated from the Maidan stage after this salvo that snipers were walking and shooting behind the Monument of Independence column which is located on the Maidan Square between the stage and Hotel Ukraina. A group of unidentified men were filmed on Zhovtnevyi Palace roof a couple of minutes after this salvo (Video, 2023a).

Videos show that during the massacre, several Maidan leaders, particularly leaders of the Fatherland and Svoboda parties, spoke from the Maidan stage, which faced Hotel Ukraina and other buildings from which snipers shot Maidan protesters, in particular, killing two protesters within dozens of meters from the stage before and after speeches by the Maidan leaders from the stage (see Video, 2023a; Vysota, 2017b). Similarly, many members of parliament from Svoboda were inside and near the hotel during the entire massacre. In particular, a video by a Maidan activist and their own statements revealed that the Svoboda deputies were on the 11th floor, including in their own rooms at the very time when snipers were located on this floor, including in the room of one of the Svoboda deputies, and shot Maidan protesters (Kogda, 2014). For example, the GPU investigation revealed in 2015 that two Svoboda deputies lived in hotel rooms located next to another Svoboda deputy room, from which, as the BBC and ICTV videos and testimonies of the BBC journalist and Maidan protesters show, snipers shot at the BBC television crew and Maidan protesters. One of the Svoboda leaders admitted in 2015 that

he was filming the massacre from a room located next to the Svoboda deputy room with the snipers (Svobodivtsi, 2015).

Svoboda deputies did not warn Maidan protesters and foreign journalists, in particular, those who were shot by snipers located in this hotel, including on their floor and their neighboring rooms, or were in the lobby of the hotel at that time. Such actions by these Maidan leaders and Svoboda deputies suggest that they did not fear snipers and that they knew that these snipers were not from a government or any other hostile force but from the Maidan or other friendly covert force and would not shoot the Maidan leaders on the stage and Svoboda deputies in or near Hotel Ukraina.

Videos and statements by some Maidan activists in the social media show that Maidan leaders, in particular, oligarchic and far-right, evacuated around the midnight captured snipers along with captured Internal Troops members despite attempts by Maidan protesters to block the bus with them (Video, 2023a).

Two Maidan leaders admitted during the massacre that snipers located in Hotel Ukraina were killing Maidan activists. But they claimed that these were Yanukovych government snipers, contrary to the evidence. Arsenii Yatseniuk, who became the prime minister of Ukraine after Maidan, stated during the massacre that snipers shot protesters from Hotel Ukraina (Yatseniuk, 2014). Petro Poroshenko, who became a president of Ukraine, also stated in the Ukrainian parliament speech on the day of the massacre that snipers in Hotel Ukraina were killing “innocent boys and girls” (Ofitsiinyi, 2014a).

Several dozen journalists from a dozen countries reported in the media or the social media during the massacre about witnessing snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, in particular, shooting of Maidan protesters by these snipers, cited eyewitnesses among Maidan activists about such snipers, or based their reports on such testimonies. In addition to cited reports from ABC, CNN, BBC, the Guardian, ITV, Bild, TVP, 1+1, 5 Kanal, 24 Kanal, 112, ICTV, RT, and Spilne TV, they included TT News Agency, Novyi Kanal, and Kyiv Post. But they, with couple of exceptions, stated or implied that these were government snipers, contrary to all the evidence.

3.2 SHOOTING AT WESTERN, POLISH, AND RUSSIAN JOURNALISTS DURING THE MAIDAN MASSACRE

The analysis of videos, photos, forensic examinations by government investigators, and reports by journalists in the media and social media concerning the locations of these Hotel Ukraina rooms and timing of the shooting at journalists from ABC News (US), ABC (Australia), ARD (Germany) twice, the Associated Press (US), BBC (UK) twice, TVP (Poland), RT (Russia), and Sky News (UK) shows that they were also shot at by snipers from Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, in particular, the Right Sector headquarters, the Music Conservatory, and Bank Arkada. This is consistent with a reported testimony of self-admitted Maidan snipers from Georgia that the former leader of Georgia ordered to kill a foreign journalist during the massacre (General, 2021).

As noted, BBC TV journalists filmed and reported that sniper in a Maidan-style helmet shot at them from the 11th floor of Hotel Ukraina. The government investigation revealed that a deputy from the far-right Svoboda Party then occupied this hotel room. The verdict confirmed that the BBC TV crew was shot at from this “activist-controlled” hotel (Chapter 8).

A Ukrainian TV video showed a bullet hole and its impact in room 925 of Hotel Ukraina and that this bullet narrowly missed the German ARD TV female producer. The Maidan massacre trial verdict and the visual examinations of these bullet holes and their impact points by the government investigators confirmed that this German ARD TV room was shot at from the direction of the Main Post Office, which was the Right Sector headquarters. The verdict and a forensic examination by government experts established that a likely bullet trajectory in room 825 pointed to the roof of the Music Conservatory building, which was headquarters of the far-right-linked company of snipers. But the government investigation and the trial did not reveal that these rooms were occupied by the German TV journalists (Video, 2023f).

A RT journalist reported during the massacre that a bullet narrowly missed him when he was in Hotel Ukraina room for the live broadcast. He showed that the bullet trajectory pointed to a gunshot from the Music Conservatory. A Fox News reporter went to room 628 to film the bullet holes for his report about the Maidan massacre, but he was told that government experts did not go there to examine the bullet holes. No Fox News report about this can be found. A broadcast by the Australian ABC

News journalist revealed that he was shot at in his Hotel Ukraina room facing the Maidan. The timing of the gunshot after the police retreat and its steep upward trajectory suggest that it came from a Maidan-controlled area. Videos show that the police did not shoot at the hotel direction during its brief advance.

A Sky News journalist reported that a bullet flew in their Hotel Ukraina room. The time of her tweet and her photo taken a day before suggest that it was likely shot at from the Maidan-controlled area. A statement by a BBC producer to ABC News and his photo two days before suggest that the BBC room was also likely shot at from the Maidan-controlled area. The information about his room facing Maidan (Independence Square) and the apparent timing of the shooting in the AP report indicate that the journalist from this leading US news agency was shot at in his Hotel Ukraina room from a Maidan-controlled area.

The bullet hole and impact locations in the American ABC News Hotel Ukraina room 926 indicate that the gunshot that missed the American journalist was from Bank Arkada. The Maidan massacre trial judge and a Berkut lawyer stated that it could not be physically shot from the ground level of the Berkut barricade because the entry hole and bullet impacts in the wall were at similar heights. The forensic ballistic examination made public at the trial revealed that the bullet was a Winchester caliber hunting soft point, which did not fit calibers of Berkut firearms. A Polish TVP TV journalist said that he saw “a sniper” on Bank Arkada roof and that a TVP producer was shot in his Hotel Ukraina room from there, judging by the direction of bullet holes. In contrast, such evidence suggests that a ricochet that hit a Ruptly reporter on the top floor of Hotel Ukraina was from Berkut police shooting which targeted snipers there. There is contradictory evidence or lack of evidence in case of shooting at other Russian journalists (see Video, [2023f](#)).

3.3 OVERTHROW OF THE YANUKOVYCH GOVERNMENT

The deputy head of the Ukrainian parliament from the far-right Svoboda Party convened in the late afternoon on February 20, 2014, an emergency parliament session. As noted, this Svoboda leader was filmed with a handgun accompanying the far-right-linked group of snipers in Hotel Ukraina during the massacre. He along with other Maidan opposition leaders and deputies falsely blamed Yanukovych and his forces for this massacre. The parliament voted by a slim majority to withdraw the

government forces from downtown Kyiv. However, this deputy head of the Ukrainian parliament admitted that he opened the parliament session without quorum and in violation of the parliament regulations. A Svoboda deputy stated that they voted for the absent deputies (Braty, 2017).

Far-right commander of far-right-linked company of Maidan snipers issued on February 21 from the Maidan stage an ultimatum to Yanukovych with threats to use weapons if he won't resign and falsely blaming him for the Maidan massacre of activists, in which his far-right group of snipers was involved. The Maidan Self-Defense head, who was then a deputy from the Fatherland Party, admitted approving this ultimatum in advance. Dmytro Yarosh, the Right Sector leader, issued a similar ultimatum to Yanukovych from the Maidan stage (see Chapter 1).

The deputy parliament head from Svoboda also opened a parliament session on February 22 to remove Yanukovych from presidency. The parliament vote to oust Yanukovych for "abandoning presidency" was unconstitutional, lacked required 338 vote majority, and was done under duress, and its 328 "yes" vote was fabricated. According to official record, 248 deputies out of 450 were registered at the opening (Ofitsiyny, 2024b). Many Yanukovych Party deputies switched loyalty, but many others voted under threat of violence by the far-right group of Maidan snipers, the Maidan Self-Defense, and a mob which surrounded the parliament. The commander of the far-right-linked Maidan company of snipers admitted that his group brought by force deputies from the Yanukovych Party of Regions to vote for his removal. The number of present deputies in various videos of this vote was about 262 (see, for example, Al Jazeera, 2014). A member of Maidan leadership, who headed then a parliamentary committee, stated that Maidan opposition leaders seized duplicate cards of absent deputies and used them to fraudulently inflate this vote and other votes which put leaders of Fatherland and Svoboda, which were involved in the false-flag Maidan massacre, in top government positions. Yanukovych fled from Kyiv and then Ukraine because of assassination attempts against him, in particular with involvement of the far-right Right Sector and Svoboda (see Chapter 1; Katchanovski, forthcoming).

Main findings of the video reconstruction and content analysis of the massacre on February 20 are summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Summary of the video reconstruction and content analysis of the Maidan massacre on February 20, 2014

Summary of evidence	Source
At least 8 videos show snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, including 6 videos of snipers identified as Maidan snipers, aiming or shooting at the Berkut police during the Maidan massacre. Excludes 13 videos and photos of individual protesters on the ground openly aiming or shooting at the police or filmed with firearms during the massacre	Video (2023a, 2023c, 2023g); media & social media
At least 14 videos show snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings, including 10 videos of them identified as Maidan snipers, aiming, or shooting at the Maidan protesters. At least 26 videos of groups of armed Maidan snipers and spotters moving into, looking for, changing, or leaving shooting positions in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. At least 8 photos of groups Maidan snipers and spotters in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas	Video (2023a, 2023c, 2023g); media & social media
A radio communication recording of a group of apparent Maidan snipers shooting, and 4 radio communications recordings of government forces concerning snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings	Video (2023a); online files
Over 100 testimonies by Maidan activists, journalists, and policemen during the Maidan massacre about Maidan snipers/snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings	Video (2023a, 2023c, 2023e, 2023g)
Synchronized videos show that specific times of gunshots by the Berkut policemen and their aiming direction in synchronized videos do not coincide with specific times and locations of killing of at least 39 out of 49 protesters. There is lack of video data in 10 other cases of the killed protesters	Video (2023a); Maidan massacre trial & investigation, Vysota (2017a, 2017b); SITU
Synchronized videos show 3 protesters were killed and 10 wounded before the Berkut special company started shooting. And 45 protesters were killed before Omega, SBU, and other government sniper units were deployed	Video (2023a) and Vysota (2017a); Maidan massacre verdict; SITU

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

<i>Summary of evidence</i>	<i>Source</i>
Synchronized videos show several hundred different sounding gunshots when Berkut was filmed not shooting and before the arrival of government snipers	Video (2023a, 2023c, 2023g) and Vysota (2017a, 2017b)
Videos, photos, testimonies, and on-site examinations by government forensic experts show snipers and spotters, including from the special armed Maidan company, in at least 20 Maidan-controlled buildings, such as far-right Svoboda-controlled Hotel Ukraina, the Music Conservatory (far-right-linked special armed Maidan company headquarters), the Main Post Office (the far-right Right Sector headquarters), Kozatsky Hotel (neo-Nazi Patriot of Ukraine headquarters), Zhovtnevyi Palace, and Bank Arkada	Video (2023a, 2023c)
Videos, photos, and testimonies show control of these 20 buildings and areas of their location by the Maidan forces, including the special armed Maidan company, at the time of the massacre of the Maidan protesters and the police by snipers from these buildings and areas	Video (2023a, 2023c, 2023g)
Positions of shot Maidan activists and locations and directions of their wounds in forensic medical examinations match Maidan-controlled buildings and areas.	Video (2023a, 2023c, 2023g); Maidan massacre trial & investigation
Videos, photos, and on-site visual examination visually show bullet traces and impacts from the Maidan-controlled locations Several dozen journalists from more than dozen countries, including from ABC, CNN, BBC, Guardian, ITV, Bild, TT News Agency, TVP, 1+1, 5 Kanal, ICTV, Novyi Kanal, and Kyiv Post, reported in the media or the social media during the massacre about witnessing snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, including shooting of Maidan protesters by these snipers, cited eyewitnesses among Maidan protesters about such snipers, or based their reports on such testimonies	Video (2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2023e, 2023f); media; social media

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Summary of evidence	Source
Videos, photos, forensic examinations by government investigators, and reports by journalists show that journalists from ABC News (US), ABC (Australia), ARD TV (Germany) twice, the Associated Press (US), BBC (UK) twice, TVP (Poland), RT (Russia), and Sky News (UK) were shot at by snipers from Maidan-controlled buildings and areas	Video (2023f); Maidan massacre trial and verdict; media; social media
Far-right-linked group of Maidan snipers, and leaders of far-right Svoboda and oligarchic Fatherland, all of which were involved in the false-flag massacre, were also involved in unconstitutional removal of Yanukovych	Braty (2017) and Katchanovski (forthcoming)

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CHAPTER 4

Testimonies of Several Hundred Witnesses and 14 Self-Admitted Maidan Snipers

This chapter analyzes interviews and statements in the Ukrainian and other media and social media after the Maidan massacre of the Maidan protesters and the police by several hundred witnesses, primarily eyewitnesses among Maidan activists and journalists, concerning Maidan snipers, snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings, and other evidence of the false-flag massacre in downtown Kyiv in Ukraine on February 18–20, 2014. It also examines interviews and statements by 14 self-admitted members of Maidan sniper groups, in particular, about shooting the police and the protesters in various media and the social media. Many Maidan activists and self-admitted snipers publicly stated that they witnessed involvement of specific top Maidan leaders from the oligarchic parties and far-right organizations in the massacre. There are no such specific public testimonies or admissions by Yanukovych government leaders and commanders and members of the Berkut police, the Security Service of Ukraine, and the Internal Troops concerning involvement of the government forces and officials in the massacre. There are also no corroborated witness testimonies about specific involvement of then Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych, his government ministers, commanders, in the massacre of the Maidan activists, including massacre orders.

4.1 TESTIMONIES BY OVER 300 WITNESSES CONCERNING MAIDAN SNIPERS

Over 300 other witnesses testified after the Maidan massacre in the various Ukrainian and other media and social media about Maidan snipers and snipers in the Maidan-controlled locations or about involvement of the specific leaders of the Maidan oligarchic and far-right opposition. They include over 100 video testimonies about such snipers in numerous TV reports and social media, such as YouTube (see Video, [2023b](#)). The government investigation in Ukraine denied that there were any snipers, who were located in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations and who massacred the Maidan activists,

The witness testimonies examined in this chapter do not include over 100 other witness interviews and statements, which were made in the media and the social media during the massacre itself, concerning snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas (see Chapter [3](#)). They also do not include Maidan massacre trial and investigation testimonies concerning snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas by the absolute majority of 172 Maidan protesters, who were wounded on February 20, 2014, and close to 100 of such testimonies by the prosecution, defense, and Maidan victims' witnesses at this trial and investigation in Ukraine (see Chapter [5](#)).

Two leaders of the far-right Svoboda Party stated in their separate interviews that a Western government representative told them and other Maidan leaders a few weeks before the massacre that Western governments would turn on the Yanukovych government after casualties among protesters would reach 100. Oleh Tiahnybok, who headed this far-right party and was one of the leaders of the Maidan, said that when he asked that “we have four victims, why is there no reaction?” the Western representative responded that “this is not enough” and that “we will be able to react when there are 100 victims” (Braty, [2017](#), 94).

Ruslan Koshulynsky, deputy leader of the Svoboda Party and the deputy head of the Ukrainian parliament, made similar statement concerning the discussion of this issue:

They talked about the first deaths - well, 5, 20... 100? When will the authorities be guilty? In the end, they reached the figure of one hundred. There was no pressure. There were no sanctions. They waited until a mass murder. And if there is a mass murder in the country - the authorities are

to blame, because they crossed the line, the authorities cannot allow mass murders. (Braty, 2017, 94)

Such specific conditionality created rational incentives to “sacrifice” 100 protesters and attributed their killing to the government forces. The killed protesters were called Heavenly Hundred immediately after the massacre. Protesters and people who were not even on the Maidan or died from illnesses, suicide, and other causes were included in the Heavenly Hundred to bring the number of victims to 100.

The Western governments almost immediately after the Maidan massacre blamed the Yanukovych government and his forces for this mass killing and recognized the new Maidan government. Biden (2017) in his memoir described making a call to Yanukovych “when his snipers were assassinating Ukrainian citizens by the dozens” to tell him to “call off his gunmen and walk away” and that “the disgraced president fled Ukraine the next day.” Yanukovych signed a deal with the Maidan opposition leaders and representatives of France, Germany, and Poland on February 21. The deal would have kept him in office with significantly reduced power before the early presidential election. It also specified to conduct an investigation of the Maidan massacre with international involvement. However, the deal was immediately violated by the Maidan opposition, which seized the central government offices in Kyiv, and by France, Germany, and Poland, which recognized the new Maidan government.

The majority of a few hundred testimonies after the Maidan massacre by witnesses, primarily Maidan protesters, in the media, social media, concerning snipers in Maidan-controlled buildings and areas during the Maidan massacre, are by direct eyewitnesses and by Maidan activists and Western and Ukrainian journalists. Many of them also stated that Maidan leaders knew in advance about the massacre and that snipers were located in the Music Conservatory, Hotel Ukraina, and at least 18 other buildings in the Maidan-controlled areas and shot protesters and police from there. Several Maidan protesters testified that some of the snipers were captured by Maidan protesters but were then released by Maidan leaders (Video, 2023b).

At least 10 Maidan politicians and activists publicly testified that they witnessed the involvement of specific top Maidan leaders from oligarchic parties and far-right organizations in the massacre, such as their advance knowledge of the massacre, deployment of snipers, evacuation of snipers who were captured by Maidan protesters, and cover-up of such snipers.

They include members of the Maidan and Right Sector leadership, the Maidan Self-Defense commanders, Right Sector activists, and other Maidan activists.

For example, David Zhvania, who headed a parliamentary committee at the time of the massacre and was a member of the Maidan leadership, stated that the Maidan leaders, whom he named in his videos, “arranged” the Maidan massacre, that they wanted to seize power in Ukraine. He said that the Maidan opposition leaders knew in advance about the Maidan massacre and called their members of the parliament before the massacre not to go to the Maidan so that they would not be killed. David Zhvania stated that he along with Maidan leaders were members of “the organized criminal group” which used the Maidan to seize power in Ukraine for personal enrichment. He said that they financed the Maidan, used media to escalate the Maidan protests, broke attempts of peaceful resolution of the conflict by the incumbent government, and conducted negotiations with foreign embassies (see Pravda, 2020a; Video 2023b, 01:07).

Zhvania stated that he along with Poroshenko, Turchynov, Yatseniuk, and Klitschko used the Maidan protesters as “extras” to seize power in Ukraine and called this “a coup” (Pravda, 2020b). He said that the Maidan leaders decided in January 2014 to seize power in Ukraine and that he was personally involved in forcing then Prime Minister Mykola Azarov to resign to clear them a path to power after their intended removal of Yanukovych. Zhvania also said that the parliament’s vote to remove Yanukovych was manipulated because Maidan leaders obtained from the secretariat duplicate cards of absent deputies and cast their votes. He was a close associate of Poroshenko and one of the leaders of his election team during the 2014 parliamentary elections.

David Zhvania stated in his letter to the State Bureau of Investigations of Ukraine that Maidan leaders were organizers of the Maidan massacre. He said that one of the Maidan leaders started to kill people on the Maidan and that money and weapons for the Maidan “coup” were channeled through the Lithuanian Embassy and Diamantbank, which Zhvania owned. He said that he had documents supporting his statements and was ready to testify to the Ukrainian prosecutors concerning these statements (Pravda, 2020c).

Nadia Savchenko, a member of the parliament from the Fatherland Party, stated that she witnessed in the morning of February 20 an arrival of a group of Maidan protesters armed with hunting rifles near the

Maidan stage and that they became members of the Ukrainian parliament after the Maidan. She said that she later witnessed armed Maidan activists entering a Hotel Ukraina elevator. Savchenko also said that she witnessed as one of the Maidan leaders brought the snipers to Hotel Ukraina and that she saw gunshots from Hotel Ukraina (see Ukrayina, 2018; Telekanal, 2017; Video, 2023b, 11:04).

Andrii Artemenko, a Right Sector sponsor during the Maidan massacre, stated that he and other Right Sector activists found and photographed three positions of snipers and their exit routes, and that the Maidan leadership released one of these snipers, who was found there. He said that these positions were located in a building in the rear of the Music Conservatory, on the sixth floor in an abandoned building between the Dnipro Hotel and Ukrkoopspilla building, and on the roof of the Ukrainian House. The first two positions of Maidan snipers were also identified in various publicly available sources. The location of the sniper position on the roof of the Ukrainian House was previously mentioned in media interviews and social media by an ex-leader of the neo-Nazi White Hammer, which was a part of the Right Sector during the massacre. Artemenko offered an independent confirmation of this testimony. Artemenko said that he has photos of these sniper positions, bullet casings found there, that his testimony can be confirmed by other witnesses that he can name, and that other Maidan protesters witnessed snipers leaving their positions (see Telekanal, 2018; Video, 2023b, 48:09).

This ex-Right Sector sponsor and an ex-member of the Ukrainian parliament suggested that the Maidan opposition leadership brought “snipers” because Maidan leaders benefited from the massacre by obtaining power in Ukraine. Artemenko also stated that Andrii Parubii, the head of the Maidan Self-Defense, planned to seize the Ukrainian parliament and the Cabinet of Ministers headquarters during the “Peaceful March” on February 18, 2014, and that Serhiy Pashynsky, another Maidan leader from then Fatherland Party, planned a seizure of a police weapons depot in Kyiv to get arms. He said that he met with both of them then. Artemenko also said that the Right Sector leader also discussed then how to get weapons and that the Right Sector was involved in appointment of the Maidan government after the massacre. This Maidan politician said that he got information about formations of sniper groups by specific Maidan leaders, one of whom became the head of the parliament during the Poroshenko presidency, from meetings with them during the Maidan massacre (see Video, 2023b). Artemenko

is a dual Ukrainian and Canadian citizen, and he lived in an exile in Washington DC after he was stripped of his Ukrainian citizenship and membership in the parliament. Neither the US nor Canadian media reported any of his statements concerning the Maidan massacre and the violent overthrow of the Ukrainian government.

A Maidan protester stated that he, along with other protesters, captured five snipers in room 211 on the second floor of Hotel Ukraina. He said that they were paid money, ordered to kill protesters, and shot from that room. He noted that these snipers surrendered and laid their weapons when his group of Maidan activists came and that they were transferred to a Maidan leader, but since then, the Maidan leaders, who became senior officials, have refused to disclose any information about them (Serhiy, 2014).

A Maidan Self-Defense commander stated that 15 “snipers” were captured on the roofs of buildings by the Maidan Self-Defense and Maidan activists. He said that one of them fell from a bank building after he was wounded by a veteran of the Soviet war in Afghanistan. He stated that this wounded and injured sniper was captured there along with two other snipers, who were on the roof of Bank. This activist said that he helped to carry him to the Trade Union building for medical help but that he died in a few hours (News-Front, 2015; Video, 2023b).

In a leaked intercepted telephone call with the EU foreign affairs head, the Estonian minister of foreign affairs referred to Olha Bohomolets, one of the Maidan doctors, pointing during his visit to Ukraine to similarity of the wounds among the protesters and policemen, which served as an indication that the massacre was organized by some elements of the Maidan opposition (Michael, 2014). Because their wounds had the same distinctive features, this meant that both the police and the protesters were shot by the same “snipers.” The Estonian Foreign Minister confirmed the authenticity of this call.

While Bohomolets, who was a coordinator of the Maidan medics during the massacre, publicly denied saying this, she confirmed meeting the Estonian Foreign Minister. Her public denial of her private admission of the involvement of the Maidan elements in the massacre would be in her political and rational self-interest. Oleh Musiy, who headed the Maidan medics during the massacre and became the health minister after the Maidan, confirmed in his Associated Press interview that similarity of bullet wounds of Maidan activists and police, whom he treated (Danilova, 2014). And Bohomolets stated that a group of protesters came around

1:00 pm to Hotel Ukraina and told her that a sniper was shooting from the hotel. They threatened to burn the hotel to prevent the sniper from shooting and found a sniper position in the hotel (Newsone, 2018; Video 2023b, 47:13–48:09).

In addition, a Maidan protester from the Volyn Region said in his interview to a local news site that Maidan snipers were given automatic assault rifles and sniper rifles and shot Maidan activists in the back. He also said that people close to the Maidan opposition reported that snipers of two Maidan leaders (Poroshenko and Parubii) were shooting from the Trade Union building. He stated that he was wounded during the Maidan massacre on Instytutska Street and that there were snipers shooting at both the police and the protesters (Volynianyn, 2017).

The commander of the 26th company of the Maidan Self-Defense, who was in March–August 2014 an adviser to the Maidan head of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (Andrii Parubii), said that he had access after the Maidan in 2014 to the materials of the government investigations of the Maidan massacre and conducted his own investigation. He stated that the materials of the government investigation and his own investigation showed that there were “third forces,” which shot both Maidan protesters and the police, and that different firing positions of these forces included Hotel Ukraina and Horodetsky Street. He suggested that the third forces are linked to the Maidan leadership. The senior Maidan Self-Defense commander specifically stated that these snipers shot both the protesters and the police, massacred a significant part of the Maidan activists, and were linked to the Maidan opposition. He said that the Maidan opposition needed such “sacred victims” in order to gain power (SVII, 2019, 1:37:45; 2023). Such statements are against his political self-interest since he was a senior Maidan Self-Defense commander from the Lviv Region, continues to support the Maidan, and expresses radical nationalist views.

Several Maidan activists, including from the far-right, stated that the Maidan opposition leaders, including the neo-Nazi C14 and the Right Sector leaders, knew in advance about this mass killing. Such advanced knowledge implies that the massacre was planned by the elements of the Maidan opposition, including the far-right.

Zhvania said that the Maidan leaders knew in advance about the Maidan massacre. He said that they warned in phone calls to their members of the parliament in advance of the massacre not to go to the

Maidan so that they would not be killed and continue voting in the parliament (see Video, [2023b](#)).

Mustafa Nayem, who with his Facebook post formally initiated the EuroMaidan mass protests against the suspension of the EU association and free trade agreement by Yanukovych in November 2013 and became a member of the parliament from the Poroshenko Bloc after the Maidan, wrote that there were people on the Maidan who knew about the Maidan massacre in advance. Nayem also revealed that an organizer and leader of a group of “titushki,” who are charged with beating and killing a Vesti journalist near Maidan on February 18, 2014, in fact worked in the security company which guarded a bank of one of Fatherland Party and Maidan leaders and was a friend of a former member of the Poroshenko faction in the parliament (Nayem, [2018](#)). This member of the Fatherland Party leadership during the Maidan became the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, and he changed charges against this “titushki” leader from murder to hooliganism, and the court in this case gave him a suspended sentence in December 2017. Mustafa Nayem stated in parliament that both this “titushki” organizer and his friend knew in advance about the Maidan massacre. This “friend” at that time headed a bank, which was Bank of this Fatherland Party leading member. He became a member of the Poroshenko faction in the parliament and the governor of the Mykolaiv Region after the Maidan. In his 24 TV channel interview, Nayem revealed that this “titushki” group organizer testified during investigation that he was in fact not on the Yanukovych side but on the Maidan side and that this was his job (24TV, [2018](#)). This is consistent with various evidence that the Maidan massacre was a false-flag mass killing with involvement of the elements of the Maidan leadership, in particular, from then the Fatherland Party.

A Maidan protester said that he learned that the Right Sector members were absent during the massacre, because they received advance warning from their leadership (Novyk, [2014](#)). The former leader of the Right Sector in the Sviatoshyntsi District in Kyiv also suggested that there was such a Right Sector order (RPS, [2015](#)). The Right Sector leader stated that he ordered unarmed Right Sector members to avoid the Maidan after the massacre started because the shooting from the Music Conservatory targeted the Maidan activists. However, he claimed, contrary to the definite evidence, that the Music Conservatory was in a grey zone even though he admitted that he went himself to the Conservatory at

that time from a new Right Sector headquarters in the KyivStar building nearby (Braty, 2017, 203).

A leading member of C14, a Neo-Nazi affiliate of Svoboda Party, stated that the C14 leader told his C14-based company that he received information about the impending Maidan massacre and therefore he and his company took a refuge at the Canadian Embassy near the Maidan on February 18, 2014, and stayed there during the Maidan massacre (Lidera, 2017). The leader of the Svoboda-affiliated C14 admitted that his C14-based Maidan Self-Defense company took refuge in the Canadian embassy in Kyiv on February 18 and stayed there during the Maidan massacre (Sich, 2014). These statements are corroborated by the disappearance of the Right Sector and C14 activists from the Maidan shortly before the massacre and no single member of these far-right organizations and their Maidan companies was killed or wounded during the massacre.

The far-right Svoboda Party, a Maidan Self-Defense commander in the hotel, and the hotel staff stated that Hotel Ukraina was seized and guarded by the Maidan forces since the end of January 2014 or during the massacre (Video, 2023b). In its official statement, Svoboda stated that its activists took Hotel Ukraina under their control and guard on January 25, 2014: “Activists of the All-Ukrainian association “Svoboda” took the hotel “Ukraine” under the guard. At the moment, the hotel has been taken under the control of “Svoboda” activists, and it is operating as usual” (VO “Svoboda”, 2014). A similar statement was made by the Svoboda leader on the Maidan stage (VO «Svoboda», 2014). A BBC video showed a leading Svoboda activist along with a few Maidan protesters guarding the entrance to the stairways and elevators in the hotel shortly after 9:51 am (Video, 2023a, 36:50).

Mykola Romaniuk, a Maidan Self-Defense unit commander, said that he and more than dozen members of his unit guarded Hotel Ukraina entrance and checked bags of people entering the hotel since January 26, 2014. This matches the Svoboda statement. He said that he personally along with his unit guarded the hotel entrance and checked bags of people entering the hotel before, during, and after the Maidan massacre (Billy, 2014a; Video, 2023b). This Maidan activist was filmed during the massacre near the hotel entrance in BBC, Belgian RTBF, and other videos. However, he denied that any shooters were in the hotel. Such denial would be rational if the snipers in the hotel were from the Maidan forces.

Similarly, a senior Hotel Ukraina staff member stated that the Maidan protesters controlled this hotel before and during the massacre and that no police entered the hotel. This Hotel Ukraina manager said that during the massacre the hotel staff, Maidan protesters, and the Maidan Self-Defense checked all rooms but did not find any snipers there. She also stated that the Maidan Self-Defense was in the hotel since December 2013. She also denied that any snipers were there but said that there are bullet holes in windows in some 20 hotel rooms (Billy, 2014b). This is another indication that the Berkut and Omega targeted Maidan shooters at this hotel and that these shooters and their spotters and security were able to move freely to different floors and rooms (see Video, 2023b, 46:24). Another Hotel Ukraina staff member stated in his 1+1 TV interview that he witnessed three “snipers” with music instruments type weapon cases entering the hotel late on February 17 or early on February 18 when this hotel was in the area controlled by the Maidan Self-Defense (TSN, 2014a) (Fig. 4.1).

A few hundred witnesses stated after the massacre in media interviews and on the social media that they witnessed snipers in about 20 Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. Such locations included Hotel Ukraina, the Music Conservatory, Bank Arkada, Muzeinyi Lane 8 and 12 building, Horodetsky Street buildings between Hotel Ukraina and Bank Arkada, Hotel Kozatsky, Trade Union building, Zhovtnevyi Palace, and other locations.

Testimonies and analysis of various sources of evidence indicate that the cease-fire agreement was broken by the Maidan side in the early morning of February 20, when small groups of armed protesters started to shoot from the Music Conservatory building with live ammunition at the Berkut units besieging the protesters at Maidan. For example, a Maidan protester witnessed Maidan shooters entering the Music Conservatory on February 20. Police officers said that they noticed protesters with the Right Sector insignia in the Music Conservatory building on February 19 and that armed protesters took positions there (Beck-Hofmann, 2015). A policeman stated that the Right Sector occupied the second and third floors of the Music Conservatory in the evening of February 19 and that there was shooting at the police from there in the morning of February 20. A police officer said that three persons with weapons appeared on the second floor and the roof of the Music Conservatory (see Video, 2023b).

A senior Internal Troops officer stated that they had information that five “snipers” moved to the Music Conservatory from the Trade Union

Fig. 4.1 Hotel Ukraina (Photo by the author)



building after it was burned down by the protesters during Alfa's attempt to seize it after 11:00 pm on February 18 (Fakty, 2014a, 2014b). He also confirmed that the shooters killed and wounded many policemen from the Trade Union building and Maidan tents when this building was occupied and used as the headquarters of the Maidan Self-Defense and the Right Sector (5 Kanal, 2014a). This senior police commander said that shooters were shooting from the Trade Union building, killing two Internal Troops members, and then moved to the Music Conservatory (Video, 2023b).

Two police officers stated that they came under gunfire from the Music Conservatory building (5 Kanal, 2014a). In a US-made documentary investigating the Maidan massacre, a Berkut member said that the shooting from the Music Conservatory building at their anti-riot police units began at 5:30 am on February 20 (Beck-Hofmann, 2015). A Berkut policeman stated that a few Berkut policemen were wounded on the

Maidan after 3:30 am on February 20 and that the Berkut then found that the shooting was from the Music Conservatory from automatic firearms and that the shooters were from the Maidan side (Sharij, 2021). The Berkut policeman said that his unit was under gunfire by Maidan snipers from several positions for 40 minutes before Berkut retreated (NTS, 2014).

The Right Sector, an alliance of radical nationalist and neo-Nazi organizations and football ultras groups, took active part in the violent attacks on the presidential administration on December 1, 2013, and on the parliament in the end of January and on February 18, 2014. Shortly after midnight on February 20, Dmytro Yarosh, the leader of the Right Sector, announced that his organization did not accept a truce agreement with Yanukovych and would undertake decisive actions against the government forces (Pravyi, 2014). One of leaders of UNA-UNSO, which was a part of the Right Sector, admitted that he saw some 50 armed protesters in the underground area of Maidan in the morning of February 20 and also saw protesters shooting then in the police on the Maidan (Shvets, 2014).

Eyewitnesses among the Maidan protesters said that organized groups from the Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk regions in Western Ukraine arrived at Maidan and moved to the Music Conservatory several hours after midnight on February 20, and that some of them were armed with rifles (UKRLIFE.TV, 2014). For example, one protester confirmed that the armed Maidan activists shot at the police from the Conservatory building (5 Kanal, 2014b). A Ukrainian journalist working for the German ARD TV reported on his Facebook page that a hotel room of a German ARD journalist in Hotel Ukraina was shot at from the direction of the Main Post Office, i.e., the Right Sector headquarters (Oleksiy, 2014).

Andrii Shevchenko, a parliament member from the Fatherland Party—one of the opposition “Euromaidan” parties—stated that he received a phone call from a Berkut commander shortly after 7:00 am that 11 members of his police unit were wounded by shooters from the Music Conservatory building (Koshkina, 2014). This Berkut commander soon again informed him that, within half an hour, his unit’s casualties increased to 21 wounded and three killed. This member of the parliament from the pro-Maidan Fatherland Party became the Ukrainian ambassador to Canada after the Maidan.

Evgeniy Maloletka, a Ukrainian photographer who became an Associated Press journalist and a winner of Oscar for the best documentary, stated in his BBC interview in 2015 that he saw armed men with guns,

including a Kalashnikov assault rifle and a hunting rifle, in the Music Conservatory, just after 8:00 am on February 20. He photographed them and their firearms (Gatehouse, 2015; Video 2023b, 06:40). A TV reporter said that on the morning of the massacre he saw two snipers on the roof of the Music Conservatory firing in an Instytutska Street direction. Another journalist confirmed that journalist saw from his balcony a sniper on the roof of the Music Conservatory before the massacre and that this sniper made a warning gesture to leave the balcony (Video, 2023b).

These interviews are consistent with admissions in a BBC program and in Ukrainian media by three members of the far-right-linked special armed Maidan company that they shot at the police from the Music Conservatory. They are also consistent with prosecution charges of one of them with killing and wounding the police and with leaked interrogation of a Maidan activist who provided a hunting version of Kalashnikov to one of the Maidan snipers in the Music Conservatory. Similarly, photos and videos of Maidan snipers shooting the Berkut police from this Maidan-controlled building also corroborate these interviews (see Video, 2023a).

A Maidan stage announcer said that the commander of one of Maidan Self-Defense companies warned him on the stage about sniper gunfire from the roof of the Music Conservatory and Hotel Ukraina direction (Apostrof, 2021). Yevhen Chervonenko, a Ukrainian politician, said that the shooting started from Hotel Ukraina and the Kozatsky Hotel and that he saw that his and two other Maidan politicians' bodyguard was shot from there based on the muzzle flash and the bullet. Mykola Katerynchuk, one of these two Maidan politicians, independently confirmed that he witnessed on February 18 that Maidan protesters were shot from Hotel Ukraina and the Kozatsky Hotel and people falling on the Maidan near him with gunshot wounds (Newsone, 2017; Shuster, 2015; Video 2023b).

In his interview, Anatolii Strelchenko, the commander of the Omega unit of the Internal Troops, stated that they knew on February 18, 2014, before the attempted attack of the parliament, that Maidan activists had firearms and that the Maidan shooters started to use live ammunition on that day. Specifically, he said that a member of his unit was wounded from a Makarov handgun, three Internal Troops soldiers were wounded by pellets from a hunting rifle shot, and there was a seriously wounded a Berkut officer by a gunshot (Khripun, 2015). The owner of a hunting rifle said in his interview that he participate in the violent clashes with

police in that area on February 18, 2014, and was wounded there, and that he arrived on the Maidan with other hunters after hunting with his group of a few dozen “hunters” in Western Ukraine (Koshkina & Bazar, 2015).

In his speech on the third anniversary of the Maidan massacre, Petro Poroshenko, one of the Maidan leaders, admitted after he became president of Ukraine that Maidan protesters were shot from Hotel Ukraina, the Music Conservatory, and a building nearby (Ofitziine, 2017). Then a member of the Ukrainian parliament from the Maidan UDAR Party said that he lived in this hotel during the massacre and saw himself snipers shooting from the 12th floor of Hotel Ukraina when he was in his 9th floor hotel room (NASH, 2021).

Le Monde stated that there was no doubt for the Maidan protesters that “sniper fire was coming from the top of the hotel.” “For us, the building had become an adversary.” It quoted a pro-Maidan journalist Vitaly Portnikov, who “was in the crowd at the time” and admitted more than 10 years after the massacre that “this hotel scared us,” “it was like the eye of Sauron in Lord of the Rings” (Chemin, 2024).

Olena Bilozerska, a far-right blogger said that a sniper shot in a Zhovtnevyi Palace column just above her and a female medic but did not aim to kill them because the distance was short (Apostrof, 2021). In her blog post on the day of the massacre, she wrote that she saw snipers shooting from open windows of Hotel Ukraina and posted her photo of such open windows from the hotel side facing the Maidan and Zhovtnevyi Palace.¹

One of the leaders of the neo-Nazi White Hammer during the Maidan stated that he knows about three groups of Maidan snipers organized by Maidan leaders and the West. The White Hammer was one of the far-right organizations in the Right Sector during the Euromaidan.

He stated that he took part in seizure of the Ukrainian House in order to enable establishing there sniper positions for them and that such groups of Maidan snipers in the Kozatsky Hotel and the Ukrainian House shot at the police (NTV, 2016).

An SBU Alfa commander said in his Ukrainian media interview that when Alfa snipers located snipers preparing their position on a roof and reported this in their radio communication, these snipers moved away

¹ Her original blog entry is no longer available on her blog, Livejournal. <https://bilozerska.livejournal.com>.

because they intercepted Alfa radio communication about their identification (Mihayluk, 2014). This matches testimonies of SBU Alfa snipers at the Maidan massacre trial about a sniper on the roof of the Ukrainian House.

A prominent Ukrainian journalist referred to testimonies about shooting from the Kozatsky Hotel on the Maidan. A Maidan Self-Defense member also said that there were snipers on Kozatsky Hotel and the Trade Union building (Hromadske, 2016). A Maidan protester stated that there were two positions of “snipers” in the Trade Union building and that they shot protesters in the back in the morning of February 20 (Ustym, 2014).

A member of the Ukrainian parliament stated in her speech in the parliament that there was a video of a shooter with a Kalashnikov shooting both protesters and the police from a roof of a building (Podrobnosti, 2014). A German blogger, who interviewed her, said that she referred to the Ukrkoopspilka building on the Maidan.

A Maidan activist stated that other protesters told him during the massacre that a sniper in Hotel Ukraina was shooting at both protesters and the Berkut police (Vladimir, 2014). Andrii Parubii, the commander of the Maidan Self-Defense during the Maidan, also admitted this. He said in his BBC interview that they found sniper positions and bullet casings in Hotel Ukraina. But like Musiy, he claimed that Russian snipers perpetrated the massacre (Video, 2023b, 49:55). This study has not found any evidence of Russian snipers on the Maidan during the massacre. The official investigation and the Maidan massacre trial verdict stated that the investigation determined that Russian agents were not involved in the massacre (see Chapter 8).

There are such eyewitness testimonies about Hotel Ukraina snipers by various foreign journalists. A Belgian VRT TV reporter stated that a bullet striking a tree near protesters in his widely broadcast video, which was filmed from Hotel Ukraina, was fired from behind the protesters (VRT 2015). An Italian photographer said that he witnessed shooting from the 5th or 6th floor of the Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina and that he filmed a Maidan protester who realized that the shooting was from the back (Maydan, 2018; Video, 2023b).

Similarly, a New York Times journalist tweeted on March 6, 2014: “Breakfast on the Maidan. In background is the Hotel Ukraine, from where snipers fired on opposition...” (C.J. Chivers, 2014). A CNN reporter said that the Maidan protesters were killed by snipers on Hotel Ukraina roof (CNN, 2014). This journalist suggested that they were

government snipers, contrary to all the evidence. The official investigation, the Maidan massacre trial verdict, and this study did not reveal any evidence of government snipers in this hotel.

An ICTV journalist said that his Ukrainian TV channel filmed the video showing a sniper shooting from Hotel Ukraina window. He stated that at least one of the snipers was shooting from the top floors of this hotel (Fakty, 2021).

Another Belgian TV journalist says that there were armed people in Hotel Ukraina shortly after the shooting started in the morning. One person with an automatic assault rifle and in a helmet came to his hotel room saying “snipers.” A Polish TV journalist also stated that an armed person in a helmet came to his Hotel Ukraina room and asked who was there. He also said that his hotel room was thoroughly searched in the evening. Both journalists do not mention any uniforms or government forces affiliation of these armed people in the hotel (Maydan, 2019; Video, 2023b).

The ZDF correspondent Britta Hilpert said that the protesters broke into their Hotel Ukraina room and then were shooting. The ZDF correspondent said that the armed Maidan activists stopped their shooting from the ZDF hotel room when their commander came, and that he was angry and commanded the shooters to stop and move because “the press should not be drawn into it” (ZDF, 2014). She referred to the ZDF video which shows Volodymyr Parasiuk retrieving his armed company members from the room of Hotel Ukraina at 10:22 am.

Several wounded Maidan protesters also stated in the media and social media that snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations were shooting them and other Maidan protesters or that they witnessed snipers there. Since the absolute majority of the wounded Maidan activists testified the same at the Maidan massacre trial and the investigation, this suggests that many wounded protesters and the media simply did not report publicly such evidence of the false-flag Maidan massacre.

For example, Serhiy Trapezun stated in his Ukrainian TV interview that he and other Maidan protesters in the same group did not expect that they would be shot in the back (TSN, 2014b). In his another interview, he showed a bullet impact mark in the spot that Ushnevych was killed when their group took cover behind the wall, which shielded them from Berkut in front (Fakty, 2016). Trapezun also said that there was a talk that Ushnevych was shot from a handgun from bushes near Arkada

and that he himself was wounded not by Berkut but by a “sniper” from Hotel Ukraina or a building nearby (Oleksandr, 2016). He pointed out that the snipers, who shot him and other protesters, were located in a sector ranging from Hotel Ukraina to Bank Arkada, and included also Horodetsky Street buildings in between them. Trapezun said that he saw flashes in a hotel window on the fourth floor when he fell on the ground, and he pointed towards a Hotel Ukraina room as a location of the shooter (Fakty, 2016). He gave a similar testimony for the official investigation. In his Israeli media interview during his medical treatment there, Trapezun said that he saw snipers shooting at the Maidan activists from Hotel Ukraina roof and from a hotel room (Slutskaya, 2014). In his ICTV interview, he indicated that Roman Varenytsia was shot dead from a similar direction (Fakty, 2016).

Volodymyr Honcharovsky, who was wounded in his back when he was filmed in Zelenyi Front video at 9:50 am, stated in his interview from a German hospital that the protesters there were shot from behind and that he himself was wounded in the back, i.e., from Maidan-controlled areas, such as Hotel Ukraina and Zhovtnevyi Palace. Nobody was charged with his attempted murder (Art, 2014).

Roman Tityk who was in that group that was massacred there said in his interview that some suspicious people among the protesters, specifically the person in black, tried to lure them to the place where they were killed and wounded (Pol'sha, 2014). The same protestor in black and with the gas mask was seen in 10:18–10:19 am while running with members of the far-right-linked group of snipers into Hotel Ukraina (AFP, 2014; Video, 2023a). In a documentary and his interview, a Maidan activist from the Lviv Region identified himself as that person. But he claimed that he went first ahead because he wanted to see positions from which the fire was coming after many protesters were massacred in the same area and on the opposite side of the street, and he denied that there were any shooters at the hotel in spite that many protesters in that group stated the opposite (UKRLIFE.TV, 2014). The insider knowledge of actual snipers and the knowledge of snipers in the Maidan positions about this luring make this seemingly irrational behavior rational.

Anton Lubianytsky, who was filmed in the same video being shot when he was running to the wall at 9:50 am, said in his Ukrainian 1+1 TV channel interview that one of the shots that wounded him there came from Hotel Ukraina, while another was from the opposite direction, such as Bank Arkada (TSN, 2014c). Oleh Sukhinsky, who was also filmed by

BBC and in other videos right before and right after his wounding, said that he saw that he was shot from Hotel Ukraina (Stulen' et al., 2014).

Yuri Kravchuk showed in his Ukrainian TV interview that he was wounded in his right hand when his hand was behind a tree and that this made it physically impossible to make such a shot from Berkut positions in front. He said that the gunshot came from a Bank Arkada direction because of the wound location and pieces of his jacket that he then saw flying in front of his eyes (Fakty, 2016; Video, 2023b, 34:48–35:11).

Roman Kotliarevsky, the wounded Maidan medic, said that his position at the moment of his shooting and a steep wound in the side back area of his right thigh indicated that he was shot from Bank Arkada or a roof of one of the buildings there, i.e., on Horodetsky Street (Vagner, 2015). He also stated that he was wounded with 7.62 mm bullet and that the investigation in his shooting was dragged out and that no specific suspects were identified.

Similarly, several relatives of the killed Maidan protesters testified about Hotel Ukraina snipers. The head of the organization of families of the Maidan victims of this massacre stated that Vasyl Aksenin, his father, was killed from Hotel Ukraina and showed that his father was shot there in the right side at a steep direction from this hotel. Mother of Eduard Hrynevych said that snipers were shooting from above when he went to attack the Berkut police. A Volyn TV documentary that included her interview stated, presumably based on information provided by Maidan protesters, that he was killed by a sniper from Hotel Ukraina (Suspil'ne, 2016).

Wife of Volodymyr Melnychuk said in her BBC and Ukrainian TV interviews that she witnessed his killing. She said that he was shot from Hotel Ukraina based on the source of the gunshot sound. A sister of Leonid Poliansky, a killed Maidan protester, said that the trial documents show that he was killed from the 6th floor of Hotel Ukraina (Suspil'ne, 2021).

His son stated based on evidence that he collected that his father, Serhii Bondarchuk, might have been killed in the back from Hotel Ukraina, and that the investigation, which concluded that he was shot with a 7.62 mm caliber bullet, did not want to consider this location of the shooters (Chimiris, 2014a). His story was featured in the Reuters report concerning the government investigation of the massacre, but the location of the shooters in the hotel was not mentioned in the Reuters story (Stecklow & Akymenko, 2014).

Father of Ustym Holodniuk, a former policeman, initially stated that his investigation based on measurements of shooting and position of the body and wounds pointed towards a gunshot from Zhovtnevyi Palace. He also concluded that the protesters were lured to the spot of their execution and that this was a professionally organized operation but blamed the former government for the massacre (Nebesna, 2015a).

Similarly, some of the protestors, who witnessed the killings and brought their killed and wounded counterparts to the hotel, publicly stated that they knew about snipers in Hotel Ukraina at the time of the massacre. For example, Andrii Ostrozhny said that the snipers from this hotel were shooting to prevent them from evacuating protesters who were shot. He was filmed in various videos and photos carrying the shot protesters to the hotel from at least 9:55 am till most of the killings were over. Ostrozhny also confirmed that snipers were killing the protesters from Zhovtnevyi Palace and the top of the Arkada building (Mityasova et al., 2014).

Oleh Tomashchuk said that he witnessed snipers shooting from Hotel Ukraina when he helped to carry a wounded protestor. This was at 10:13 am based on the content of the Zelenyi Front video which shows him in a blue helmet doing this. In a German ARD Monitor interview, Mykola Tokar said that the protesters near the Berkut barricade came under fire from eight or nine floor of Hotel Ukraina (Todesschüsse, 2014). He was filmed in that area of the killings in the Zelenyi Front video before and after 10:20 am (see Video, 2023a).

A Maidan nurse said that a Maidan activist warned her about a sniper in a window of Hotel Ukraina. He told her that he saw this sniper shooting. She said that he helped her to cross the Instytutska Street and away from the area of shooting by the snipers, and that this activist was Vitalii Markiv (Hromadske, 2020). He was later sentenced in Italy for killing an Italian journalist in the war in Donbas but released on appeal and returned to Ukraine following a public campaign led by the Ukrainian government.

Volodymyr Pastushok, a fellow member of the Volhynian company of the Maidan Self-Defense, said that Oleksandr Khrapachenko was killed by a sniper from Hotel Ukraina with a rifle bullet (UKRLIFE.TV, 2014). He was photographed next to Khrapachenko at the moment of his killing and testified at the Maidan massacre trial. Pastushok stated that investigators said that they lost his initial testimony and tried him to change it and to say that Khrapachenko was shot not from Hotel Ukraina but he refused (Nataliya, 2014a).

A Maidan medic stated in a 5 Kanal TV documentary that several snipers on the roof of Hotel Ukraina shot at the protesters in front of Zhovtnevyi Palace (5 Kanal, 2014a). This medic was filmed in that area during the massacre. He also stated that the protesters were shot by expanding bullets. Another Maidan protester said in an STB TV interview that snipers shot from Hotel Ukraina (see Video, 2023b).

A testimony by a member of the Volhynian Company of the Maidan Self-Defense reported direction of wounds, and time-stamped photos show that Oleksandr Khrapachenko from this unit was killed and another person wounded at 11:27 am near the Berkut barricade on Instytutska Street by shots fired from Hotel Ukraina. The report by Maidan NGOs and lawyers stated that the government investigation named Khrapachenko as one of at least three protesters killed from this hotel. Mother of Viktor Smolensky said that, based on information that she received, he was also killed from Hotel Ukraina (Hromads'ke, 2015).

Another Ukrainian Maidan supporter showed in his YouTube video that the shooting was from Hotel Ukraina (Hrazhdanin, 2015). Maidan protesters, who were near Maksym Shymko during his killing near Hotel Ukraina, said that he was shot by a sniper from a roof (TK, 2020). A female Ukrainian journalist showed in her Argentinian TV interview that there were snipers on the roof of Hotel Ukraina (Televisión, 2015). A female Maidan activist in her Bild interview also noted that snipers shot from the roof of Hotel Ukraina. A Maidan protester said that Maidan activists were constantly looking for snipers on this hotel during the massacre and noticed movement there (see Video, 2023b).

A Maidan protester showed a bullet hole in a shield of another protester and stated that this activist was shot from a top and a side direction from Hotel Ukraina (Ivanna, 2014a). A description by an eyewitness about a protester killed in his head from Hotel Ukraina matches the place, the time, and circumstances of the Nazar Voitovych killing. The same eyewitness, who was filmed in various videos during the massacre in those areas with a candle in his hand, said that he saw four protesters killed in that area of Instytutska Street and two others killed near a stairway leading to Zhovtnevyi Palace. In another interview, he stated that the protesters were mostly shot from high positions, such as Hotel Ukraina (Fakty ICTV, 2014a).

Another Maidan activist eyewitness testified that he saw a few protesters shot by “a sniper” from a Hotel Ukraina window. He said that he saw muzzle flashes and window curtains moving in this window during

the gunshots. He pointed to a window in the same hotel room, which was identified by the government investigation as being occupied by a Svoboda deputy and from which ICTV and BBC showed snipers shooting the Maidan activists. The location of snipers there is also independently confirmed by yet another Maidan activist (Ivanna, 2014b; Video, 2023b, 27:26).

There are similar interviews by Maidan activists, including wounded, and by journalists about snipers in Bank Arkada, Zhovtnevyi Palace, and other Maidan-controlled locations. A member of the Maidan Self-Defense showed that the shooting was from Hotel Ukraina, Zhovtnevyi Palace, a Hrushevsky/Muzeiny streets buildings direction, and from a direction that matches Bank Arkada (Ukrinform, 2014). A Maidan protester, an Afghanistan war veteran, pointed out in his Spiegel interview locations of snipers in Hotel Ukraina, the Music Conservatory, and Zhovtnevyi Palace. He noted that the gunshots had “whipping” sound which did not match Kalashnikov shots but rifle shots (Spiegel, 2014).

A protester suggested that he was wounded from a Bank Arkada direction and from Hotel Ukraina. Another protester pointed out in a German documentary that there were “snipers” on Hotel Ukraina (Nebesna, 2015b). Volodymyr Shulhan testified that he and other Maidan activists realized during their advance that “a sniper” was shooting at them from the top of Hotel Ukraina after a protester next to him was killed and another wounded. He said that this protester was killed in the head near stairs to Zhovtnevyi Palace, and another was wounded in the right shoulder before Ihor Dmytriv was killed (Kalus’ke, 2014). Mykhailo Khomik, who is seen in the videos at the place and time of the killing of Ihor Dmytriv, stated that Dmytriv was shot from this hotel (Maydan, 2014).

Maksym Hoshovsky, a Maidan activist, who was filmed in many videos of the massacre with a Ukrainian flag on his shoulders, stated that one of the “snipers” was at the top of Bank Arkada building, which also includes an entrance to the subway. He stated that he saw one sniper shooting at the protestors from Arkada (Svobodacom, 2015). A Maidan Self-Defense member interviewed by an Irish TV correspondent in Hotel Ukraina said that he saw three protesters killed from the roof of a metro station, which is located in the same building as Arkada bank (Snipers, 2014).

As other testimonies of the Maidan activists and videos show, the Maidan Self-Defense specifically checked Zhovtnevyi Palace for any snipers after the Berkut company’s retreat shortly before and minutes

after these “snipers” appeared there but reported that there were none. For instance, this was stated by Hoshovsky, who was filmed in various videos in that area in the beginning of the massacre, and by a Polish reporter who filmed inside this building and on the roof and interviewed Maidan protesters within minutes after the snipers or spotters were located there and protesters were killed from Zhovtnevi (Hoshovskyy, 2016). Many eyewitnesses among the Maidan protesters reported presence of at least three snipers on Zhovtnevi Palace roof and its upper floor (UKRLIFE.TV, 2014).

A Maidan activist stated in his Radio Svoboda interview that the first Maidan protesters were massacred by snipers in Bank Arkada and that protesters were also shot in the back from Hotel Ukraina (Radio, 2014a). Another Maidan activist showed that protesters hiding behind a wall near Bank Arkada were shot from the back. He pointed out that shooters from Zhovtnevi Palace were killing wounded protesters during their evacuation. He showed also locations of snipers at the top of Bank Arkada and Hotel Ukraina (Wounded, 2014a). Another Maidan protester stated that there were “snipers” in both Zhovtnevi Palace and Hotel Ukraina. He said that they were shooting from a hotel room and changing their positions in the hotel (Video, 2023b, 34:15).

There were several other Maidan protesters publicly reporting snipers shooting protesters from Bank Arkada building in their media interviews or on social media. For instance, Mark Paslawsky, a Ukrainian diaspora graduate of the US Military Academy at West Point, in his twitter posts during the massacre mentioned witnessing snipers at both Bank Arkada and Hotel Ukraina shooting many protesters (Paslawsky, 2014a, 2014b). A lawyer for the killed protesters confirmed that there was evidence of the shooting from Bank Arkada, but the government investigation denied that there were any snipers there (Utro, 2014).

Similarly, a Polish TVP journalist based in Hotel Ukraina during the massacre stated that he saw one of the “snipers” on the roof of Arkada and that their producer was shot from this building’s roof in his Hotel Ukraina room, judging by the direction of a bullet strike. The TVP journalist said that snipers in Bank Arkada were shooting the protesters and that he saw many protesters shot there (Po, 2014). Two Maidan protesters pointed out locations of snipers on the roof of Horodetsky Street buildings. Another Maidan protester from the Volyn Region referred to a sniper in a building under construction in the Hrushevsky Street (Muzeinyi Lane) area (Nataliya, 2014b; Video, 2023b).

Olesya Zhukovska, a female Maidan medic, showed her entry wound location and her position during her reported wounding on the Maidan. The locations of entry and exit wounds and her location and the position that she showed in her NTV and other TV interviews indicate that she was shot from the Main Post Office, which was the Right Sector headquarters (Sulkhanov, 2015). However, a Ukrainian journalist stated that the wounding was staged. This Ukrainian journalist reported that a Maidan activist informed him that her wounding was staged by the Maidan Self-Defense leadership. Zhukovska de facto admitted in a prank phone call by this journalist, who told her that he was calling on behalf of the former Maidan Self-Defense head Parubii, that she was not wounded and that her surgery was misrepresented as her wound (TK Media, 2020). The prosecution did not charge anyone for wounding this female medic, and the Maidan massacre trial refused to classify her as a victim (see Video, 2023b and this chapter).

This is consistent with her tweet before the Maidan massacre that she was hospitalized, and her statements that she did not notice that she was shot through her neck and not falling from the supposed bullet impact and tweeting right after this. This is also consistent with her wound size and shape which looked in TV reports and photos like surgical and not a large exit bullet wound and with her tweeting and giving numerous interviews within a day of the massacre.

This famous Maidan female medic was turned into the Maidan “icon” by the Ukrainian and Western media and politicians. Her wounding was publicized by numerous Ukrainian and Western media and attributed to the government snipers or the Berkut police. She tweeted that she was dying two minutes after her staged wounding. This tweet was retweeted almost 5 thousand times and was reported at face value by the major media in many countries (Zhukovskaya, 2014).

A Maidan protester stated in his Radio Svoboda interview that he and other protesters came under fire from Hotel Ukraina when they were evacuating wounded protesters. He was filmed in several videos doing such an evacuation during the Maidan massacre. He showed that the snipers shot at them from a top left part of this hotel. He pointed out that they came under crossfire from Bank Arkada, Hotel Ukraina, and the Cabmin Club (Lashchenko, 2014; Video, 2023b, 38:38). Yet another Maidan activist, who filmed the start of the massacre, showed locations of snipers in Bank Arkada, Hotel Ukraina, and Muzeinyi Lane buildings (Video, 2014, 2023a).

Oleksandr Tonsky also showed that he was wounded from a building on Muzeinyi Lane, 12 (Okhrimenko, 2014). A video operator stated that gunshots were reported from the same Muzeinyi Lane building (Nikita, 2014). Serhiy Asavalyuk, a senior police commander, stated that their snipers were deployed on the Instytutska Street after appearance of unidentified persons with weapons. He is not charged with any involvement in the Maidan massacre.

A Ukraina TV journalist, who filmed the Berkut special company members and members of other government forces units there, said in his media interview that they reported of being under fire from Hotel Ukraina and that government snipers arrived after their request for help (Telekanal, 2015). Anatoliy Strelchenko, the Omega special Internal Troops unit commander, stated that his unit of government snipers arrived to check for snipers in Hotel Ukraina and to neutralize them. The Omega commander pointed out that the Cabmin Club next to the Berkut barricade also came under fire, most likely from Zhovtnevyi Palace but also possibly from Hotel Ukraina. He is also not charged with the Maidan massacre. But the Ukraina TV video, which was filmed by this journalist and showed the Omega commander and the Omega unit of snipers, was posted on this journalist's YouTube channel with the title "Death Squad" (Roman, 2014).

In his Ukrainian media interview, this commander of Omega unit of the Internal Troops confirmed that they had information and observed themselves that on February 20 both Maidan protesters and the police were killed and wounded from Hotel Ukraina. He also confirmed that the shooters and spotters were also stationed in the Music Conservatory, Zhovtnevyi Palace, Kinopalats, Muzeinyi Lane, and other nearby buildings controlled by the Maidan. He stated that his Omega unit observed Maidan activists armed with hunting rifles and Kalashnikovs in these areas, and it came under live ammunition fire. The Omega commander also confirmed that groups of the Maidan protesters started first using live ammunition during the "peaceful march" on February 18 and that the fire in the Trade Union building on the Maidan started on the floors controlled by the Right Sector (Khripun, 2015).

The Omega commander and an Internal Troops commander in charge of such special units stated that they received orders to target snipers at Hotel Ukraina and other locations and had permission to shoot at armed protesters (Fakty ICTV, 2014c, 2014d). A former Berkut officer said that

a sniper that accompanied the Berkut special company had a task to look for a Right Sector sniper in Hotel Ukraina (Sergienko, 2014).

A senior Berkut commander stated that hired shooters shot from Hotel Ukraina and the Music Conservatory and that he himself was wounded (24 Kanal, 2014). He is not charged with involvement in the massacre. Similarly, commander of the Alfa snipers unit of the Security Service of Ukraine said that they observed people on the roofs of Hotel Ukraina and Zhovtnevyi Palace during the massacre. They also observed and reported people, who apparently covertly carried weapons in various places. He said that his Alfa unit of snipers noticed gunshot impacts on the roofs, probably warning shots by other government units, when people were moving there. This commander of the Alfa snipers identified Hotel Ukraina as the most likely location of the shooters (Tvi, 2014). The government investigation determined that this unit did not massacre the Maidan protesters.

Similarly, then the head of the Donetsk SBU Alfa during the Maidan said that during the massacre they received information that snipers in buildings surrounding the Maidan and Maidan barricades were shooting Maidan protesters. He stated that afterwards they received information that the head of the Maidan Self-Defense and a future member of the Ukrainian parliament led some persons into the buildings to take positions on the roofs and then evacuated them. He also confirmed that the SBU Alfa snipers were deployed to locate the snipers in these buildings but when the SBU snipers arrived the snipers in the buildings were already gone. He said that the SBU snipers found bullet casings and other signs of presence of these non-government snipers there (Video, 2023b; Yuri, 2017).

An edited version of the SBU Alfa sniper team's radio communications intercept was posted on YouTube on the day of the massacre with its content and added photos of the massacre misrepresented to claim that these were the killers (Dmitriy, 2014). It was swiftly used by Ukrainian politicians, including the head of the parliamentary commission, and the media as key evidence that these SBU snipers killed the protesters. "Miron" stated that this highly publicized version was also cut and did not include their reports of civilians carrying weapons in bags in the European Square (Shevchenko, 2014). The time-stamped version includes such cut-out parts in the beginning and the end, but some key time periods during the massacre are missing there also.

A Maidan activist stated that his friend intercepted and recorded on Maidan a radio-exchange of a group of snipers. A Maidan Self-Defense company commander was informed about this recording, but he disregarded this information which could have enabled to locate the shooters. The radio communication by this group of shooters was detected until the following day (Guerra, 2014). The content of this radio communication shows that they were not government snipers and were shooting at the Maidan activists on a command. The government investigation simply ignored this audio recording.

A Maidan activist said in a YouTube video that he shot the Berkut police from a Kalashnikov assault rifle on the Independence Square (Maidan) and captured a sniper on the 5th floor of the Ukrainian House (ProPolitiku, 2014). A Life TV journalist noted that he saw some Maidan protesters with Saiga version of Kalashnikov assault rifles during the massacre (Maydan, 2016). A Lviv protester stated that he saw on Hrushevsky Street after the massacre a group of Right Sector members armed with rifles wrapped in cloth and with Kalashnikov assault rifles hidden under their jackets (RTVE, 2014). Mykola Tokar, a Maidan protestor, said that holes in shields of protestors were from pellets, Kalashnikov assault rifles, and larger size caliber. These types and calibers of the ammunition are consistent with hunting rifles and hunting versions of Kalashnikov assault rifles used by the concealed armed groups of the Maidan snipers (Aleksandr, 2014).

A Ukrainian journalist noted that she heard a gunshot one or two floors above her in Hotel Ukraina on February 20 and that the Maidan Self-Defense was searching for a “shooter” there all day (Ukraine, 2016). Another Maidan protester said in his Radio Svoboda interview that there were snipers in Hotel Ukraina and that Maidan protesters asked the hotel administration to provide information concerning guests and checked the hotel (Radio, 2014b).

In addition to several mentioned above, many other Maidan activists stated in the media and social media that snipers in Hotel Ukraina were captured by the Maidan forces. Andrii Ostrozhy, a Maidan activist, said that a sniper in Zhovtnevyi Palace disappeared, while a sniper on the 10th floor of Hotel Ukraina was apprehended. According to an eyewitness account by another Maidan activist, he saw near this hotel that a person in black was carried out, and he was told that this person was captured in the hotel in one of the rooms booked by foreigners and was beaten. He implied that this was a sniper (Video, 2023b).

A Maidan eyewitness testified that a “sniper” on the 8th floor of Hotel Ukraina was probably “pulled apart” and that a “sniper” on the 2nd floor was escorted from the hotel under a blanket, put into a car, and his whereabouts are unknown. Another Maidan protester also said in his Ukrainian media interview that a sniper in Hotel Ukraina was captured but refused to reveal more detailed information about this sniper (see Video, 2023b, 51:55). A different Maidan protester suggested that two snipers in Hotel Ukraina and Zhovtnevyi Palace were captured (Oleksandr, 2014). A Maidan protester and Afghanistan war veteran noted that one sniper was captured in Hotel Ukraina but another continued to shoot afterwards. He also said that another sniper was captured in Zhovtnevyi Palace along with his rifle and ammunition (Wounded, 2014b). Another person from the Maidan said that there was a talk that a sniper was caught in the Trade Union building (Video, 2023b).

A Maidan medic, who treated wounded Maidan activists on the Maidan, said that he had information from Afghanistan war veterans that two snipers, who were shooting the Maidan activists from the Finbank and Kyivmiskbud buildings, were neutralized. He also received information about a sniper in Hotel Ukraina and another sniper, who was shooting from the roof of Zhovtnevyi Palace. A Maidan activist stated that there were most snipers in Hotel Ukraina and three snipers on the roof of Zhovtnevyi Palace, and that they killed two of these snipers, while another sniper disappeared (see Video, 2023b, 53:08). A leader of Spilna Sprava, a Maidan organization, said that one of the snipers was killed in Hotel Ukraina (Wilson, 2014, 88–90).

Orest Karakevych, a Maidan protester, said that he was informed that the Right Sector members were absent during the massacre, because they received advance warning from their leadership (Novyk, 2014). A Maidan activist said that the Right Sector had its own armed group among several Maidan groups of the armed protesters, primarily with hunting rifles. On February 18–20, 2014, one of these groups shot 8 Berkut and Internal Troops members, and another 12, in particular, from the Trade Union building and then from the conservatory (Guerra, 2014).

A Kyiv leader of the Patriot of Ukraine, a paramilitary wing of the Social National Assembly, stated on Facebook that he had a firsthand knowledge that the Maidan Self-Defense members stormed a suspected sniper’s room in Hotel Ukraina. He said that the hotel staff told him that Svoboda deputies reserved hotel rooms on the upper floors of the hotel during the massacre and that this sniper was shooting from one of

such rooms. He also alleged that Petro Poroshenko, one of the leaders of the Maidan opposition who became the president of Ukraine, helped to whisk away this sniper, who used a name common in the Caucasus region (see Katchanovski, 2015). The BBC investigation report stated that courts blocked requests by lawyers of the Maidan massacre victims to obtain lists of people who booked these hotel rooms used by snipers (Gatehouse, 2015).

The former Maidan Self-Defense commander said that he learned that the snipers, who were captured by him and other Maidan activists, would be removed along with captured Internal Troops members by Maidan leaders and that he along with other protesters blocked a bus with them but they were released and escorted by foot by Maidan leaders. The former district leader of the Right Sector in Kyiv suggested that the leadership of this far-right organization and one of its paramilitary units helped to remove snipers along with captured Internal Troops members from the Maidan in a bus. Their testimonies were corroborated by videos that showed such events (Video, 2023a, 01:22:38; 2023b, 1:00:27).

The former Georgian military commander stated that Georgian snipers were involved in the Maidan massacre. He said that he had their names and their other data (PROTV, 2014; Video, 2023b, 55:13). Mykola Azarov, the former prime minister of Ukraine during the Maidan, stated that his exile organization in Russia knew names of two Lithuanian snipers who were on the Maidan (Nikolay, 2017). A Berkut officer said that he had information that three snipers from the Baltic States were detained by the government forces (Video, 2023b).

Oleh Tsariov, the ex-member of the Ukrainian parliament from the Party of Regions, testified during the special meeting of the UN Security Council concerning the Maidan that he received information from the Security Service of Ukraine during the Maidan that Georgian snipers participated in the massacre. A Polish member of the European parliament stated that he had information about the involvement *inter alia* of Poles during the Maidan massacre. But he did not know whether they themselves or snipers hired by them shot (Video, 2023b, 57:26).

Each of these testimonies concerning the Maidan snipers is corroborated by at least one other independent source, and typically multiple independent sources, including over 100 witness interviews, statements, and reports during the massacre itself concerning snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, trial and investigation testimonies of the absolute majority of wounded Maidan protesters, synchronized videos,

and forensic medical and ballistic examinations. Most of these testimonies are by Maidan activists and Western and Ukrainian pro-Maidan journalists who have no rational incentive to lie about this because such information implicates the Maidan forces in the massacre of their own Maidan protesters (see Chapter 3 and 5, Video, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2023d, 2023e, 2023f).

There were also hundreds of interviews and reports by eyewitnesses in the media and social media that there were snipers in buildings without identifying specific buildings and that they shot the Maidan activists. Therefore, the Maidan massacre became almost synonymous with the massacre perpetrated by snipers. The Berkut police on the ground with Kalashnikov assault rifles and in the open do not fit any definition of snipers, i.e., professional snipers or shooters shooting precisely from hidden positions. However, the government investigation and Maidan victims' lawyers denied at the Maidan massacre trial and numerous media interviews that there were such snipers.

The witness testimonies about killings of Maidan protesters by snipers in government-controlled buildings are not specific and not corroborated by videos, forensic medical examinations, and other primary evidence. The same concerns the massacre by the Berkut police with some exceptions that are due to lack of evidence or contradictory evidence. Nearly all such witness testimonies are by Maidan activists and pro-Maidan journalists who all have rational political interest to implicate the government forces in the massacre of the Maidan protesters.

There are no corroborated specific testimonies of massacre orders by Yanukovych, his government ministers and commanders of Berkut, the Security Service of Ukraine, and the Internal Troops, the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the media, and the social media. Numerous claims of such orders in the media and social media are allegations or speculations which were not based on any specific information and made by people who were not eyewitnesses.

For example, this concerns numerous claims that Yanukovych fled his residency in Mezhyhiria near Kyiv on February 19 and then Kyiv and Ukraine after the massacre because he ordered the massacre of the Maidan activists. The Yanukovych trial in absentia on state treason charges revealed various witness testimonies that he evacuated from his residence in Mezhyhiria on February 19 because there was an information about plan by the Right Sector and other Maidan activists to seize it. Various witness testimonies and other evidence revealed at the Yanukovych

treason trial show that he fled from Kyiv on February 21 and then from Ukraine not because of his responsibility for the Maidan massacre but because of a number of assassinations attempts by the Maidan forces, in particular the far-right, and after their attempts to capture him and his residence near Kyiv and likely execute him (Katchanovski, 2020, 2023a, 2023b).

Witnesses testified at this trial that right after the Maidan massacre the presidential motorcade was shot at a checkpoint, which was manned by activists with Right Sector and Svoboda flags and that the bullets hit one of the cars and a gun of one of the Yanukovych bodyguards. Helicopter pilots, who flew Yanukovych in Ukraine after the massacre, testified that the air traffic controllers relayed them an order from Maidan leaders to land the helicopter with Yanukovych under threat of its shot-down by military planes. The witness testimonies also referred to information received by his security personnel about a plan involving Svoboda activists to assassinate him during a congress in Kharkiv where he flew after the Maidan massacre, and then on the road near Melitopol (see Katchanovski, 2020, 2023a, 2023b; Roschenko, 2018).

Leonid Kravchuk, the first president of Ukraine, revealed that he received information about a plot to assassinate Yanukovych around the time of the Maidan massacre. He stated that this plan was called “Ceausescu” after the last name of the last communist leader of Romania, who was assassinated by soldiers soon after snipers massacred the anti-government protesters in a false-flag operation (U Kravchuka, 2018). The former Romanian president, prime minister, and a number of other leaders of the “Romanian revolution” were charged by the Romanian prosecutors in 2018 and 2019 with crimes against humanity for using deliberate disinformation and diversion right after they seized power in 1989 to provoke false-flag mass killings (RFE/RL, 2018).

The Ukrainian parliament voted to remove Yanukovych from the position of the president of Ukraine under the false pretext that he abandoned his presidential duties and fled Ukraine because of his responsibility for the massacre. But the decision violated the Ukrainian Constitution and the vote lacked constitutional majority, while many deputies from the Yanukovych Party of Regions and the Communist Party voted under threat of violence, in particular, by the far-right. For example, the commander of the far-right-linked group of the Maidan snipers admitted that his group forced certain members of the parliament to participate in the votes to dismiss Yanukovych and his government and to elect the

Maidan leaders in their place (Chapter 3; Katchanovski, Forthcoming; Kovalenko, 2014).

4.2 CONFESIONS BY 14 SELF-ADMITTED MEMBERS OF MAIDAN SNIPER GROUPS

Moreover, 14 self-admitted members of Maidan sniper groups testified in the media and social media that the massacre of the police or protesters was perpetrated by the Maidan snipers. They include testimonies by several far-right activists and members of the far-right-linked special Maidan company of snipers in the Ukrainian media, a BBC program, the social media, and the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine investigation and testimonies by seven self-admitted Georgian members of Maidan sniper groups for the Maidan massacre trial and investigation, and their interviews in American, Italian, and Israeli TV documentaries and Macedonian and Russian media.

Volodymyr Parasiuk, a special Maidan company commander, confirmed that his unit—which included armed protesters with experience fighting in armed conflicts—was based in the Music Conservatory building at the time of the massacre (Kovalenko, 2014). He de facto admitted in his various that his unit shot at the police (Schuller, 2015). Parasiuk denied any political or organizational affiliation by himself or his unit but said that he was a member of the far-right Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists in the past, a successor party of the Stepan Bandera faction of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. He said that he trained to shoot in its camps in the past. However, the presence of such a large armed unit at the Maidan could not be possible without its subordination to the Maidan Self-Defense or one of the political organizations of the Maidan opposition, and there is varied evidence of such links. Parasiuk admitted that his company was formed following negotiations with the Right Sector and that he later talked with representatives of Klitschko's UDAR Party.

On February 21, 2014, Parasiuk in a speech from the Maidan stage in presence of the Maidan leaders blamed Yanukovych for the Maidan massacre and gave him an ultimatum to resign by next morning and threatened the use of force if he would not resign. Parubii said this ultimatum was a decision made by “the institutional bodies of the Maidan” and it was adopted by a military council set up by the Maidan Self-Defense and the Right Sector on February 21 (Kalnysh, 2015). After playing a

key role in the violent overthrow of the Yanukovych government, Parasiuk served as a company commander in the Dnipro battalion, which was organized with the direct involvement of the Right Sector.

In a Lviv TV interview in 2014, Ivan Bubenchyk admitted that he was given a Kalashnikov assault rifle and shot at the police, first from behind the shields of the protesters during the police attack and then shortly before the police started to flee (Bubenchik, 2014; Katchanovski, 2015). In his other Ukrainian media interviews in 2016, he stated that he killed two policemen with his AK assault rifle from the Music Conservatory (Siiak, 2016). His shooting from this building and his joint photos and interviews with Volodymyr Parasiuk in the Music Conservatory building suggest that Bubenchyk was a member of the Parasiuk-led special company based there.

The name of Bubenchyk is included in the list of members of this far-right-linked company. This list was compiled by this Maidan company, obtained by the Prosecutor General Office investigation, and made public by a popular Ukrainian blogger and the Ukrainian media (Kto, 2020). The names and places of residence of two members of this sniper group matched the names and places of residence of two far-right Svoboda activists, who were from Galicia in Western Ukraine and participated in the Maidan.

Another link of this company to the far-right is Bubenchyk's statement that the Right Sector promised him more ammunition during the Maidan massacre of the protesters after he spent his ammunition shooting into the police from the Conservatory building. He also said that Yanukovych was supposed to be killed on February 20 (#BABYLON'13, 2016). The GPU charged him with felony of killings two police officers but then after intervention of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, who was one of the Maidan leaders, his charges were changed to a lesser crime, and he was released. The new charges were covered by a law that gave amnesty to the Maidan protesters.

This Maidan sniper joined the Dnipro battalion and became the commander of Zakhid-2 battalion, which was formed by a part of the Right Sector activists and Voluntary Ukrainian Corps (DUK) commanders during a split in these far-right organization and its paramilitary wing in fall 2016. Bubenchyk became one of the leaders of Radical Right Forces, the UPA, formed in February 2016 by a part of the Right Sector activists and DUK commanders, attempting to launch a new Maidan protest (Viktoriya, 2016).

In an interview with a Ukrainian Vesti newspaper, one of the Maidan self-admitted Maidan snipers said that he started firing on police from the Music Conservatory building around 6:00 am and saw about 10 other Maidan shooters shooting at the police from this building in the morning of February 20. This Maidan sniper said that he was among a group of about 20 protesters who were asked at around 6:00 pm on February 19 to come forward if they had shooting skills. He said that he used Saiga, a hunting version of Kalashnikov assault rifle. He stated that their guns were hidden at the Main Post Office (Chimiris, 2014b). This building was located directly across the street from the Music Conservatory, and it was occupied by the Right Sector at the time of the February 20 shootings. His reported service in the summer of 2014 in a volunteer battalion in a town near a sea most likely refers to the neo-Nazi-led Azov special police battalion, which was then based in Mariupol. This unit was organized and led in May 2014 by the neo-Nazi Social National Assembly (SNA) and Patriot of Ukraine, its paramilitary branch, which were a part of the Right Sector during Maidan.

In a BBC interview, one of the Maidan snipers based in the Music Conservatory said that he was recruited for such a mission at the end of January 2014. This sniper said that he was among a group of Maidan activists who were asked by “the Maidan security people” on February 19 to come forward if they had shooting skills and then given a choice of weapons, which included shotguns and Saiga rifles—which is based on the Kalashnikov assault rifle—before being told to take convenient positions in the Music Conservatory. He said that he was shooting at the police (Gatehouse, 2015).

Another Maidan activist confessed in a leaked video of his interrogation at the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine of providing his Saiga, a hunting version of a Kalashnikov assault rifle, to members of the far-right-linked Maidan company of snipers in the Music Conservatory to shoot the police. He also testified that he witnessed such shooting and that snipers in Hotel Ukraina shot the Maidan activists (Sharif, 2019; Video, 2023b).

Another Maidan sniper admitted in his Ukrainian media interview that he shot at the police with live ammunition on the Maidan. He was reportedly a KGB-trained sniper and an officer in the Alfa unit of the Security Service of Ukraine before the Euromaidan and one of top people in the security of the oligarchic Fatherland Party during the Euromaidan. He said that he shot and hit a person who was “titushka” and shot and hit a police water cannon on February 18, 2014. The self-admitted sniper did not mention any investigation about his shooting and his whereabouts during the February 20 massacre, but he served as an expert on Ukrainian

television about the Maidan massacre. He became a deputy head of the SBU Alfa after the Maidan with a calling sign based on the Right Sector name.

He was one of the commanders of the special Alfa group which was tasked with attacking first separatists in Luhansk and then Strelkov-led armed Russian nationalist group in Sloviansk. He was wounded and another Alfa officer killed by separatists on April 13, 2014, near Sloviansk after they discovered his advancing group. This was the first deadly firefight during the “Anti-Terrorist Operation” in Donbas. This admission provides another indication of the involvement of Fatherland in the Maidan massacre of the protesters and the police and a reason for its failed investigations (Butusov, 2016).

A member of the “Vikings” neo-Nazi group in the Right Sector during the Euromaidan admitted on the Ukrainska pravda forum and on his VK page that he killed two policemen on February 18, 2014, and that his associate, who was deputy leader of the “Vikings,” also killed two policemen on the same day from a revolver. They both served in the Ukrainian Voluntary Corps of the Right Sector during the war in Donbas (Olexiyovich, 2015). After this admission, this deputy Vikings commander was posthumously awarded Hero of Ukraine title by President Poroshenko for his service in a Right Sector paramilitary unit during the war in Donbas.

Several Georgians stated that they, along with others from Georgia, the Baltic States, and Ukraine, were members of the Maidan sniper groups. Six Georgians testified in American, Italian, Israeli, Macedonian, and the Russian media and for the Maidan massacre trial and investigation in Ukraine that they witnessed shooting by snipers from the far-right-linked Maidan company and by Georgian and Baltic snipers at police and the protesters from the Music Conservatory and Hotel Ukraina.

They testified that specific Maidan leaders, in particular, from the Fatherland Party and the Maidan Self-Defense, and former Georgian government leaders and commanders gave them orders and firearms to massacre both protesters and the police to stop a peace deal agreed upon by Yanukovych and the Maidan leaders. They said that they then saw on February 20, 2014, Maidan snipers from Georgia, the Baltic States, and the far-right Right Sector-linked Ukrainian group shooting from the Music Conservatory and Hotel Ukraina. One of them stated in a

US documentary that he shot protesters from Hotel Ukraina (Goroshinskij, 2019; InsideOver, 2017a, 2017b; MichaelRCaputo, 2022; Stephan, 2018).

The specific information given by them was generally consistent with various publicly available evidence concerning the Maidan massacre. This includes locations of many of the snipers in Hotel Ukraina and the Music Conservatory, exact calibers of firearms used to massacre protesters, the involvement of the far-right-linked special Maidan armed company under Parasiuk's command, and a well-known video of a Maidan leader who was filmed on February 18 evacuating a Maidan protester with a rifle.

One of the Georgians reported in the media that 50 Georgians were brought to Maidan and were in covert Maidan sniper units and that many of them later joined the Georgian legion and far-right-led formations, such as Azov and Aidar battalions. The same two Georgians, who said in the Italian TV documentary that they received orders and weapons to massacre both police and Maidan protesters, in long live interviews to one of the most popular Macedonian TV channels provided many more details about their background, their arrival and departure from Ukraine, and the Maidan massacre as a false-flag operation.

In particular, they said that they saw many top Maidan leaders and Saakashvili in Hotel Ukraina before February 18 and that they were taken by Parubii, the current head of the Ukrainian parliament, from the Boryspil airport to an Ushynsky Street apartment in Kyiv bypassing the border control. One of them said that he and other members of his group refused an order to shoot but that he witnessed shooting from the Music Conservatory and then Hotel Ukraina on February 20. Another Georgian said that there was shooting from the conservatory and his Hotel Ukraina room and that he saw Lithuanians shooting from a Hotel Ukraina window. They said that they and some other Georgians from one group left the hotel because it was dangerous to remain there and went to the Boryspil airport and flew to Tbilisi right after the massacre was over.

Alexander Revazishvilli, one of these Georgians, who stated in an Italian TV documentary that they were in the groups of Maidan snipers, said in his Macedonian TV interview that an adviser of then Georgian president selected him because he was a military sniper, gathered their group in the beginning of 2013, i.e., a year before the Maidan massacre, informed them that there would be a "coup" in Ukraine and that they traveled in March and September 2013 to the Independence Square (Maidan) in Kyiv to survey best positions for snipers and identified Hotel

Ukraina, the Music Conservatory, and Zhovtnevyi Palace as such. He stated that they again flew to Ukraine during the “Euromaidan” mass protesters in the end of January 2014 with a task of provoking the Berkut anti-riot police to use force against the Maidan protesters and spill blood of the protesters.

This Georgian said that in the morning of February 19 their group was ordered by one of the Maidan leaders from the Fatherland Party to move from the Georgian tent on the Maidan to the Music Conservatory and given SKS carbines and bullets. He also stated that he saw there a group of about 10 people, who included the Maidan special company commander and his father armed with Kalashnikov-based Saiga hunting carbine and with SKS carbine, and another group of Georgians who were accompanied by a former top Georgian military commander. The interviewee stated that all these groups and the said Maidan leader shot for about 10–15 minutes circa 7:30 am–8:00 am on February 20 from the Conservatory at both the Berkut police and the Maidan protesters following a command to do so by this Maidan leader.

This Georgian said that he then abandoned the Maidan and flew back to Georgia. He named several Georgian officials in the Saakashvili government, the said Maidan leader and several people whom he referred to as other snipers. He also described a former far-right American US Army sniper who called himself in a Ukrainian TV program a Right Sector adviser and an Azov battalion instructor. The Georgian stated that he and other two Georgians decided to go public and give interviews to the Italian and Macedonian television programs because they felt danger to their lives after several Georgians, whom he said were Maidan snipers or participated in these Maidan events, were killed in strange circumstances in Ukraine. He specifically named a Georgia-based Chechen killed by a car bomb in Kyiv, three Georgians who served in the neo-Nazi-led Azov regiment and were killed during the Donbas war, and two Georgians killed during the Maidan massacre.

The last name of the Georgian killed during the Maidan massacre in strange circumstances matches David Kipiani, whose body was reportedly found close to midnight on February 20 in a Maidan-controlled area far from the shooting. He was a member of the Georgian Party led by Mikheil Saakashvili, the former president of Georgia who became the governor of the Odesa Region in Ukraine in 2015. Killing of this Georgian protester on February 20 was not included in the charges against the Berkut, and circumstances of his killings have not been officially disclosed.

The same two Georgians in another media interview and in testimony to defense lawyers in the Maidan massacre trial stated that they were in groups of Georgian, Baltic, and Ukrainian snipers who shot both police and protesters from Hotel Ukraina and Music Conservatory on orders of a Maidan leader, whom they named. They confirmed their previous testimony and also said that there were other named commanders of Georgian sniper groups. They reportedly also produced copies of plane tickets as proof of their presence on the Maidan. In testimony to a Berkut lawyer for the Maidan massacre trial, one of these Georgians stated that a group of snipers in the Music Conservatory was headed by Pashynsky and that it included Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Georgians, and Poles (Veselov, 2018a, 2018b).

Since the Georgian interviewed by the Macedonian TV gave not only his name but also specific information about himself, said that he crossed the Ukrainian border at Kyiv airports in spring and fall 2013 using his real passport, and showed passport stamps, it would be easy for investigators, government officials, and journalists to verify his identity and his bombshell statements. This study cannot verify information concerning specific individuals named in these interviews because this academic study of the Maidan massacre analyzed this massacre from a political science perspective and not analyzes involvement of specific snipers and massacre organizers. But information, which is given by him about the specific locations of snipers, types, and calibers of firearms from which Maidan protesters and the police were shot, shooting of both police and the protesters from the Music Conservatory and Hotel Ukraina, involvement of the Right Sector-linked Maidan special company and elements of the Fatherland Party, and the Maidan massacre as a false-flag operation, is generally consistent with numerous publicly available evidence analyzed in this book.

Various self-styled “fact-checking” websites, the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine, Maidan victim lawyers, and with some exceptions, the Ukrainian media claimed that these Georgians were fake or actors. They did not produce any evidence in support of such claims, apart from the absence of Ukrainian border-crossing records by these Georgians during the Maidan, or certain inconsistencies, such as a spelling error in a document.

German ARD TV “factcheck” program propagated fake news that Alexander Revazishvili was in prison in Georgia during the Maidan massacre (Stöber, 2021). BBC Monitoring suggested that the Georgian snipers are fake because Revazishvili mistakenly identified another Georgian as himself wearing a cap in a Life TV report in a Georgian tent on

the Maidan. However, this video shows also another Georgian wearing a cap that hid his face (Pegov, 2016).

Moreover, the Maidan massacre trial in November 2021 admitted and examined a video of testimony by Alexander Revazishvilli, who confessed being a member of the Georgian group of Maidan snipers (Sudova, 2021). The Ukrainian border guard documents presented at the trial by the prosecution confirmed his identity and that he crossed the border into Ukraine in a Kyiv airport and back to Georgia in spring and fall 2013 shortly before the start of the Maidan.

Most of these Georgians provided their names, passport numbers, Ukrainian border stamps, copies of their plane tickets to Ukraine, their photos in Ukraine or the Georgian military, and other specific evidence in support of their testimonies. They said that they had entered Ukraine before the massacre with forged passports using false names and without border control. The head of the Georgian Legion admitted that the Georgian, with a spelling error in his Ministry of Defense, served as an adviser in this ministry (Myth, 2018).

Specific information that the self-admitted members of the Maidan sniper groups stated in their media interviews and testimonies for the Maidan massacre trial and investigation in Ukraine could have been investigated and easily verified or shown to be false by the official investigation, government officials, and journalists in Ukraine. The fact that this is not done is another dog that did not bark. This indirectly corroborates their statements.

The lack of government investigation in Ukraine of the statements by five Georgians, blocking of their testimony in a Maidan massacre trial by the Ukrainian government, and a campaign to denounce them as fakes or actors also suggest that they and their testimonies are real. There is another confirmation from Saakashvili military adviser that one of them served in the Georgian Defense Ministry's Council of Advisors and was known to this adviser. English-language errors in his ID were used to declare him fake, even though he stated that this ID was not from the official agency but from a covert "zonderkomanda" of Saakashvili which included ex-military and criminals. The commander of the Georgian Legion in Ukraine stated that Koba Nergadze "started to work at the Defense Ministry's Council of Advisors in 2012 through an interview process" (Myth, 2018).

In addition, the Israeli TV documentary showed that one of these Georgians was filmed on May 2, 2014, during the Odesa massacre in

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

Another Georgian confessed in a protocol of his interrogation by some of the Right Sector leaders that he was hired and deployed in an abandoned building near Maidan to shoot during the massacre. He was captured after the massacre, interrogated by the Right Sector, and released by one of the Maidan leaders (Zavorotnyi, 2016). This is consistent with testimonies by several Maidan activists that some snipers were captured during and immediately after the massacre, particularly in Hotel Ukraina, but then released by Maidan leaders (see Video, 2023b).

In contrast, there were no such admissions of the involvement in the Maidan massacre in the media or social media by the Berkut policemen, ex-police and SBU commanders and members, and ex-Yanukovych government ministers and other officials admitting their own involvement or other government forces involvement in the massacre of the protesters, witnessing such involvement, or getting such specific information from other witnesses. This includes both those charged with the massacre in Ukraine or in absentia and those who were not charged, in particular, those who continued to serve under the new Maidan governments. The same concerns involvement of any third force snipers in the massacre. The Maidan massacre trial verdict confirmed that there was no massacre order by Yanukovych and his government ministers and other government officials (see Chapter 8; Katchanovski, 2024).

Testimonies by hundreds of witnesses are summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Summary of witness testimonies concerning Maidan snipers

Interviews and statements after the Maidan massacre by over 300 witnesses, including over 100 TV and other video testimonies, concerning Maidan snipers/snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings, primarily Hotel Ukraina, and other evidence of the false-flag massacre	Video (2023b); Ukrainian and other media; social media
Over dozen witness interviews and statements about control and guard of Hotel Ukraina before, during, and after the massacre by the far-right Svoboda Party and other Maidan activists and about presence of the Maidan snipers in this hotel during the massacre	Video (2023b); Ukrainian and other media; social media
Five Maidan leaders and activists testified about advance knowledge of the Maidan massacre by specific leaders of Maidan oligarchic parties & far-right organizations	Video (2023b); Ukrainian media; social media
Seven Maidan politicians and activists testified concerning specific involvement of specific Maidan leaders in the massacre of the police and the Maidan activists	Video (2023b); Ukrainian media; social media
14 self-admitted members of Maidan sniper groups testified in the media and social media and for the Maidan massacre trial and investigation in Ukraine about specific involvement of themselves and/or other Maidan snipers and leaders in the massacre of the police and/or Maidan activists, including about such massacre orders	American, Italian, Israeli, Macedonian, Russian, and Ukrainian media; social media
Two leaders of the far-right Svoboda Party stated in their interviews that a Western government representative told them and other Maidan leaders a few weeks before the massacre that the Western governments would turn on the Yanukovych government after casualties among protesters would reach 100	Braty (2017, 94)

(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued)

Maidan opposition and then Maidan government leaders, such as Poroshenko and Parubii, publicly admitted that snipers from Hotel Ukraina and the Music Conservatory massacred the Maidan protesters. In an intercepted telephone call with the EU foreign affairs head, the Estonian minister of foreign affairs referred to a testimony by the head of the Maidan doctors that elements of the Maidan opposition perpetrated the massacre	Video (2023b)
Several dozen journalists and media reports from the media in more than dozen countries, including from CNN, New York Times, BBC, ARD, Bild, Spiegel, Radio Svoboda, TVP, 1+1, ICTV, and STB, reported after the massacre about witnessing snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, including shooting of Maidan protesters by these snipers, cited eyewitnesses among Maidan activists about such snipers, or based their reports on such testimonies	Video (2023b); media; social media
Testimonies about killings of Maidan protesters by Ukrainian government, Russian or other third force snipers and, with a few exceptions because of lack of evidence or contradictory evidence, by the Berkut police, are either not by eyewitnesses or not corroborated by synchronized videos, forensic medical and ballistic examinations, and other primary evidence	Media; social media;
No testimonies in the media and social media by the Berkut policemen, ex-police and SBU commanders, and ex-Yanukovych government officials admitting involvement in the massacre of the Maidan protesters, witnessing such involvement, or getting such specific information from others	Media; social media
No corroborated testimonies about advanced knowledge of the Maidan massacre by Yanukovych, his government ministers, and commanders	Media; social media
No witness testimonies about specific involvement of Yanukovych, his government ministers, commanders, in the massacre of the protesters, including massacre orders	Media; social media

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CHAPTER 5

Trial and Investigation Testimonies of Wounded Maidan Activists and Witnesses

This chapter analyzes testimonies concerning snipers by wounded Maidan activists and prosecution, defense, and Maidan witnesses at the Maidan massacre trial and the investigation in Ukraine. It also includes trial testimonies of relatives of killed Maidan protesters, Ukrainian journalists, and snipers and commanders from government units, and the Berkut police. It shows that the absolute majority of wounded protesters and about 100 prosecution and defense witnesses and relatives of the killed Maidan activists testified about witnessing snipers in the Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings and areas and their shooting of the protesters and the police. Testimonies attributing the massacre to the Berkut police or government snipers were contradicted by synchronized videos and forensic ballistic and medical examinations by government experts. There were no confessions or witness testimonies about orders or specific involvement of President Viktor Yanukovych, his government ministers, Berkut and police commanders, in the massacre of the protesters, including their advance knowledge and any massacre orders.

5.1 TESTIMONIES OF WOUNDED MAIDAN ACTIVISTS CONCERNING SNIPERS IN MAIDAN-CONTROLLED LOCATIONS

Although the official investigation denied existence of snipers in these Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, the absolute majority, 52 out of 74 wounded Maidan protesters, with whose shooting on February 20 Berkut policemen, were charged and whose testimonies were revealed at the trial, testified at the trial and/or the investigation that they were shot by snipers from Maidan-controlled buildings or areas, witnessed themselves snipers there, and/or were told by other Maidan protesters during the massacre about such snipers. At least 31 wounded protesters testified at the trial and/or the investigation that they were shot from Hotel Ukraina, Bank Arkada, and Zhovtnevyi Palace, Muzeinyi Lane and Horodetsky Street buildings, and other Maidan-controlled buildings or areas. At least 35 wounded Maidan protesters testified that they witnessed snipers there and/or were told about snipers in these Maidan-controlled locations by other protesters (see [Video, 2023d](#); [Map 3.1](#)).

Videos, photos, and testimonies of Maidan activists show that Hotel Ukraina, Zhovtnevyi Palace, the Main Post Office, and the Music Conservatory were controlled by the far-right and other Maidan forces and Bank Arkada, Horodetsky 11, Muzeinyi Lane 8, 10, and 12 buildings were in the Maidan-controlled areas when Maidan activists, journalists, and other witnesses filmed or reported snipers there (see [Chapter 3](#); [Map 3.1](#); [Katchanovski, 2023a](#); [Video, 2023a](#)). The government investigation denied that there were any Maidan snipers, who shot Maidan activists from these Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. A Berkut lawyer said that wounded protesters identified sectors of fire from Hotel Ukraina, Bank Arkada, Zhovtnevyi Palace, Horodetsky 11, Muzeinyi Lane 8, 10, and 12, the Main Post Office, the Music Conservatory, Instytutska 7 and 8, and Cabmin ([Video, 2023d](#), 58:02).

5.1.1 *Hotel Ukraina Snipers*

The absolute majority of the wounded protesters testified about Hotel Ukraina snipers. At least 17 wounded Maidan activists, with whose attempted murder Berkut members were charged, stated at the trial and the investigation that they were shot from Hotel Ukraina. At least 28 wounded protesters testified that they witnessed themselves snipers in

this hotel or were told by other protesters during the massacre about snipers there. (see Video, [2023d](#)). Videos, the official statement by the far-right Svoboda Party, the Maidan massacre trial verdict, and interviews by hotel staff and the head of the Maidan group that guarded this hotel show Hotel Ukraina was controlled and guarded by the Maidan forces, in particular, far-right Svoboda activists, before, during, and after the massacre (see Chapters [3](#), [8](#); Katchanovski, [2023b](#)) (Fig. 5.1).

For instance, Borys Kharchuk testified during the trial that he was wounded by a sniper from a Hotel Ukraina window. He said that he was shot immediately after he saw two persons in black clothes and black balaclavas in a Hotel Ukraina window between the fourth and the sixth floors, and one of them was aiming a rifle. When Kharchuk shouted “snipers,” he noticed that another protester near him was shot in the back and he himself was wounded in his arm when he turned to look at this protester. Kharchuk demonstrated his own position in the moment of his shooting and locations of his entry and exit wounds at a significant vertical angle. They all point to a gunshot from the direction and the height of the hotel and not from the Berkut police on the ground (Video, [2023d](#), 4:50).



Fig. 5.1 Hotel Ukraina (Photo by the author)

Similarly, Sviatoslav Kolesnikov testified during two investigative experiments and his first interrogation in 2014 that he was wounded from upper floors of Hotel Ukraina. His wounding from Hotel Ukraina is consistent with his description of his position at the moment of the shooting that he demonstrated during both investigative experiments, his wound in the right shoulder, and its steep direction. A video showed Maidan protesters taking cover under this bridge and pointing towards shooting from the upper floors of this hotel at the direction of the bridge at the same time as Kolesnikov was wounded on the bridge. A government forensic expert during an on-site investigative experiment determined that the bullet impacted his chair, which he shielded himself from Hotel Ukraina, at a 35 degrees angle and that this pointed to a gunshot from an upper floor of this hotel (see Video, [2023d](#), 45:20; [2023g](#)).

Volodymyr Venchak testified that he was wounded in the back from Hotel Ukraina. When he was in a group of Maidan protesters on Instytutska Street, Venchak saw TV operators and other persons in open windows of the hotel. He said that these Maidan activists felt that there was shooting in the back from this hotel and that they saw later in videos gunshot impacts that only could come from this direction (Video, [2023d](#), 0:15). Forensic examinations of his wounds and clothing also determined that Venchak was shot in the back from a steep direction. The Maidan massacre trial verdict stated that he was wounded from Hotel Ukraina (see Chapter 8).

Andrii Khalak said in the investigative experiment video that he was shot from Hotel Ukraina based on his position and his wounds locations (Video, [2023d](#), 7:37). Ivan Plish stated that he was wounded near Zhovtnevyi Palace in the back of his head from Hotel Ukraina. He said that there was then shooting from the back, from Hotel Ukraina and that he saw 3 to 5 people with weapons, including with an apparent assault rifle, on the roof of Hotel Ukraina. Plish stated that he and other Maidan protesters were shot from this hotel (Video, [2023d](#), 16:00). A government forensic examination confirmed the entrance bullet hole in the back of his helmet and exit holes in the front area of the helmet and in the glasses and their steep direction.

Mykola Rudyk testified that his group of protesters feared shots from the back from Hotel Ukraina. He feared danger from this hotel and from Zhovtnevyi Palace. Rudyk stated that he heard about a sniper in the hotel before he was wounded. He identified himself looking back

towards the hotel shortly before the bullet hit a tree behind their group of the protesters because they said that there was a sniper in the upper part of the hotel (Video, 2023d, 19:23). His testimony is corroborated by the Belgian VRT video and the Maidan massacre trial verdict (Chapter 8; Video, 2023c).

Borys Aseev testified that the protesters in the same group talked about possible shooting from the hotel when they turned their heads towards Hotel Ukraina after a shot in that tree (Video, 2023d, 20:00). While he denied that he did this, the Belgian VRT video showed him pointing and shouting to Hotel Ukraina snipers after the bullet hit a tree near this group and narrowly missed them (see Video, 2023a, 2023c).

Roman Kachan testified that other protesters in the same group were shouting about a sniper firing from Hotel Ukraina and that there was a sniper on this hotel. He showed during an investigative experiment his entry wound on the right side and stated that he was wounded from Hotel Ukraina, which was on the right from him (Video, 2023d, 23:46).

Roman Tityk, who was in the same group, testified at the trial that other protesters wanted to go to Hotel Ukraina after they heard a rumor that somebody was shooting from this hotel. He states that Volodymyr Zherebnyi told him that he saw a gunshot flash in a hotel window in the middle or top area of the hotel. When Tityk looked at that part of the hotel, he saw an open window there (Video, 2023d, 52:13). He said in his Ukrainian media interview that some suspicious people among the Maidan activists, specifically a person in black, tried to lure them to the place where they were killed and wounded (NTN, 2014).

Serhii Trapezun, who was also in this group of the Maidan protesters, showed during an on-site investigative experiment a bullet impact trace in the wall from Hotel Ukraina side and suggested that the bullet might be linked to killing of Ushnevych when he was protected by this wall from Berkut. Trapezun said during this investigative experiment that he saw an open window in Hotel Ukraina corner part on the 3d or 4th floor, and that he thought that he might have been shot from there (Video, 2023d, 20:49). This is consistent with his position in videos, a somewhat top to bottom wounds direction, and identification of the entry wound in his left thigh and the exit wound in his right thigh by a hospital (Video, 2023a).

Trapezun stated in his Ukrainian media interview that shots that killed and wounded most members of his group came from the sides and from the back (24 Kanal, 2014). He also said that he was wounded from Hotel Ukraina or possibly two-story building on the left (Horodetsky

Street) (Video, [2023b](#)). In his interview during medical treatment in Israel, Trapezun said that he saw snipers shooting at the protesters from the hotel roof and from a hotel room (Chapter 4; Slutskia, [2014](#)).

Yuri Andrushko testified that he saw a protester near him being shot, and he believes that this protester was shot from Hotel Ukraina. He also stated in his investigation testimony that he saw a bullet trajectory from this hotel (Video, [2023d](#), 26:27).

Vitali Karpyn stated at the trial and at the investigative experiment that he clearly saw gunshots from Hotel Ukraina, in particular gun flashes. He says that the gunshots were from Zhovtnevi Palace side of the hotel. He saw these flashes when he was climbing to Zhovtnevi. Karpyn saw many protesters shot near Zhovtnevi Palace from Hotel Ukraina when he and others were climbing to Zhovtnevi. He heard gunshots again from Hotel Ukraina when he was near the snow barricade, and he was wounded from a top direction (Video, [2023d](#), 8:05).

Pavlo Onufriiv testified during the investigation that there were one or two snipers in black uniforms on the roof of this hotel. Onufriiv identified during the investigation Hotel Ukraina and Zhovtnevi Palace along with Bank Arkada on the map of 6 buildings that he saw snipers on with his binoculars. The locations of three other buildings were not made public at the trial. He testified during the investigation that there were one or two snipers in black uniforms on the roofs of Hotel Ukraina and Zhovtnevi Palace and that he was shot by a sniper that might have been located on the hotel roof. Onufriiv pointed the exact location of a sniper on the roof of this hotel during the investigative experiment. But like many other protesters at the trial, he changed or dismissed as unimportant his testimonies during the investigation about snipers in these Maidan-controlled locations (Video, [2023d](#), 48:04).

Petro Ladym also testified during the investigation that there was shooting from Hotel Ukraina. Oleksandr Yashchuk stated that he feared danger from Hotel Ukraina above and put his shield to protect from there (see Video, [2023d](#), 15:14, 17:55).

Vadym Lapko testified that when he with his Maidan company started to move to Zhovtnevi Palace some protesters were saying that there were gunshots from Hotel Ukraina.

In his investigation testimony, Lapko said that when they climbed to Zhovtnevi and were crossing the area near its columns some protesters were warning about snipers in Hotel Ukraina. He testified that there were

gunshots from Hotel Ukraina direction based on their trajectory when his company was approaching Zhovtnevyi Palace (Video, [2023d](#), 38:16).

Yuri Slyvka testified at the trial and the investigation that he saw three snipers who shot Maidan protesters from the roof and a window of Hotel Ukraina. Two of these snipers were on the hotel roof and one was on the top floor in a hotel room facing Zhovtnevyi Palace. Slyvka testified that he saw one sniper shooting from a Hotel Ukraina window. He also saw a sniper on the roof near Hotel Ukraina sign and another sniper on the roof of this hotel on Zhovtnevyi Palace side. These snipers were in balaclavas. He also witnessed protesters shouting about the snipers on Hotel Ukraina roof after a female medic was wounded. Slyvka said that some twenty protesters went to the hotel because of the sniper shooting from one of the window after a male protester was wounded (Video, [2023d](#), 02:07).

Similarly, Bohdan Datsyshyn testified that when he was near Zhovtnevyi Palace other protesters told him that a sniper was shooting from the 6th floor of Hotel Ukraina and killed or wounded a couple of protesters. He stated during the trial that he himself saw for 10–15 minutes opening and closing of curtains in a partially opened window on the 6th floor of the hotel, and he showed its location. This is consistent with modus operandi of snipers there in videos and testimonies. Datsyshyn said that there was a motorbike helmet near Zhovtnevyi with a bullet hole on the right, i.e., hotel, side. It matches the killing of Kotuba, since he wore such a helmet and was shot in the head near Zhovtnevyi (Video, [2023d](#), 9:52).

Petro Kovalchuk testified that he was wounded in the back and that after he was carried to Zhovtnevyi he waited there during shooting, which came from Hotel Ukraina. He stated during the investigation that he was shot either from this hotel or Zhovtnevyi Palace. Kovalchuk also heard shots from Hotel Ukraina direction circa 6:00am when he was on the Maidan.

A steep direction of his wounds, the location of the entry wound in the back, and his position described by him are consistent with him wounded a “sniper” there (Video, [2023d](#), 13:50).

Andrii Navalnyi testified that he was shot from a Hotel Ukraina direction. He said that after he was wounded on the Maidan and brought for treatment he heard about shooting from Hotel Ukraina and that many protesters were killed there (Video, [2023d](#), 14:38). Kushnir testified during the investigation that he was wounded from the same hotel in the area of the pedestrian bridge during the advance of Maidan protesters.

He stated during the trial that he was shot from a Hotel Ukraina direction (Video, [2023d](#)).

Vasyl Symchyn testified that lots of people were saying during the massacre that there was a sniper in Hotel Ukraina, in particular, on the 7th floor (Video, [2023d](#), 29:00). Vitalii Gukov stated at the trial that some protesters were saying about gunshots from Hotel Ukraina. He said during an on-site investigative experiment that he was wounded in the right side of his right thigh and stated that then Hotel Ukraina was on his right (Video, [2023d](#), 32:00).

Yuri Ksenchuk testified during the investigation that he saw a sniper in a black uniform with a rifle on a Hotel Ukraina balcony. However, at the trial he omitted this testimony and then claimed that his testimony was incorrectly recorded by the investigation. Investigation documents signed by him and his testimony in the investigative experiment video, which was shown at the trial, confirmed that Ksenchuk testified during the investigation that he saw a sniper in a black uniform with a rifle on a balcony in the middle part of Hotel Ukraina. He identified a sector from which he was wounded that included Zhovtnevyi Palace and Hotel Ukraina. He showed during an investigative experiment the location of the sniper in this hotel. A Berkut lawyer noted at the trial that another wounded protester showed a sniper location in the same hotel area (Video, [2023d](#), 33:58).

Oleksandr Huch stated during the trial that his fellow Maidan protester told him that he along with other Maidan activists captured in Hotel Ukraina a man with a Kalashnikov assault rifle and with one full and one empty magazine. They transferred him to the Maidan stage to Parubii, the Maidan Self-Defense commander, because they assumed that this was a police sniper. But they heard no information about this captured sniper afterward (Video, [2023d](#)). A rational explanation is that this was a cover-up of a Maidan sniper by the Maidan leadership.

Mykhailo Medvedetsky testified at the trial that he heard from the other protesters during the Maidan massacre about shooting from Hotel Ukraina. Yaroslav Hrabovetsky stated during the investigative experiment that there were also shooters at the top and pointed to a top in a Hotel Ukraina direction. Ihor Vikuliov testified during the investigative experiment that he might have been shot from Hotel Ukraina or Zhovtnevyi Palace (see Video, [2023d](#), 51:28).

In his testimony at the trial and the investigation, Volodymyr Buchenko stated that he was shot from a Hotel Ukraina direction. He

said during an investigative experiment that protesters behind him feared danger from Hotel Ukraina and tried to hide behind shields from that direction (Video, 2023d, 52:48).

Anton Lubianetsky testified during the investigation that he was shot from a Hotel Ukraina direction. Andrii Frantsuz during an investigative experiment showed his position near Zhovtnevyi Palace entrance, his entry and exit wounds locations, and their steep top to bottom and right to left direction. The investigative experiment video showed Hotel Ukraina in that direction. A Berkut lawyer said that Frantsuz testified in the investigative experiment video that protesters were hiding behind Zhovtnevyi Palace entrance columns from a Hotel Ukraina sniper and that he did the same (Video, 2023d, 53:42, 55:30).

Anatolii Adamovsky stated that protesters told him that they saw and heard shooting from Hotel Ukraina and that one sniper position was in a hotel room, which had constantly filming video camera on the balcony (Video, 2023d, 56:20). This matches either the 9th floor room, from which a long video of the massacre was filmed by Svoboda activists, or the German ZDF TV room on the 14th floor, from which a long ARD video of the massacre was filmed and in which the far-right-linked group of Maidan snipers was filmed shooting (see Video, 2023a).

Oleh Sukhinsky during the investigative experiment pointed towards Hotel Ukraina as the direction of the gunshot that wounded him. He said in his Ukrainian media interview that he saw that he was shot from Hotel Ukraina (Omelianchuk et al., 2014). A Berkut lawyer stated in his closing arguments during the trial that Droziuk saw snipers in the Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina and that Soloviov and Amelchenko testified that they could have been wounded from this hotel (Video, 2023d, 58:48.).

The Maidan massacre trial verdict noted that another wounded Maidan activist possessed information about snipers in Hotel Ukraina windows. His description matches Petro Lukashevych from the Volyn Region in Western Ukraine. The verdict noted that he initially was avoiding the investigation and refused to testify at the trial: "As can be seen from the written statements of PERSON_1483 dated May 11 and 17, 2014 (vol. 166 a. 34, 44, 57), the latter initially asked not to open criminal proceedings due to the fact of his injury, stated his lack of desire to support private prosecution and claims against anyone because of his injury" (Vyrok, 2023).

5.1.2 *Zhovtnevyi Palace Snipers*

At least 7 wounded Maidan activists, with whose attempted murder Berkut members were charged, testified at the trial and the investigation that they were shot from Zhovtnevyi Palace. At least five wounded protesters testified that they witnessed themselves snipers in this building or were told by other protesters during the massacre about snipers there (see [Video 2023d](#)). Videos, photos, and testimonies of Maidan activists show that Zhovtnevyi Palace was controlled by the Maidan forces when Maidan activists, journalists, and other witnesses filmed or reported snipers there (see Chapter 3; [Video, 2023d](#)).

For example, Ivan Filipovich suggested at the on-site investigative experiment that he was wounded from Zhovtnevyi Palace based on his position and locations and a steep direction of his entry and exit wounds, respectively, below his left eye and the right side of his neck ([Video, 2023d](#), 11:22). Another protester, who witnessed his shooting, also stated in his interview that Filipovich was shot from Zhovtnevyi Palace ([Vikna, 2014](#)).

Bohdan Datsyshyn testified and showed in the on-site investigative experiment video recording that he was shot from Zhovtnevyi Palace, specifically from its roof, because of his position turning towards it, locations of entry and exit wounds, and their top to bottom direction. A forensic medical examination confirmed such locations and directions of his wounds ([Video, 2023d](#), 9:52). Maidan protesters were filmed inside Zhovtnevyi Palace and on its roof facing his wounding spot around the time of his wounding circa 10:30 am (see [Video, 2023d](#)).

Symchyn stated during an investigative experiment that he was wounded from the 2d floor of Zhovtnevyi Palace. He testified at the trial that he did not see Berkut or any other government forces there at that time but saw protesters near Zhovtnevyi around that time. Andrii Marchak stated that he feared danger from direction of Zhovtnevyi Palace and a part of Instytutska Street where Hotel Ukraina located, because there were constant gunshots from there. Roman Kotliarevsky, a wounded Maidan medic, testified that he heard a gunshot from Zhovtnevyi Palace roof. Petro Ladym testified during the investigation that he saw snipers in windows of Zhovtnevyi Palace shooting people (see [Video, 2023d](#)).

Pavlo Onufriiv identified during the investigation Zhovtnevyi Palace on the map of 6 buildings that he saw snipers on with his binoculars. A Berkut lawyer stated that Onufriiv's mother testified in an investigation

protocol that he told her when she visited him in a Polish hospital that he was shot from the roof of Zhovtnevyi Palace. He denied this at the trial testimony. Oleksandr Gornytskyi testified during the investigation that he saw a person with a firearm on Zhovtnevyi Palace balcony. Vitalii Karpyn testified that he and other protesters checked Zhovtnevyi Palace during the massacre (see Video, [2023d](#)).

5.1.3 Bank Arkada Snipers

At least five wounded Maidan activists, whose attempted murder Berkut members were charged with, testified at the trial and the investigation that they were shot by snipers from Bank Arkada. In addition, at least one wounded Maidan protester stated that he witnessed snipers there.

In the investigative experiment video, Oleksandr Yashchuk identified a top part of Bank Arkada as the location of his shooter and showed that he took cover from Berkut behind a tree. The same location of the shooter was determined by a ballistic expert during the on-site investigative experiment. Similarly, the court verdict stated that Viacheslav Khoroshavin testified during the investigation that he was shot from the upper floors of Bank Arkada (Chapter [8](#)). As noted, Onufriiv testified during the investigation that he saw with his binoculars snipers on Bank Arkada.

Yuri Kravchuk testified at the trial that he was wounded first two times from a sideway direction from Bank Arkada and not from the Berkut barricade in front of him. He determined this because he was taking cover behind a tree from the Berkut, because the bullet did not go through a tree, and because he saw down flying in front of his face from a bullet hole in his jacket. A ballistic expert during an investigative experiment also determined that Kravchuk was wounded there not from a Berkut barricade, as the prosecution charged, but from Bank Arkada or the attached metro entrance (Video, [2023d](#), 41:40).

Similarly, Roman Kotliarevsky stated during the investigation experiment that he was most likely shot from Bank Arkada based on the steep direction of his wound channel. A government ballistic expert during an on-site investigative experiment concluded that this wounded Maidan medic was shot from a sector ranging from Hotel Ukraina to Bank Arkada. A forensic medical report made public during the trial confirmed that Kotliarevsky was shot in the top back part of his right thigh at a steep angle from a top to bottom direction. The moment of his wounding

was filmed by CNN from Hotel Ukraina and used by the media in the West and in Ukraine as evidence that the government forces deliberately targeted even medics (see Video, 2023d, 30:58; 2023g). A forensic ballistic report, which was made public during the trial, found that this medic was shot from the same 7.62 × 39 caliber weapon, which was used to kill Mykola-Oleh Pankiv.

5.1.4 Muzeinyi Lane, Music Conservatory, and Other Maidan-Controlled Locations Snipers

At least 3 wounded Maidan activists, with whose attempted murder Berkut members were charged, suggested at the trial and the investigation that they were shot by snipers from Muzeinyi Lane buildings (see Video, 2023d). For example, Oleksandr Tonsky testified during investigation that he was shot from a building opposite of the subway entrance, i.e., a Muzeinyi Lane building. He said that he was wounded in his right shoulder when he was standing behind a tree and facing Maidan. This position and a forensic medical examination finding of a right to left direction of the bullet are consistent with a Muzeinyi Lane building (Video, 2023d, 22:30).

Anatoli Panchuk stated during an investigative experiment that it was impossible for the gunshot that wounded him to be from the front direction, i.e., the Berkut barricade. He said that the sector of fire was from National Bank corner to Zhovtnevyi Palace. A ballistic expert identified in the investigative experiment reconstruction of the Panchuk wounding the sector of fire, which ranged from Zhovtnevyi Palace corner to Cabmin Club corner and excluded the Berkut barricade. This sector includes Muzeinyi Lane buildings in both cases (Video, 2023d, 43:45).

Mykola Shevchenko testified during the investigation that he was shot from tall buildings on the left when he was facing the Berkut barricade on Instytutska Street. He showed his position and his wounds direction. This matches Muzeinyi Lane buildings. Shevchenko said that he was wounded into his left thigh from a left to right perpendicular direction. A forensic medical examination found that he was wounded from a left to right and steep top to bottom direction (Video, 2023d, 57:26).

Vadym Lapko testified that during the massacre another Maidan activist shouted that a sniper was on the left when Kemsky, Opanasiuk, and Dziavulsky were killed. Muzeinyi Lane buildings are located in that direction.

Several wounded protesters also testified about witnessing snipers in the Maidan-controlled Music Conservatory and the Maidan barricades near the Maidan stage in the early morning of February 20. Volodymyr Venchak testified at the trial that he saw two or three persons with weapons on the Music Conservatory roof circa 7:30–8:00 am and that a politician on the Maidan stage warned protesters about snipers there. Andrushko saw one protester on the Maidan shooting at Berkut from a hunting rifle and another protester there with a Kalashnikov assault rifle or its hunting version. They were often changing positions between the Maidan and the Music Conservatory (see Video, [2023d](#)).

Andrii Navaliany saw a person with a rifle shooting from the third floor of the Music Conservatory circa 10:00 pm–2:00 am the night before. Borys Kharchuk said that he saw several Maidan protesters with hunting rifles on February 19 during the day and heard that Maidan protesters shot from the Music Conservatory on that day. Mykhailo Medvedetsky testifies at the trial that he heard from the other protesters during the Maidan massacre about shooting from the roof of the Music Conservatory. Anton Lubianetsky said that he saw near the Music Conservatory a Maidan activist, who made two shots from a hunting rifle on the morning of February 20 (see Video, [2023d](#)).

Ruslan Figol testified during the investigation that he was shot in the back near Zhovtnevyi from buildings behind the Maidan stage (Video, [2023d](#), 12:12). Such buildings include Kozatsky Hotel, which was reported by many Maidan activists as one of the locations of snipers (see Video, [2023d](#)). A Berkut lawyer said that this Maidan activist testified that he was shot from the Music Conservatory. A Berkut lawyer stated during the trial that wounded Maidan activists also identified sectors of fire from the Main Post Office (Right Sector headquarters), Horodetsky 11 building, and the Music Conservatory (Map [3.1](#); Video, [2023d](#)).

The testimonies of the wounded Maidan protesters concerning snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings shooting them and other protesters are generally consistent with videos of snipers in these buildings and testimonies and reports by over 100 witnesses during the massacre about such snipers, testimonies at the trial, the media, and the social media about such snipers by over 300 other witnesses, with results of initial forensic medical and ballistic examinations by government experts, and with positions of these wounded protesters at the time of their shooting in videos (see Video, [2023a](#), [2023b](#), [2023e](#), [2023g](#)).

In addition, the GPU investigation determined based on their testimonies and investigative experiments that about half of the Maidan protesters were wounded on February 20 from other sectors than the Berkut police and did not charge Berkut with their shooting. The trial and investigation found no evidence of Russian or any other third force snipers. The trial and investigation testimonies of commanders of government sniper and counter-sniper units and other evidence, such as videos, revealed that government snipers arrived in their positions when almost all protesters were already killed and wounded, and therefore could not massacre the absolute majority of these Maidan protesters (Chapter 8; Video, 2023e). This suggests that these activists were wounded from the Maidan-controlled buildings or areas and that the absolute majority of them also testified concerning snipers in the Maidan-controlled locations.

Their testimonies were not made public at the trial. However, Volodymyr Honcharovsky stated in his interview from a German hospital that the protesters there were shot from behind and that he himself was wounded in the back, i.e., from Maidan-controlled areas, such as Hotel Ukraina and Zhovtnevyi Palace. He said that when he was wounded, he heard a gunshot behind and that shots came not from the front but from the back, i.e., from the Maidan-controlled area (Art Press Event, 2014; Video, 2023b, 33:29). Another Maidan protester from Lviv stated during the Maidan massacre trial that he was wounded by a sniper from Zhovtnevyi Palace and that he saw this sniper aiming at him. However, the judge stopped his testimony because nobody was charged with his wounding (Video, 2023d, 59:11).

5.1.5 Staged Wounding of a Female Maidan Medic

The Prosecution and in 2021 the Maidan massacre trial refused to classify Olesia Zhukovska, a Maidan female medic, as a victim in a trial of Berkut policemen who are charged with this massacre. She was turned into a Maidan “icon” after tweeting that she was dying shortly after she was filmed on the Maidan running to an ambulance with blood on her clothes. Numerous Ukrainian and Western media reported that she was wounded by the Berkut police or government snipers (CNN, 2014; Beaumont, 2014). This Maidan medic testified as a witness in the Maidan massacre trial in 2021 that she was wounded from direction of the Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina based on her reported entry and exit wounds locations in the neck (Sudova, 2021a).

However, she admitted in an interview with a Ukrainian journalist that she was not wounded. This Ukrainian journalist reported that a Maidan activist revealed that the wounding of this Maidan medic was staged by the Maidan Self-Defense leadership and that her surgery conducted shortly before the massacre was misrepresented as her exit wound. This Maidan activist reportedly revealed that there was an intention to stage a false-flag killing of a female protester in order to galvanize public support for the Maidan and blame the government forces. But because there was reluctance to kill a woman, the leadership of the Maidan Self-Defense decided to stage a fake wounding of the female Maidan medic by misrepresenting her neck surgery as her wounding (see Chapter 4).

However, a Maidan activist standing near her was killed in the same Maidan spot right after she was filmed running to the ambulance with blood on her clothes. Two protesters said that they saw that he was shot from the Main Post Office building, which was the Right Sector headquarters. A Polish reporter video showed a few apparent “snipers” on the roofs of Finbank and the adjacent Main Post Office, and a Maidan stage speaker and protesters then warned about “snipers” there (see Video, 2023a, 1:11:16).

5.1.6 Government Forces-Controlled Buildings and Areas Snipers

In contrast, the absolute majority of testimonies of wounded Maidan protesters about being shot by the Berkut police or snipers in government-controlled buildings or about snipers in these buildings are not corroborated by videos, forensic medical examinations, and other evidence (see Chapters 3, 4, 6, Video, 2023a). In the small minority of remaining cases, such evidence is either absent or contradictory. For instance, Kolesnikov reversed his testimony about being shot from the upper part of Hotel Ukraina and backed in his trial testimony prosecution charges that he was wounded by a Berkut policeman on the ground behind a Berkut barricade, in spite of the evidence described above. Moreover, a time-stamped video, which was used by the prosecution as evidence that Kolesnikov and other Maidan protesters were wounded and killed by one of the Berkut policemen being tried, showed that this policeman behind a Berkut barricade was not shooting at all at the time and around the time of the Kolesnikov’s wounding (Video, 2023g).

Many protesters, such as Yuri Kravchuk, who testified during the trial about being wounded from such Maidan-controlled locations, as Bank Arkada or Hotel Ukraina, still accused the Berkut police in shooting them. However, the government investigation, videos, eyewitness testimonies, and cell phone tracking showed that all Berkut policemen charged with the massacre of these protesters and other government units and snipers were in other locations during the massacre and not in these Maidan-controlled buildings.

Some wounded protesters testified that they were shot by snipers in the Cabinet of Ministers building, the Cabmin Club buildings, or the National Bank. However, the government investigation, synchronized videos of the massacre, security camera recordings, and testimonies of the commanders and snipers of Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), Alfa, Internal Troops Omega, and UDO snipers units as prosecution witnesses showed that there were no government snipers during the massacre in the National Bank building and that SBU Alfa and Internal Troops Omega sniper units were deployed in these buildings around 11:00 after the overwhelming majority of Maidan protesters were killed and wounded.

For instance, Oleksandr Huch, the Volhynian company of the Maidan Self-Defense commander, stated that he thought based on his position that he was shot from the Cabinet of Ministers building. However, his position in a Norwegian TV video, which was not shown at the trial, the ricochet impact seen in this video, and his wound location and steep direction suggest that he was shot from a Muzeinyi Lane building on the left and somewhat in front of him. An on-site investigative experiment by the government forensic experts, including a ballistic expert, determined that Huch was shot from a sector of fire which included Muzeinyi Lane buildings (see Video, [2023a](#), 24:40).

Similarly, Ivan Halamai claimed at the trial that he was wounded from a Berkut barricade. However, the locations and the direction of the bullet wounds, his position in the video at the time of his shooting, and the steep slope of the bullet in his x-ray in the upper left leg point to a gunshot from the top of Bank Arkada and not from the Berkut barricade on the similar ground level. The forensic medical examination found that he was shot in his right buttock area from back to front direction with the bullet ending in his right leg significantly lower, while the videos show that he was turned by his right side towards the Berkut barricade and by his back towards Bank Arkada (see Video, [2023a](#), 00:48:50).

5.2 TESTIMONIES BY PROSECUTION WITNESSES AND RELATIVES OF KILLED MAIDAN ACTIVISTS CONCERNING SNIPERS IN MAIDAN-CONTROLLED LOCATIONS

The testimonies of the absolute majority of wounded Maidan protesters concerning snipers in Maidan-controlled locations were consistent with testimonies of several dozens of prosecution witnesses, relatives of killed Maidan protesters, and witnesses called by Maidan lawyers at the Maidan massacre trial and the investigation. These prosecution witnesses were supposed to provide testimonies supporting the prosecution charges that the Berkut policemen massacred the Maidan protesters and the denial of the existence of any snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. However, they testified concerning snipers in the Maidan-controlled locations massacring the protesters and the police.

For example, Dmytro Holubnychiy testified at the trial that other Maidan protesters wondered during the massacre whether “ours [shoot] at ours” and told him that there were shooters on Hotel Ukraina (Video, [2023e](#), 01:42). He was filmed as a teenage protester in one of the most widely publicized videos of the Maidan massacre and in “Winter on Fire” Netflix documentary, which omitted evidence of Maidan snipers.

Volodymyr Pastushok testified that he and other three protesters from the Volhynian company were filmed by the BBC running away along with other protesters and the BBC TV crew after shouts about “a sniper” in Hotel Ukraina. Another protester told him then that this was “our sniper.” Pastushok saw someone opening a window in Hotel Ukraina on the 7–9 floor and waving at them not to shout about this sniper, aimed his rifle, raised it, and waved his hands giving a similar sign. He testified to the government investigation that Oleksandr Khrapachenko, who was then next to him, was shot from across the Instytutska Street, in particular, the left wing of Hotel Ukraina. Pastushok also stated that the protesters were shot at from Hotel Ukraina when they carried Khrapachenko. Another protester, who was next to Khrapachenko during his killing, testifies that he heard gunshots that came mostly from Instytutska Street, Hotel Ukraina, and Bank Arkada (Video, [2023e](#), 02:29, 08:32).

A Spilno TV reporter testified during the trial that when he streamed the massacre from a Hotel Ukraina room, armed Maidan activists entered that room, but the people who lived in this room told them and him to leave. This matches the Spilno TV video recording circa 9:35 am (see

Video, 2023a). He stated that he saw these armed people twice, first in the hotel room that he was streaming from and then in a hotel corridor when they appeared via stairs. A Berkut lawyer said that in the Spilno TV video recordings, the Spilno reporter streamed that the two groups of the protesters from the Maidan Self-Defense were looking for shooting positions in Hotel Ukraina corridor on the 11th floor. The Spilno streamer testified at the trial that they were the same armed people whom he saw in the hotel room (Video, 2023e, 05:04).

His testimony confirms both that the hotel was controlled by the Maidan forces and that there were Maidan snipers in the hotel during the massacre. He streamed later that two snipers were captured in Hotel Ukraina. The Spilno streamer said that this armed group moved to another hotel wing and that they later told him about the capture of the two snipers. The timing and the location matches snipers, who were filmed by ICTV and BBC shooting at the protesters from Hotel Ukraina room few minutes after this armed group of the protesters moved to that wing of the hotel on the same floor. They also match the location of snipers who were reported by a Maidan stage speaker shooting at the protesters from the same floor about 25 minutes earlier (see Video 2023a) The government investigation revealed that this hotel room was occupied by a member of the parliament from the far-right Svoboda Party. The BBC journalist and the Maidan massacre trial verdict stated that this was a Maidan activist shooting at BBC journalists from this hotel room (see Chapters 3 and 8).

Another Maidan activist testified at the investigation that the gunshot that killed Poliansky was from Hotel Ukraina and that protesters shielded them from Hotel Ukraina when he and other protesters carried him. His wife testified at the trial that Vasyl Aksenyn before he passed away told another Maidan protester that he most likely was shot from Hotel Ukraina. Another Maidan protester testified as a prosecution witness that he heard gunshots mostly from Hotel Ukraina side when he was on the left side of Instytutska Street (see Video, 2023e).

Brother of Kotsiuba testified that circa 8:00 am he saw snipers on the 5th or 6th floor of Hotel Ukraina shooting at Maidan protesters, that he heard gunshots circa 8:00 am, and that protesters said that this was a sniper from Hotel Ukraina. The Maidan activists also warned that a sniper was on Hotel Ukraina and Zhovtnevyi Palace. They said that there were snipers in Hotel Ukraina on the 5th or 6th floor. Kotsiuba brother testified that he heard a gunshot and saw a person there when and a

protester said that a sniper in Hotel Ukraina on these floors started to shoot at a protester. Then he saw a sniper on the balcony of Zhovtnevyi Palace shooting from a rifle into Maidan protesters direction, but he did not specify specific time (Video, [2023e](#), 16:43).

A Kalush TV reporter stated that a man asked her to zoom into Hotel Ukraina. After she zoomed, another man told her not to do that because a sniper can shoot her, and she stopped looking in this hotel. Her TV crew member gave a similar testimony that she was asked to zoom into Hotel Ukraina windows to see if there were snipers (Video, [2023e](#), 27:14).

Another Maidan protester testified that he saw a sniper shooting from the Main Post Office roof and killing a person behind the Maidan stage. This matches killing of Viktor Smolensky, who was shot there along with a female medic. This building was then the headquarters of the Right Sector. Berkut lawyers referred to testimonies of protesters to the investigation about armed people in this Right Sector headquarters building during the Maidan massacre (Video, [2023e](#), 16:00).

Oleh Ushnevych brother stated that eyewitnesses among the protesters told him that there was gunfire from the Berkut barricade and from a building on the left after Zhovtnevyi Palace (Video, [2023e](#), 20:27). This matches a Muzeinyi Lane building. A Maidan activist testified that he found a bullet behind the concrete wall near Bank Arkada and that this gunshot was not from the government forces positions in front of their group of Maidan protesters behind a wall but from the right or from the back (Video, [2023e](#), 19:57). This Maidan activist identified himself in the VRT TV video at the same place behind the wall and the same time of the killing of Ushnevych behind this wall. The Maidan massacre verdict stated that Ushnevych was killed from Hotel Ukraina direction (see Chapter [8](#)).

Serhiy Asavyuk, who was the coordinator of the special forces of the Internal Troops during the Maidan massacre, testified at the Maidan massacre trial that Maidan snipers started shooting first and that they massacred the Berkut police and Internal Troops on February 20 not on their own as a group but in a planned action by the Maidan leadership. Such his testimony for the investigation was omitted from protocols of his interrogations as a witness. He testified as a witness at the Maidan massacre trial on request of the Maidan lawyers. Asavyuk was not charged with the Maidan massacre. But he and his special forces were falsely blamed by numerous Ukrainian media reports for killing the Maidan protesters (Video, [2023e](#), 28:14).

He testified at the trial that both Security Service of Ukraine and the Internal Troops intelligence on the Maidan reported that two vans with about 20 armed men in military-style fatigues arrived to the Music Conservatory right before shooting at the police started from there. The Internal Troops intelligence also reported that Maidan protesters guarding a barricade near the Conservatory were told to leave shortly before the massacre and that smoke from burning tires was used to cover snipers. He also testified about reports of the Maidan snipers in the Trade Union building, Hotel Ukraina, and Muzeinyi Lane building. He confirmed that during his joint press conference with the Omega commander at the end of February 2014 he reported that there were sniper groups in Hotel Ukraina. His special forces unit came under fire by snipers from the tall building under reconstruction in the Hrushevsky Street area [Muzeinyi Lane 2A] and later found evidence of sniper positions there. He stated that he along with the Crimean special forces unit and the Omega unit arrived to the presidential administration area with an order from the Internal Troops commander to neutralize the Maidan snipers in the Music Conservatory (Video, [2023e](#)).

Anatolii Strelchenko, the commander of the special forces Omega unit of the Internal Troops, testified at the trial that his unit of snipers was in its base near Kyiv when circa 9:30 am he received an order to deploy because the Maidan side used weapons on the Maidan and there were killed policemen and protesters. When the Omega snipers opened windows on the third floor of Cabmin Club, they were shot at, and bullet hit a window frame and walls. The Omega commander said that based on the bullet holes in Cabmin Club the shooting at the Omega snipers was likely from the 5 to 7th floors of Hotel Ukraina. He stated that there were 5 or 6 gunshots at the Omega snipers during the Maidan massacre on February 20. They hit walls near the windows in Cabmin Club (Video, [2023e](#), 35:07).

The Omega commander also testified that the Omega snipers saw gunshot flashes from the 5–7th floors of Hotel Ukraina. They reported gunfire from the 5–7th floors of the hotel and the attic windows of Zhovtnevyi Palace after it was occupied by Maidan protesters. The shooting was done professionally from the inside of the buildings. He said that in the Ukraina TV video an Omega sniper was filmed taking his position near a street corner and this sniper reported that he saw a broken window on a Hotel Ukraina balcony from which shooting was probably carried out.

Strelchenko said that locations of the shooters at the police included the Music Conservatory, Hotel Ukraina, and attic windows of Zhovtnevyi Palace after it was occupied by Maidan protesters. He was told by other law enforcement participants that government units retreated from the Maidan area because of shooting at them from the Music Conservatory.

The Omega commander also stated that snipers of his unit reported about movement in a construction zone near the Dnipro Hotel and a building there with construction nets, and that there was possible shooting from there. The Alfa unit of the Security Service of Ukraine and his Omega unit of the Internal Troops were ready to neutralize the shooters but the Maidan leadership refused to allow their passage to the Conservatory and another building. This seemingly irrational refusal by the Maidan leadership makes rational sense if the snipers in these Maidan-controlled buildings were from the Maidan forces (Video, [2023e](#), 38:38).

An Omega sniper testified at the trial that there was shooting from Hotel Ukraina direction when he was observing this hotel. Based on his experience of participation in the war in Donbas on the Maidan-led government forces side, he said many opened windows that he observed in Hotel Ukraina suggested that there could had been snipers there and that the shooters there were professionals because this made it difficult to detect specific shooters who shot from inside of the rooms. It was possible for snipers in Hotel Ukraina to shoot undetected from behind curtains (Video, [2023e](#), 42:14).

The Omega machine-gunner testified at the trial that after he retreated from Zhovtnevyi Palace to the Berkut barricade, there were two gunshots at them. The sound was of a rifle, and the gunshot trajectory was from Hotel Ukraina (Video, [2023e](#), 43:49).

The commander of the SBU Alfa snipers testified that his unit was deployed from an SBU base circa 10:00 am because of information that sniper weapons were used on the Maidan and that there were both police and protesters killed. He and other members of his unit stated at the trial that their order was to act as counter-snipers and that they observed Hotel Ukraina and roofs of buildings. They testified that during their deployment to the Cabinet of Ministers around 10:30 am–11:00 am they came under fire from a Maidan direction (Video, [2023e](#), 52:45).

A sniper from the Alfa unit of the Security Service of Ukraine stated at the trial that he was ordered by his commander circa 9:00 am to deploy with his unit because of information about law enforcement victims and

to locate who shot them. He testified that the Alfa snipers unit took positions in Cabmin circa 10:45–11:15 am, and that there was gunfire in their direction during their deployment. He saw a person with a firearms case on the Ukrainian House roof (Video, 2023e, 44:33). This sniper, like many others, continued to serve in the Alfa unit after the Maidan. He was killed in the war in Donbas and was given the Hero of Ukraine title by President Zelensky.

Another SBU Alfa sniper testified at the trial that they observed Hotel Ukraina and roofs of buildings to locate probable snipers there from circa 10:30 am till 1:00 pm and that their snipers unit came under fire from a Maidan direction. (47:20).

Similarly, a deputy commander of the SBU Alfa sniper unit testified that when they moved to Cabmin, there was gunfire, apparently in their direction. He also confirmed that they had an order to locate snipers on the roofs and upper floors of buildings. This sniper said that he saw persons with apparent weapons covers to the right of Hotel Ukraina in the European Square area and reported this by radio. He stated that another Alfa sniper saw a sniper on the roof of the Ukrainian House on the European Square. But after this was reported in a radio communication of the Alfa snipers, that sniper moved away right away. He said that in the intercepted Alfa snipers radio communication, he reported people on the roof of a building to the left of Hotel Ukraina. This matches the location of Maidan snipers on a Horodetsky Street building (Video, 2023e, 47:44).

Similarly, several UDO snipers testified at the trial that they received an order circa 10:00 am to locate a sniper in Hotel Ukraina because there was information that a sniper in the hotel was shooting at the police and that they were deployed to Cabinet of Ministers building around noon. The commander of the UDO counter-sniper unit testifies that he was told by his commander that there was shooting from Hotel Ukraina and received his order to take three snipers, go to Cabmin, and determine from which hotel window there was shooting. His understanding was that someone was shooting at both sides, i.e., the government forces and the Maidan protesters (see Video 2023e).

His commander told him to determine from which window there was shooting from Hotel Ukraina and that this information would be reported to the SBU leadership, which would use its Alfa special unit to neutralize the shooter. Another UDO counter-sniper stated that he was ordered by his commander to check along with four other UDO counter-snipers and Omega who was shooting from Hotel Ukraina (Video,

[2023e](#)). This is corroborated by the Omega snipers commander, who testified that the Alfa unit of the Security Service of Ukraine and his Omega unit of the Internal Troops were ready to “clear out” the shooters but their passage to the Music Conservatory and another building was refused by the Maidan leadership.

Another UDO counter-sniper testified that circa 9:30 am he was summoned by his commander and was told that a person with a firearm on the Maidan was shooting the police.

He received an order to deploy to Cabmin and to locate the shooters. He stated during his interrogation in March 2014 that his commander informed him about a report by the Minister of Internal Affairs about a sniper shooting at the police from Hotel Ukraina (Video, [2023e](#), 58:28).

The head of Cabinet of Ministers UDO guards testified at the Maidan massacre trial that in the evening of February 20, 2014, or possibly February 21 he saw a truck arriving to Cabmin with about 15 people armed with Kalashnikov-type weapons. One of these people took such firearm with an optic scope and pointed at him and demanded to enter the Cabinet of Ministers building (Cabmin). They were Maidan activists. (Video, [2023e](#), 1:01:09).

A police commander suggested that the policemen were shot probably from the Trade Union and Music Conservatory buildings or the Main Post Office area buildings.

A guard of the National Bank of Ukraine, which was located near the Berkut truck barricade, testified to the investigation that another guard on the Instytutska Street was told by a policeman that they were being fired upon (Video, [2023e](#), 59:55, 01:00:42).

An Ukraina TV correspondent testified that one of policemen behind a truck Berkut barricade said that there was shooting at them. Policemen there said that they noticed shooting from Hotel Ukraina to the police [Berkut] barricade direction. He testified that [Omega] snipers later arrived in a bus to check whether there was shooting from this hotel. They started to check the hotel windows via the scope. This journalist heard an apparent sound of bullet hitting a green electric pole near a press kiosk and then an apparent sound of bullet hitting pavement (see Video, [2023e](#), 21:25).

His video operator testified at the trial that he filmed a government [Omega] sniper targeting a window in Hotel Ukraina on the 6th or 7th floor. This video operator also testified during the interrogation that

the police warned them about shooting from Hotel Ukraina. (Video, 2023e) Their Ukraina TV video, which was posted on YouTube, misrepresented these Omega snipers as a “death squad” which killed the Maidan protesters, and it was broadcast by many TV channels in Ukraine and other countries as evidence that they massacred the protesters (see Video 2023a).

A Maidan activist stated that he saw another Maidan activist with a Kalashnikov assault rifle on Independence Square (Maidan). He identified him in a video of a protester giving another protester an AK-type weapon. He testified that this protester with a Kalashnikov was walking from the Music Conservatory direction to the Founders of Kyiv monument (Video, 2023e, 26:08). His testimony matches the CNN and Ukrainian TV videos of members of the far-linked group of Maidan snipers (see Video, 2023a).

The testimonies of the commanders and snipers of Alfa, Omega, and UDO sniper units and other prosecution witnesses show that snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings shot not only at the protesters but also at the police and government snipers, that the government units of snipers were deployed to their positions only after the massacre was long underway, that they had orders to locate snipers who shot the police and the protesters, and that snipers were located in the Maidan-controlled buildings, such as Hotel Ukraina, the Music Conservatory, and Zhovtnevyi Palace.

5.3 TESTIMONIES OF DEFENSE WITNESSES CONCERNING MAIDAN SNIPERS

Stanislav Shuliak, the commander of the Internal Troops during the Maidan, in his video-link testimony at the Maidan massacre trial said that his observers reported that snipers were shooting at the protesters and the police, including the Internal Troops, from top floors of Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations, such as the Music Conservatory. He also stated that the SBU Alfa negotiated with Andrii Parubii, then the head of the Maidan Self-Defense, to search for these snipers at Hotel Ukraina but that Parubii refused to allow this (Sudova, 2016a).

Ex-president Viktor Yanukovych during his video-link testimony as a witness in the Maidan massacre trial also stated that he received reports about snipers shooting from the top floors of buildings whose entrances were guarded by the Maidan forces (Sudova, 2016b). Many Berkut

policemen testified at the trial that they or other Berkut servicemen were shot from the Music Conservatory in the early morning of February 20.

Three of self-admitted Maidan snipers from Georgia testified before the Russian invasion of Ukraine at the Prosecutor General Office of Belarus on a request of the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine following an appeal of Berkut lawyers in the case of the killings and wounding of the police during the Maidan massacre. The Maidan massacre trial in November 2021 admitted and showed as evidence a testimony of one of these Georgians who confessed of being a member of a group of Maidan snipers (Sudova, 2021b). The Ukrainian border guards confirmed his identity and that he visited Kyiv shortly before the start of the Euromaidan. Three self-admitted Georgian snipers also gave written depositions for the trial and offered to testify via a video link. Armenian, Belarusian, and, as noted, Ukrainian authorities all confirmed the identities of these Georgians. Two provided notarized letters to the Ukrainian courts and offered to testify via a video link from Belarus.

In interviews for the American, Italian, Israeli, Macedonian, and Russian media, seven Georgian self-admitted members of Maidan sniper groups testified that they and other sniper groups from Georgia and the Baltic States and the far-right-linked sniper group from Ukraine received orders, weapons, and payments from specific members of the Maidan leadership and former Georgian government leaders to shoot at both protesters and police in order to prevent a peace agreement from being signed by Yanukovych and Maidan leaders. They stated that the Maidan snipers shot the police and protesters from the Music Conservatory and Hotel Ukraina. They stated that they also received shooting instructions from a far-right-linked ex-US Army sniper. These ex-Georgian military members testified that they saw Georgian, Baltic States, and specific far-right Right Sector-linked Ukrainian snipers shooting from the Music Conservatory and Hotel Ukraina, in particular, before 8:00 am on February 20 (see Chapter 4).

They said that there were four groups of Georgian snipers on the Maidan with total of 40 members, including themselves. One of them stated without revealing his identity in a US documentary that he shot the protesters from Hotel Ukraina. Another said that the plan involved assassination of Viktor Yanukovych. Most of these Georgians revealed their names, passport numbers and border stamps, copies of plane tickets, videos and photos in Ukraine or Georgian military, and other evidence in support of their testimonies (see Chapter 4).

The Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine, Maidan victims' lawyers, self-styled "fact-checking" websites, and, with rare exceptions, the Ukrainian media claimed that the self-admitted Georgian snipers were fakes or actors (Myth, 2018). They based such claims on a spelling error in English-language text of an ID of one these Georgians, the mistaken identification of himself in a video by another Georgian, and report that he was in prison in Georgia during the Maidan massacre.

The Georgian Legion commander in Ukraine and an ex-associate of Saakashvili stated at the Maidan massacre trial that Georgian snipers are "actors," have no military experience, did not live in Georgia and he did not know them. He claimed that Italian, Israeli and US documentaries were filmed on orders of Russian FSB which is the same as the Georgian government. But in earlier media interview, he confirmed that one of the self-admitted Georgian snipers worked at Georgian Defense Ministry's Council of Advisors. Prosecution, media and factcheckers used spelling mistake in English-language text of his Defense Ministry ID to claim that he and his id were fake (Myth, 2018).

To corroborate their testimonies, most of these Georgians provided their names, passport numbers and border stamps, copies of plane tickets, photos from the Georgian military, and a video of one of them in the Trade Union building during the Odesa massacre. They stated that they had entered Ukraine during the "Euromaidan" with forged passports, using false names and were not stopped at the border.

The ex-commander of the special armed Maidan Self-Defense Company, who was named along with his father as snipers by these Georgian ex-military, and two members of his company admitted in Ukrainian media interviews and one in a BBC interview that they shot the police from the Music Conservatory and the Maidan barricades in the morning of February 20 (Gordon, 2020). The GPU investigation confirmed these public admissions. One of the members of the special armed Maidan Self-Defense Company, who stated in a Ukrainian media interview that he killed two policemen on the Maidan, was afterward charged with murders of two policemen (see Chapter 4).

Another member of this Maidan company confessed in a leaked video of his interrogation of providing a hunting version of a Kalashnikov assault rifle to members of this company to massacre the police and witnessing such shooting. He also testified that snipers in Hotel Ukraina massacred the Maidan protesters (Sharij, 2019). A Pechersk District court decision, which approved in 2020 his arrest in absentia on charges of killings and

attempted killings of policemen during the Maidan massacre, cited the official investigation findings that the Maidan massacre on February 20 was started with killings and wounding of policemen by Maidan snipers in the Music Conservatory (Ukhvala, 2020).

Kyiv's Pechersk district court decisions revealed that the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine investigated leaders and members of the far-right Right Sector, neo-Nazi "Warriors of Narnia," Sokil, a youth affiliate of far-right Svoboda Party, far-right Bratstvo, and other unidentified Maidan activists for their suspected involvement in the killing and wounding of the Interior Troops servicemen and the Berkut police on February 18–20, 2020 (see Katchanovski, 2020; Ukhvala, 2016). The Prosecutor General Office investigation revealed in October 2016 that one of the leaders of far-right Svoboda and its member of the parliament occupied a Hotel Ukraina room from which a sniper in reported Maidan-style green helmet was filmed shooting by BBC in the direction of the Maidan protesters and the BBC journalists (see Video, 2023c, 2023f).

The testimonies of the absolute majority of the wounded Maidan protesters, several dozen of the prosecution witnesses, and dozens of defense witnesses concerning snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas are consistent with synchronized videos of the massacre (Video, 2023a, 2023c, 2023g). The wounded Maidan activists, who provided such testimonies, have no rational incentive to lie about witnessing snipers in the Maidan-controlled locations or being shot by such snipers since such testimonies imply the false-flag massacre by the Maidan opposition.

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

Nor did the government investigations and subsequent trials reveal any testimonies or other evidence of an order to shoot at the Maidan protesters by then President Yanukovych, his ministers, or the commanders of Internal Affairs troops, police, or the Security Service of Ukraine. The same concerns "titushki" hired by the Yanukovych government or any "third force." The Prosecutor General of Ukraine stated that

their investigation determined that there was no participation of Russian snipers in the Maidan massacre (Verbianyi, 2024). This was also confirmed by the Maidan massacre trial verdict (see Chapter 8; Maidan, 2023; Vyrok, 2023).

The Maidan massacre trial and investigation testimonies of wounded Maidan activists and witnesses are summarized in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Summary of trial and investigation testimonies of wounded Maidan activists and witnesses

At least 52 out of 74 wounded Maidan protesters, with whose shooting Berkut policemen are charged and whose testimonies were revealed at the trial, testified at the trial and the investigation that they were shot by snipers from Maidan-controlled buildings or areas (31), witnessed themselves snipers there, and/or were told by other Maidan protesters during the massacre about such snipers (35)	Maidan massacre trial; Video (2023d)
Testimonies of several dozen prosecution and defense witnesses and relatives of killed protesters at the Maidan massacre trial and the investigation concerning snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas	Maidan massacre trial; Video (2023e)
Testimonies by dozens of defense witnesses concerning Maidan snipers/snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas	Maidan massacre trial
Testimonies attributing the massacre to the Berkut police or governments snipers were contradicted by synchronized videos and forensic original ballistic and medical examinations by government experts	Maidan massacre trial & investigation; Video (2023a, 2023c, 2023g)
No testimonies by the Berkut policemen, ex-police and SBU commanders, and ex-Yanukovych government officials admitting involvement in the massacre of the Maidan protesters, witnessing such involvement, or getting such specific information from others	Maidan massacre trial & investigation; media; social media
No witness testimonies about specific involvement of Yanukovych, his government ministers, commanders, or Russian snipers or officials in the massacre of the protesters, including their advance knowledge and massacre orders	Maidan massacre trial & investigation; media

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CHAPTER 6

Forensic Ballistic and Medical Examinations by Ukrainian Government Experts

This chapter analyzes results of forensic ballistic and medical examinations and investigative experiments by government experts for the Ukrainian government investigation and the Maidan massacre trial. Forensic medical examinations show that nearly all protesters while facing Berkut police on the ground were shot from steep directions from sides or the back that match the Maidan-controlled buildings. Government ballistic experts determined that many protesters were killed or wounded from the Maidan-controlled buildings. A forensic ballistic examination conducted by government institute experts with use of an automatic computer-based IBIS-TAIS system found that bullets extracted from killed protesters did not match police database of bullet samples from Kalashnikov assault rifles of members of the Kyiv Berkut regiment, including the special Berkut company that is charged with the massacre of the protesters. Forensic examinations of the bullet holes by the government experts along with videos and photos showed that Berkut policemen were shooting above and in front of Maidan protesters, in particular, into the far-right Svoboda-controlled Hotel Ukraina, which was the main location of the Maidan snipers, and in trees, poles, walls, and the ground.

The investigation by the Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine (GPU) determined based on their testimonies, investigative experiments, and forensic examinations that about half of the Maidan protesters were wounded on February 20, 2014 from sectors where no Berkut police

were located, and did not charge anyone with these shooting (GPU, 2016). Since the trial and investigation testimonies of commanders of government sniper and counter-sniper units and other evidence, such as videos, revealed that government snipers arrived in their positions when almost all protesters were already killed and wounded, and therefore could not massacre these Maidan protesters, this suggests that they were wounded from the Maidan-controlled buildings or areas and that absolute majority of them also testified concerning snipers in the Maidan-controlled locations. One such protester said that when he was wounded, he heard a gunshot behind and that shots came not from the front but from the back, i.e., from the Maidan-controlled area (Video, 2023b, 33:29). Another stated in court that he was shot from Zhovtnevyi Palace and saw a sniper there (Video, 2023d).

The Maidan massacre trial revealed that government ballistic experts found that at least six Maidan protesters had been killed, and at least ten were wounded from Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings or areas (see Chapter 8). The prosecution did not use forensic ballistic experts during the investigation to determine trajectories of bullets and locations of shooters of the absolute majority of the Maidan protesters, and failed to conduct them even after the Maidan massacre trial ordered them to conduct such examinations, specifically to determine if these bullet trajectories were from the Maidan-controlled buildings. A Berkut lawyer stated during the trial that the prosecution stopped these court-ordered investigative experiments after government forensic experts determined that the first few Maidan protesters were shot from the Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina and Music Conservatory (Zasidannia, 2022, 5:46).

A ballistic expert in an on-site investigative experiment identified Zhovtnevyi Palace and not the ground level in front of it as the most likely location of the shooter in the Yuri Ksenchuk case because of steep angle of his wound. The Berkut was filmed in front of this building shooting around that time, while Ksenchuk was among other protesters below them on the hill. A forensic ballistic report determined that the 7.62×39 caliber bullet which wounded Ksenchuk was industrially made but not from live ammunition. This suggests a nonstandard bullet, such as a training bullet, which was modified and put into a bullet casing with gunpowder, and indicates that he was shot not by the Berkut special company or any other government law enforcement unit. The GPU investigation, this protester, and Berkut did not identify him in any of the

videos. But information about his location in the investigative experiment video and other evidence presented during the trial, such as location and direction of wounds, points to simultaneous wounding of another protester near him from similar vertical and horizontal angles and matches a simultaneous wounding of him and another protester (Ihor Vikuliov) in Zelenyi Front video at 9:14 am (Zasidannia, 2016a, 2016b). Videos show that Maidan protesters entered Zhovtnevyi Palace by that time (see Video, 2023a; Chapter 3).

Ballistic experts during investigative experiments conducted for the GPU investigation determined that Yuri Kravchuk was wounded not from the Berkut barricade, as the prosecution claimed, but from Bank Arkada or the attached metro entrance. A video showing his position behind a tree just prior to almost simultaneous first two woundings and his reported wound locations and steep directions of these wounds are consistent with Bank Arkada (16 minuten, 2014; Zasidannia, 2016d). However, a Belgian VRT video shows that his position at the moment of the last wounding was different than he described during the trial and the investigative experiment. This position facing Hotel Ukraina and forensic medical reports conclusions that the entry wound was located in the left knee area and the exit wound in his left thigh area point to a gunshot from the Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina (Het, 2014; Zasidannia, 2016d). The crucial fragment of this VRT video showing the moment of the wounding of Kravchuk was not mentioned during the trial or in investigation documents (see Video, 2023a).

A ballistic expert found during an on-site GPU investigative experiment that Anatolii Panchuk was wounded in his left back area from a sector, which excludes the Berkut barricade but includes Zhovtnevyi Palace corner, Kinopalats and Muzeinyi Lane areas (Zasidannia, 2016c).

Findings of forensic medical examinations, which were done by government experts for the prosecution and were made public during the Maidan massacre trial, revealed that the absolute majority of Maidan activists were shot on February 20, 2014, from side and back directions and from top to bottom directions. Since videos and photos showed that the absolute majority of the killed and wounded protesters faced the Berkut police in front of them on the same or similar ground level and that Maidan-controlled buildings were generally behind them and on the left and right side, this forensic evidence means that they could not have been shot by Berkut but were shot by snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings. One does not need to be a forensic expert to understand this

since bullets do not fly like guided missiles in order to hit the protesters from the directions and height that do not match the locations of the Berkut police.

These forensic medical examinations indicated that 40 out of 48 protesters, with whose murder Berkut policemen were charged, were shot dead from significant vertical angles based on the directions of their wounds specified by the forensic medical examinations. At least 36 of these protesters were killed when the Berkut policemen were filmed on the same or similar level on the ground. Just one killed protester, Ihor Kostenko, had nearly horizontal entry and exit wounds, but he was shot sideways. The video of his killing and the direction of his wounds pointed to the gunshot from a Maidan-controlled location. The Maidan massacre trial verdict also suggested the same (see Chapters 3, 8).

Similarly, 48 out of 51 wounded protesters, whose wound directions were revealed at the trial and with whose shooting on February 20 Berkut policemen were charged, had wounds at significant vertical angles. The significant vertical angles of wounds are consistent with snipers in Maidan-controlled buildings or on the roofs of these buildings and not with their shooting by the Berkut police on the ground.

Three Maidan activists were shot by hunting pellets before the Berkut special company even was deployed in that area. The Maidan massacre trial verdict stated that the Berkut did not kill them because of the timing and because there was no forensic evidence of use of hunting ammunition by the Berkut. This is the evidence that they were killed by the Maidan opposition shooters from hunting weapons.

Forensic examinations by government experts determined that Viktor Chmilenco and Oleksandr Khrapachenko were killed by expanding hunting bullets. Their caliber did not match calibers of weapons used by the special Berkut company, whose members were charged with killing them. A forensic ballistic examination of a bullet fragment found that Viktor Chmilenco was shot dead by a 30-06 caliber “Springfield” bullet (Zasidannia, 2016f, 3:25:57). This is an old US military caliber bullet that is now used for hunting and sport shooting. This bullet caliber does not match calibers of weapons with which Berkut and other government units in Ukraine were armed at the time of the massacre. His killing was filmed by a French photographer in a widely publicized video (Sous, 2014).

Forensic medical examination, which was presented by the GPU during the trial, revealed that Chmilenco was shot at a steep vertical angle with bullet holes in his neck and left shoulder. His position at the

moment of his shooting in this video and a significant angle of his wound indicate that Viktor Chmilenko was shot from Hotel Ukraina. The prosecution charged that the Berkut policemen, who were located at that time on a barricade on the opposite side at practically horizontal level with Chmilenko, shot him (Video, [2023a](#)).

The forensic examination determined that Oleksandr Khrapachenko was killed by a corroded 0.308 Winchester caliber expanding hunting bullet. This NATO bullet caliber does not match the caliber of AKMS used by members of the special Berkut company, who are charged with his killing (Zasidannia, [2016f](#), 3:08:35). This forensic expert-level evidence corroborates other evidence, such as eyewitness testimony of another member of the Volhynian company of the Maidan Self-Defence, which suggested that Khrapachenko was shot not by Berkut but by a “sniper” from Hotel Ukraina (Video, [2023a](#), [2023e](#)). An Omega sniper was also charged in 2019 with his killing. But he was released by a court because of lack of evidence.

The government forensic experts determined that Oleh Ushnevych was killed with 9-mm-caliber handgun from Hotel Ukraina. The videos show that he along with several other protesters was hiding behind a wall, which completely shielded them from the Berkut positions, at the moment of his killing. It was physically impossible to shoot him from the Berkut positions. Testimonies of eyewitnesses at the Maidan massacre trial, the Maidan massacre trial verdict, and even the initial determination by the government investigation stated that he was killed from the Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina (see Chapters [3](#), [5](#), [8](#)).

One killed protester (Ivan Panteleev) and one wounded protester were shot with 7.62×54 caliber bullets. The prosecution stated that since the caliber matches Dragunov sniper rifles, this shows that they were shot by unidentified government snipers. But these bullets were not of a special sniper type but of LPS type developed in 1908 for Mosin rifles. Government units were not equipped with long obsolete Mosin rifles. However, a deputy commander of Berkut regiment stated during the trial that a Mosin rifle was later found in Dnipro Hotel and that the investigation did not test if it matched these bullets. This hotel was then used as a Right Sector base, and Andrii Parubii, who was the Maidan Self-Defense Commander and became the head of the National Security and Defense Council afterward, helped the Right Sector activists in this hotel a few weeks after the massacre to evacuate their weapons in music cases without confiscating or checking whether they were used during

the Maidan massacre. A Spilne TV live video stream referred to protesters who were in Hotel Ukraina at the time of the massacre and were armed not only with hunting rifles and AKMS but also with Mosin rifles (Video, 2023a).

A forensic examination, which was conducted by Ukrainian government institute experts on the prosecution request with use of an automatic computer-based IBIS-TAIS system in January 2015, determined that bullets extracted from killed protesters, trees, and Hotel Ukraina rooms did not match bullet samples from any 7.62×39 caliber Kalashnikov assault rifles of members of the entire Kyiv Berkut regiment, including the special Berkut company (Zasidannia, 2016e, 2:39:23).

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

A forensic examination, which reversed in 2019 results of this and some other 40 previous forensic bullet examinations and matched bullets from the killed and wounded Maidan activists to Berkut Kalashnikovs, also contradicted synchronized videos, which show that times and directions of gunshots by Berkut did not coincide with times and directions of killings of Maidan activists and on-site investigative experiments by government ballistic experts pointing to bullet trajectories from Maidan-controlled locations, and locations and directions of wounds in forensic medical examinations. It also contradicted testimonies of the absolute majority of wounded Maidan activists and several hundreds of prosecution and defense witnesses and other witnesses about snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations (see Chapters 3, 4, 5).

The 2014 forensic ballistic examinations presented by the prosecution at the Maidan massacre trial found that 19 protesters were killed on February 20 by 7.62×39 mm caliber bullets which match calibers not only of AKM Kalashnikov assault rifles, but also hunting versions of Kalashnikovs, or other weapons of this caliber, such as Simonov carbine (SKS). They indicated that Ivan Bliok was killed from Vepr carbine, a

hunting version of Kalashnikov machine gun. Three other protesters were killed by pellets used in hunting. Two protesters were killed by expanding hunting bullets, whose calibers did not match calibers of weapons used by the special Berkut company, whose members were charged with killing these protesters (Zasidannia, 2016f). Videos showed protesters with hunting rifles in Hotel Ukraina during the massacre (see Chapter 3 and Video, 2023a).

Results of forensic ballistic expert analyses, which were conducted for the GPU investigation in spring and summer of 2014 but made public for the first time during the trial on November 12, 2015, and on June 30, 2016, revealed that at least 10 protesters (Baidovsky, Kemsky, Korneev, Sienko, Zhalovaha, Shymko, Dmytriv, Ilkiv, Poliansky, and Smolensky) were killed from the same single 7.62×39 caliber weapon, and that this weapon could have been a Kalashnikov assault rifle, a hunting carbine, or other firearms of this caliber (Zasidannia, 2015). These forensic ballistic reports along with other evidence, which was revealed during the trial, indicate that these protesters were killed from the same weapon from Hotel Ukraina and Bank Arkada. This suggests that the snipers in Bank Arkada were the Maidan snipers from the same group as in Hotel Ukraina. Bullets went through bodies of more than half of the killed Maidan protesters.

The prosecution revealed that only 24 out of about 100 bullets extracted from the bodies of Maidan protesters, who were killed and wounded on February 20, were identified by forensic examinations, but the caliber and other information concerning the unidentified bullets was not publicly revealed (see Chapter 8).

The government investigation determined that most of protesters killed on February 18–19, 2014, were shot with hunting pellets and smoothbore rifles used in hunting. It revealed that the absolute majority of 11 policemen killed on February 18–19, and all 4 policemen killed on February 20 were shot from similar types and calibers of hunting pellets and bullets, handgun bullets, and 7.62×39 bullets as the protesters.

The Kyiv court decisions revealed that the weapons used by the wounded checkpoint attackers in Sloviansk on April 20, 2014, were the same weapons from which two Internal Troops servicemen were killed, and three other policemen wounded on the Maidan on February 18. The court rulings specifically referred to two Right Sector activists, who were wounded during a Right Sector attack of the separatist checkpoint and

many other Right Sector members as suspects in GPU investigation in killings and wounding the police on the Maidan (Ukhvala, 2016).

Visual examinations of the bullet holes and their impact points in a Hotel Ukraina room, which was occupied by a German ARD TV female journalist, by the government investigators confirmed that it was shot at from the direction of the Main Post Office, which was the Right Sector headquarters. A forensic examination by government experts also established that a likely bullet trajectory in the room 825 of Hotel Ukraina points to the roof of Music Conservatory, which was at the time of the Maidan massacre the headquarters of the far-right-linked special Maidan Self-Defense company of snipers. The hotel room was occupied by an ARD journalist. The Maidan massacre trial verdict made the same determination (see Chapters 3, 8, Video, 2023f).

The visual reconstruction based on government forensic expert reports concerning locations and directions of bullet holes on the massacre site in trees, flower box, and in Hotel Ukraina, as well as videos and photos of locations and directions of these bullet holes, shows that the Berkut police and Omega were generally shooting above protesters at the second and higher floors of Hotel Ukraina and in electric poles, a flower box, and trees. It also shows that they did not target the Maidan protesters because of lack of bullet holes on the first floor of Hotel Ukraina, which was located behind several dozen protesters who were killed and wounded in that area (see Fig. 6.1).

The bullet holes identified in the government's forensic reports showed that the Berkut police generally shot above protesters, at the second floor and above of Hotel Ukraina, into electric poles, and trees. Forensic examinations by government investigators did not report a single bullet hole in the hotel's ground floor, which is located at the height of the protesters (Fig. 6.2).

Forensic examinations by investigation experts also confirmed bullet holes from directions of Maidan-controlled buildings, in particular, in a flower box, an electric pole, a tree in the area of the massacre of Maidan protesters and also in one of Hotel Ukraina windows and Cabmin Club. The German ARD and US documentaries concerning the Maidan massacre showed that lasers from bullet holes in trees pointed to bullet trajectories from windows located on two different floors of Hotel Ukraina. The author's photos of bullet holes in another tree indicated that the shots were from Muzeinyi Lane and Zhovtnevyi Palace directions (Chapter 3; Video, 2023c).



Fig. 6.1 The visual reconstruction of shooting at Maidan protesters and Western, Polish, and Russian journalists during the Maidan massacre in Ukraine and locations of snipers in Hotel Ukraina: a view from a Berkut barricade (based on Google Street Map)

Fig. 6.2 Bullet holes in the electric pole from the government forces direction and one exit hole from the Maidan-controlled Hotel Ukraina direction (Photo by the author)



However, the government forensic experts reports omitted bullet holes in a wall near Bank Arkada and in at least three trees that pointed, based on laser beams in German and US documentaries and in videos and photos, to gunshots from directions of Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings. The comparison of various videos and photos made during and after the massacre, including photos by the author, along with an admission by the prosecution show that at least three of these trees were cut.

A New York architecture company working with a team of Ukrainian “volunteers” did a 3D model reconstruction of the killings of three Maidan protesters on an order of Maidan victims’ lawyers for the Maidan massacre trial (Euromaidan, 2018). This SITU model was cited by these lawyers and the Prosecutor General of Ukraine under Poroshenko as definite evidence that the Maidan protesters were massacred by the Berkut police and that snipers did not massacre the protesters.

However, the wound locations of the three killed Maidan protesters in the 3D model do not match the wound locations in the forensic medical examinations of the bodies and clothes and locations of appearing bullet holes in shields and a helmet of these protesters right after they were shot. For instance, according to forensic medical examination, Ihor Dmytriv was shot in the “right side surface” and the “left side surface” of the torso “from the right to the left, from the top to the bottom, and a little from the front to the back” with the entry wound 20.5cm higher than the exit wound. A Maidan victims’ lawyer visually demonstrated at the trial that these wounds locations were in the right and left sides. In the video of their examination of Dmytriv right after his shooting, Maidan medics also show such locations of his wounds with no wounds visible in the front area, contrary to the 3D model. However, in the 3D model, his wounds were moved to the front and the back and made nearly horizontal in order to fit them to the Berkut positions on the ground (Katchanovski, 2019; Video, 2023g).

The locations and directions of the wounds of these three protesters in forensic medical examinations and matching bullet holes that appeared in the shields of two of them and a helmet another along with their positions at the times of their killings point to their shooting from the top part of Bank Arkada in the Maidan-controlled area. Several Maidan protesters and medics pointed to snipers there shortly before and after these three protesters were killed (Video, 2023g).

The prosecution, with some exceptions, used “complex forensic examinations” by medical experts, instead of ballistic experts, to determine locations of the shooters without on-site visits and any measurements and explanations provided. The prosecution presented these examinations as a definite proof that Berkut massacre the Maidan activists. However, various evidence, such as on-site investigative experiments by ballistic experts, locations and directions of bullet wounds specified in forensic medical examinations of the killed and wounded protesters, testimonies of the absolute majority of wounded Maidan activists, and synchronized videos, shows that the Berkut sector of fire in these “complex forensic examinations” by medical experts was fabricated. As Berkut lawyers and forensic medical experts stated, ballistic experts were supposed to conduct such examinations to determine the bullet trajectories and locations of the shooters. The judges and the jury in the Maidan massacre trial verdict agreed and excluded such examinations from the evidence.

The GPU investigation determined that two Berkut officers (Zubok and Spichak) were killed on February 20, 2014, by 7.62 mm caliber bullets from either a Kalashnikov assault rifle or Saiga on the Maidan between 8:00 and 8:20 am and that the direction of fire pointed to the Music Conservatory or nearby barricade. It also found that two other policemen (Mykhailovych and Symysiuk) were killed from the angles pointing to barricade near the Trade Union building with large caliber hunting pellets (Slidamy, 2016). The investigation later determined that the police were shot from a “Saiga,” a hunting version of Kalashnikov. The owner of Saiga confessed in a leaked video of his interrogation by the prosecution that he provided his weapon to the far-right-linked company of Maidan snipers in the Music Conservatory and that they shot the police. However, he was not detained and escaped to Spain.

Main findings of forensic examinations are summarized in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Summary of main findings of forensic examinations of the Maidan massacre

On-site investigative experiments with government forensic ballistic experts determined that at least 16 specific Maidan protesters were killed or wounded from Maidan-controlled buildings or areas	Maidan massacre trial & investigation
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(continued)

Table 6.1 (continued)

Government forensic experts determined that Hotel Ukraina rooms of two German ARD TV journalists were shot at from the Right Sector headquarters and the far-right-linked special armed Maidan company headquarters in the Music Conservatory Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine investigation determined based on on-site investigative experiments and their testimonies that about half of protesters were wounded from other sectors than those occupied by the Berkut police and did not charge anyone with their shooting	Maidan massacre trial & investigation; Video (2023f) GPU (2016)
A forensic ballistic examination conducted by government institute experts on the prosecution request with use of an automatic computer-based IBIS-TAIS system in 2015 found that bullets extracted from killed protesters, trees, and Hotel Ukraina rooms did not match police database of bullet samples from any 7.62 × 39 caliber Kalashnikov assault rifles of members of the entire Kyiv Berkut regiment, including the special Berkut company charged with the massacre of the protesters	Maidan massacre trial & investigation

(continued)

Table 6.1 (continued)

A forensic examination, which reversed in 2019 results of this and some other 40 previous forensic bullet examinations and matched bullets to Berkut Kalashnikovs, also contradicted synchronized videos, which show that times and directions of gunshots by Berkut did not coincide with times and directions of killings of Maidan activists, wounds locations and directions in forensic medical examinations, on-site investigative experiments by government ballistic experts pointing to bullet trajectories from Maidan-controlled locations, and testimonies of the absolute majority of wounded Maidan activists and several hundreds of prosecution and defense witnesses and other witnesses about snipers in the Maidan-controlled locations	Maidan massacre trial & investigation; Video (2023a , 2023b , 2023c , 2023d , 2023e , 2023g)
Forensic medical examinations by government experts showed that nearly all protesters were shot from the top, the back, or from the side while facing the Berkut police on similar ground level	Maidan massacre trial & investigation

(continued)

Table 6.1 (continued)

Bullet holes identified in government forensic expert reports, videos, and photos from directions of Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings are in the areas, heights, and directions that match the shooting of the protesters.	Figure 6.1; Maidan massacre trial & investigation
Bullet holes identified in government forensic expert reports, videos, and photos from Berkut and government snipers directions are located above protesters in Hotel Ukraina and in electric poles, and trees	
Forensic ballistic examinations determined that one protester was killed from a hunting version of Kalashnikov machine gun, 4 by pellets, and two by expanding hunting bullets, while 19 protesters were killed by 7.62 × 39 mm caliber bullets which match calibers of hunting versions of Kalashnikovs, Simonov carbine, or AKMS Kalashnikov assault rifles	Maidan massacre trial & investigation
But only 24 bullets out of about 100 were identified by forensic examinations	

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CHAPTER 7

The Maidan Massacre on February 18–19, 2014, and Related Cases of Violence During the EuroMaidan in Ukraine

This chapter analyzes the Maidan massacre in Kyiv on February 18–19, 2014 and other related cases of violence in Ukraine during the EuroMaidan. Various evidence, such as videos, live streams, SBU and police radio communications recordings, and witness testimonies, shows that the violent attack of the Ukrainian parliament and the Party of Regions headquarters was initiated on February 18 by the Maidan leadership and Maidan Self-Defense, including the far-right Svoboda and Right Sector, and that the Security Service of Ukraine and police launched an attempt to clear the Maidan by force in response. Such evidence and the lack of convictions for such mass killings suggest the false-flag massacre of both Maidan activists and police and Internal Troops members by Maidan snipers and involvement of some of the Maidan leaders. Such evidence and in part Ukrainian government investigations and forensic examinations by government experts suggest a false-flag massacre of three Maidan protesters in January 2014 and in Khmelnytskyi on February 19 and that kidnapping, torture, and crucifixion of Dmytro Bulatov, beating of Tetiana Chornovol, and partly violent dispersal of Maidan protesters on November 30, 2013, were staged with Maidan opposition involvement in order to galvanize dwindling anti-Yanukovych government protests.

7.1 THE MAIDAN MASSACRE ON FEBRUARY 18–19, 2014

The violent clashes of protesters with the police and “titushki” and the mass killing started when the protesters tried to break police barricade and tried to attack the parliament on February 18, 2014. These clashes and mass killing happened during a “peaceful march,” organized by the Maidan opposition leaders, specifically Oleksandr Turchynov, a leader of the Fatherland Party Andrii Parubii, the commander of the Maidan Self-Defense, and Dmytro Yarosh, the leader of the Right Sector. They called it a “peaceful march,” but the paramilitary Maidan Self-Defense companies, including the Right Sector Company, led the Maidan activists towards the parliament.¹ At the Maidan massacre investigation, some Maidan Self-Defense company commanders testified that Parubii had ordered to start “a bloodshed” during this “peaceful march” towards the parliament around noon on February 18, 2014 (Dopros, 2018).

The live streams recordings of the rally showed that the Maidan activists led by Svoboda deputies tried to break through and attacked police barricades near the parliament. Footage disclosed that another group of the Maidan protesters attacked and set the Party of Regions headquarters on fire nearby (Shturm, 2014). The head of the Kyiv branch of the SNA later stated that they burned this building (Chimiris & Bratkova, 2014). Footage from the scene also revealed that Tetiana Chornovol, a former activist of the far-right UNA-UNSO, was among the attackers. During this attack and during the burning of the headquarters of the Party of Regions, a Party of Regions computer specialist was killed, becoming the first casualty of the Maidan massacre. The Maidan government investigation accused the Yanukovych government agents provocateurs for the attack and burning of the Yanukovych Party headquarters without any evidence and included the computer specialist among the killed Maidan protesters. After Zelensky was elected the president of Ukraine, the State Bureau of Investigations of Ukraine in 2020 charged Tetiana Chornovol with the deadly arson of the Party of Regions office and the murder of a computer admin there during the Maidan massacre on February 18, 2014, but there has been no trial (Tatiane, 2020).

¹ Personal observation of live streams of the march and the clashes on February 18, 2014.

The court decisions and the investigation also revealed that several protesters were misrepresented in the media for a long time as victims of the lethal police violence. The GPU investigation, court decisions and a verdict, and a long-withheld video revealed that a Svoboda company commander was driven over by another protestor after this protestor seized a truck and tried to slam it into the police. This was the only case with a verdict in the Maidan massacre case, but the protestor was not charged with killing but with traffic violations and was granted an amnesty under the amnesty law for Maidan participants. Unreported court decisions revealed that one of the protesters was killed on the Maidan by slushing his throat, and that the GPU investigated UNA-UNSO commanders and members for this killing (Ukhvala, 2014). These two protesters along with a number of other protesters, who according to the GPU investigation died in other locations and not as result the violence during the Euromaidan are presented as victims of the police violence by the government officials and the media, and they were awarded Hero of Ukraine titles by President Poroshenko as victims of the government violence during the Euromaidan.

A member of the Maidan leadership from the Fatherland Party was filmed on February 18 evacuating a car with a hunting rifle, equipped with a silencer and optics, of a Maidan activist, who was stopped by other Maidan activists. Such evacuation of the masked activist and his rifle with scopes during the deadly clashes might also indicate certain kind of involvement and knowledge concerning the Maidan snipers. A person who helped in the evacuation became an aide to one of leading members of Fatherland, who became the Minister of Internal Affairs after the Euromaidan, and whose ministry was involved in investigations of killings of the protestors and the police on the Maidan (Zubritsky, 2015).

There are statements by some protestors that the owner of this rifle was identified as on the “snipers” and seized by a group of the protestors from a roof of a building on Instytutska Street (De snajper, 2014). It would be irrational for a leading member of this main Maidan Party to evacuate without checking an armed masked person, who was reportedly identified as a “sniper” by Maidan protestors and was then stopped by them in area of deadly clashes. The owner of this hunting rifle said in his interview that he participated in the violent clashes with police in that area on February 18, 2014, was wounded there, and that he arrived on the Maidan with other hunters after hunting with his group of a few dozen “hunters” in Western Ukraine (Koshkina & Bazar, 2015). The GPU stated that he

was not involved in the massacre simply because his hunting rifle did not fire then. There were no reports in the media or in the official court decisions database about investigation of these “hunters” even though all three protesters were killed and up to 33 wounded with hunting pellets in the same area around the same time.

The official investigation determined that out of five protesters killed in the same area near the parliament and near Kripochnyi Lane three were shot with pellets, one driven over by a car by a Maidan activist, and another was severely beaten or died as a result of a heart attack (Cholovik, 2015). Moreover, one of these killed protesters reportedly was shot from roof of a building in the back of his head and not from the ground-level positions of the Berkut. This incident took place near intersections of Kripochnyi Lane and Instytutska Street after a deadly attack and burning by a large group of the Maidan activists, in particular, the far-right, of a nearby Party of Regions headquarters, which resulted in killing of a computer specialist in this office. (See Try, 2017).

Anatolii Strelchenko, the commander of the Omega unit of the Internal Troops, stated in his Ukrainian media interview that they knew on February 18 before the attack of the parliament that Maidan activists had weapons. He said that the Maidan shooters started to use live ammunition on that day and that a member of his Omega unit was wounded from a Makarov handgun, three Internal Troops soldiers were wounded by pellets, and a Berkut officer was wounded by a gunshot around the time and place of the incident involving the evacuation of the suspected Maidan sniper by a member of the Maidan leadership (Chapter 4; Hripun, 2015).

Investigations and trials of the massacre of the Maidan protesters on February 18–19, 2014, were even much less effective and more delayed than those involving the massacre on February 20, 2014. One Kharkiv Berkut member was arrested in June 2016 and charged with killings of the first three protesters on February 18, 2014. Another Kharkiv Berkut officer was arrested at the same time and charged with wounding of 33 protesters on the same day. They, like their accused counterparts in the February 20th massacre case, continued to serve in the police at the times of their arrests. This would be irrational if they committed such high-profile crimes. Their cases went to trials only in around the third anniversary of this massacre in 2017 and the actual trials have not started.

However, both these Berkut policemen were released from the detention by Kyiv courts in spite of such serious charges. One of them, who was

charged with attempts to kill 33 Maidan protesters, fled along with three other Berkut members to Russia soon after being released from arrest by the Kyiv Appeals Court in March 2017. Since such a court-ordered release is unlikely without a directive from the top, this decision suggests that some government leaders wanted to hinder the trial of the Berkut officers charged with killings of the Maidan protesters on February 18 (Avakov, 2017).

The investigation reported that four protesters died from head trauma and related injuries during the counterattack by titushki and the police. However, no one was identified and charged for their killings, and evidence concerning specific circumstances of their killings has not been made public, even though videos show many protesters gravely beaten by titushki and the police around the same time and place. Similarly, the investigation did not identify any suspects in killings of 12 protesters during a storming of the Maidan by the police in the evening of February 18 and around the midnight. The GPU, the special parliamentary commission, a media report based on the GPU investigation, and other evidence reported that about half of them were killed by pellets or hunting bullets (Rassledovanie, 2016).

There is no information about any investigations of involvements of groups of concealed Maidan shooters in Hotel Ukraina and the Trade Union building and other nearby buildings in killings of these protesters in spite of various such evidence and in spite of similar killings of the police around the same time and place, in particular, by hunting pellets and bullets. For instance, a Hotel Ukraina employee said that he witnessed a group of snipers in Maidan-style uniforms and with weapons in cases entering the hotel shortly before the massacre started on February 18 (Sekretni, 2014). A Fatherland deputy said that he witnessed protesters killed near him on the Maidan by shooters from Hotel Ukraina and Kozatsky Hotel on the same day (Shuster, 2015).

The GPU attributed killings of a Vesti newspaper journalist and a Maidan protester on Volodymyrska Street to “titushki.” However, a named suspect in the journalist killing was himself killed in the separatist-controlled Donbas. A Maidan lawyer stated that the evidence against this suspect was problematic (NSZhU, 2017). No specific suspect was identified in the killing of a protester nearby, even though the moment of his shooting was captured on video. No specific evidence was released by the investigation in both these cases with the exception of information that the protester was shot by a small caliber bullet.

The Maidan massacre trial verdict and GPU stated that nine policemen and Internal Troops servicemen were killed on February 18–19 during the attempts to disperse the Maidan (Vyrok, 2023). The failure to identify suspects or their affiliation in these killings is clearly not due to lack of evidence but is a part of cover-up.

Kyiv court rulings specifically refer to two Right Sector activists, who were wounded during a Right Sector attack of a separatist checkpoint in Sloviansk on April 20, 2014, and many other Right Sector members as suspects in GPU investigation in killings and wounding the police on the Maidan. The court decisions stated that the weapons used by the wounded checkpoint attackers were the same weapons from which two Internal Troops servicemen were killed and three other policemen wounded on the Maidan on February 18 (Ukhvala, 2016).

There is also evidence that there were armed Maidan shooters linked to the oligarchic Fatherland Party. A top person in the security of the Fatherland Party admitted in the Ukrainian media shooting the police on the Maidan (see Chapter 4). The Ukrainian media reported five years afterward that Kyiv prosecutors found that killers of two traffic policemen in Kyiv on February 19 were among Maidan snipers. These killers received phone calls from prominent female and male parliament deputies from one of the oligarchic Maidan parties after killing these policemen during a traffic stop. The investigation after these findings was transferred to the police and completely stalled (Rasstrely, 2019). This description matches the member of the Maidan leadership and a female activist, who were then deputies from the Fatherland Party and were involved in other cases of violence on the Maidan on February 18. The two killed policemen were included in the “Heavenly Hundred” of killed Maidan protesters, and their killing was publicly attributed to pro-Yanukovych government “titushki.”

A video showed Maidan activists with a Kalashnikov-type weapon behind a barricade on the Maidan during a standoff with the police. A little-known photo by an Italian journalist showed a protester using a cover from shields of other protesters and targeting advancing police on Maidan with an AK-74 type Kalashnikov assault rifle in the evening of February 18 (Rocchelli, 2014).

The radio intercepts of Internal Troops units and SBU Alfa commanders and snipers confirm that their attempts to seize the Maidan and the Trade Union building on February 18 were stopped by the burning of this building by its defenders and by use of live ammunition by the

Maidan Self-Defense and the Right Sector (see Katchanovski, 2015). These seizures of the Maidan and its headquarters were authorized by the Yanukovych government as a part of the “Boomerang” and “Khvylia” plans (Moskal, 2014). These plans were put in force after an attempt by the opposition led by the Maidan Self-Defense and the Right Sector to storm the parliament and their burning of the Party of Regions headquarters resulting in a death of an employee working there in the morning of the same day. An Alfa officer, who led one of the SBU groups during storming of the Trade Union Building, stated that their task was to seize the 5th floor, which contained a lot of weapons (Okrema, 2014). The Right Sector occupied the entire floor which served as both its headquarters and a base of the Right Sector company of the Maidan Self-Defense (Fig. 7.1).²



Fig. 7.1 Burned Trade Union Building covered with the OUN-UPA “Glory to Ukraine. Glory to Heroes” greeting (Photo by the author)

² The Maidan-led government and the parliamentary commission claimed without providing any evidence that SBU Alfa burned the Trade Union building.

A radio intercept of Alfa commanders contains their report about deploying SBU snipers after two “snipers” or spotters from the Maidan side were noticed on a Maidan-controlled building, their preparation to storm this building, and an order from their superior to Alfa jointly with the Internal Troops to start this attack (see Katchanovski, 2015). This would be consistent with the announcement of the “anti-terrorist” operation by the head of SBU on February 19, 2014. While this order was canceled on the same day following the Yanukovych decision, such plans by him and his government to use force to disperse and arrest the Maidan leaders and activists, and specifically armed protesters, created another incentive to the massacre organizers and armed protesters to use live ammunition against the police and their fellow protesters in a high-stakes game in order also to avoid their planned arrest by the Yanukovych government.

There is no evidence of any order by Yanukovych or his police and SBU commanders to massacre the Maidan activists on February 18 or 19. The Maidan massacre trial verdict in 2023 confirmed this (see Chapter 8).

The SBU Kyiv Region head was charged with responsibility for killings of 10 protesters during this “anti-terrorist operation” by the Berkut police, the Internal Troops, and the SBU Alfa, which attempted to seize the Trade Union building that served as the headquarters of the Maidan, including the Right Sector. The specific names of the victims in this case have not been made public. But the GPU stated that the head of the Kyiv Region SBU was responsible for death of two protesters, one of whom was reportedly a neo-Nazi, in a fire in the Trade Union building even though the investigation de facto admitted that the fire was started by the protesters during an attempt by the SBU Alfa to seize this building. A UN report stated that a court returned charges against him to the GPU because they were not specific. He was tried but there is no verdict in his case.

The GPU reported that 19 Maidan activists were killed on the Maidan on February 18, including 12 by firearms, and 120 were wounded on that day. Six activists were killed on February 19 on the Maidan, including 3 from firearms, and 20 were wounded. Eight police and Internal Troops members were killed and 113 wounded on February 18 on the Maidan, and respectively, one killed and 14 wounded on February 19 on the Maidan (Vyrok, 2023). Two Maidan protesters were also shot dead on February 19 during storming of the SBU headquarters in Khmelnytskyi. As noted, two traffic policemen were killed elsewhere in Kyiv on

February 19, reportedly by Maidan snipers. In addition, two Berkut members were killed in Lviv on February 20 during storming of the Berkut base by Maidan activists. Nobody has been convicted for killings and wounding these Maidan activists and law enforcement members. A rational explanation for such failure to identify and convict the mass murderers for more than 10 years suggests cover-up of involvement of Maidan snipers and clearly not lack of evidence (see Chapter 8).

7.2 OTHER RELATED CASES OF VIOLENCE DURING THE EUROMAIDAN

The Ukrainian government investigations in two related cases of political violence during the Maidan found that they were staged or false flag. An investigation by the Military Prosecutor Office in Lviv found that an elderly female Maidan protester was killed and several other Maidan protesters were wounded in Khmelnytskyi on February 19, 2014, by another Maidan activist from the SBU porch that was then occupied by Maidan protesters. Forensic ballistic examinations showed such bullet trajectories. However, the GPU reversed this investigation as politically inappropriate and charged an SBU Alfa officer for shooting the protesters from the second floor inside of the SBU building. But the Security Service of Ukraine publicly stated that the GPU investigation was falsified. This is consistent with the content analysis showing that the protesters were shot from the SBU porch and not from the second floor (see Video, 2023).

The Ukrainian police closed on March 27, 2020, its investigation of kidnapping, torture, and crucifixion of Dmytro Bulatov during the Maidan because the investigation determined that the crime “was absent” and could have been “staged.” The documents from his investigative criminal case show that associates of Bulatov in the Automaidan testified in 2014 after the Maidan and in 2019 that he staged his own abduction, torture, and crucifixion. One of them testified that Bulatov told him shortly before his disappearance that he planned to stage his own abduction. Another testified that she heard from Bulatov and other Maidan activists about need for some “fiery information” in order to regain popularity of the Automaidan, and that his staged abduction accomplished this.

Other Automaidan leaders testified that there was no rationale for Bulatov’s kidnapping and torture because he was removed from the Automaidan leadership a couple of days prior, and they regarded his

staging his own kidnapping as a real possibility. Two of them also testified that the light wounds and his appearance did not match his statements about being kidnapped and tortured for a week without food. A government forensic expert determined in his expert report for the investigation after the Maidan that Bulatov's wounds, including a cut of a piece of his ear, could have been inflicted by himself or by someone else with his agreement using sterile materials and disinfecting wounds, because they did not have any signs of infection. The government forensic expert also determined that there was no damage on his hands that would be consistent with Bulatov being handcuffed (Sharij, 2020). This is consistent with a testimony by David Zhvania, a former associate of Poroshenko and the head of the parliamentary committee during and after the Maidan. He stated that Maidan leaders, whom he names, staged the abduction and crucifixion of Bulatov and most other high-profile cases of violence, such as the Maidan massacre (Pravda, 2020).

The killings of the first three protesters at the end of January 2014 were attributed by the Maidan opposition and the media in Ukraine and the West to the government forces, despite the evidence that these were false-flag killings. These killings greatly escalated the conflict by turning it into conflict with fatalities.

However, unreported Pechersk court decisions suggested that the Prosecutor General Office investigated members and leaders of UNA-UNSO, one of the founding organizations in the Right Sector, for shooting these protesters (Ukhvala, 2015). The official investigation determined that these three protesters were killed from a few meter distances in the Maidan-controlled areas, while the police lines were several dozen meters away from the Maidan positions.

A Kyiv prosecutor said in 2019 that he spoke with the forensic expert who examined the body of Sergey Nigoyan, the Armenian protester, and that “there everything is unambiguous,” “the shot was from behind at a maximum distance of three-five meters and gun wads were found,” and “that is it definitely was not policemen who killed him” (Gubin, 2019). A popular Ukrainian blogger reported that the Security Service of Ukraine knows who in fact shot dead this Armenian protester on the Maidan in January 2014 because it has a video recording of a group of people in the Maidan-controlled Trade Union building hiding a firearm and discussing his killing right after it happened. The Trade Union building was the headquarters of the Maidan leadership and the Right Sector during the Maidan. He revealed a Security Service of Ukraine report concerning its

covert video surveillance of a Right Sector chemical explosions lab in the Trade Union building during the Maidan (Sharij, 2019).

Another evidence that these were false-flag killings is the absence of the moments and exact locations of killings of two of these protesters in livestreams, videos, photos, and confirmed eyewitnesses of these killings in the heavily covered area of a violent confrontation between the protesters and the police. A video published by a Ukrainian media outlet five years after these killings also provided evidence that a Belarusian far-right protester was killed from a Maidan-controlled area and not by the Berkut police. The video shows that he was shot while he was behind a barricade from burned buses that covered him from the Berkut police (Gubin, 2019).

The investigation confirmed that the Armenian protester was shot by pellets used in hunting. The killed Belarusian protester was a member of the UNA-UNSO. The ethnicities of these killed protesters also suggest that they were not random victims but were selected in order to propagate Euromaidan as ethnically inclusive and diverse and to garner support for Euromaidan among people from Armenia and Belarus. A Ukrainian reporter wrote on her Facebook page that a leader of the neo-Nazi White Hammer told her off the record that these two protesters were killed by their own and that this one of the reasons for the subsequent split of the White Hammer from the Right Sector (Melnikova, 2015).

Like in the case of the Maidan massacre, the prosecution stated that forensic examinations four years after the massacre reversed the previous examination findings without any explanation and claimed that these three protesters were killed from a distance between 7 to 21 meters. But the same investigation stated before that the police was then further from the protesters (4 goda, 2018). Various live streams and videos, which were viewed by the author, showed the same.

Nobody is charged with the killings of these Armenian, Belarusian, and Western Ukrainian protesters for more than 10 years since their murders, which were used by the Maidan leaders and the far-right to mobilize mass protests and justify their violence. The evidence suggests that they were killed in a false-flag operation with possible involvement of the far-right and that the investigation of their killings after the Maidan was stonewalled and fabricated for this reason and the actual killers were the covered-up. The Ukrainian and Western media with a few notable exceptions did not report such evidence and continued to propagate fake news

about killings of these and other Maidan protesters by the Berkut police or government snipers.

The Ukrainian trial sentence of the men for beating Tetiana Chornovol, a prominent female Maidan activist from the Fatherland Party and a former far-right UNA-UNSO activist, at the end of December 2013 stated that this was a traffic-related conflict. Various Ukrainian media reported during the Euromaidan that the same attackers, which were identified by the investigation when Yanukovych was still president, were linked to the Maidan opposition leaders. Davyd Zhvania, a former member of the Maidan leadership, stated several years afterward that her beating was staged by the Maidan leaders, similarly to the abduction of Bulatov. A similar statement was made by the former commander of the Maidan Self-Defense company. This is consistent with the disappearance of the crucial part of her dash camera recording of this incident and speedy disappearance of most of her head injuries. Zhvania also stated that the abduction of two other protesters, one of whom perished, was also staged by the Maidan leaders (Pravda, 2020).

The tipping point of the Euromaidan violence and mass protests was a highly publicized violent dispersal of a few hundred protesters by the anti-riot Berkut special police force on the Maidan on November 30, 2013. Videos, photos, and later admissions and testimonies by Right Sector and Maidan opposition leaders, and Maidan activists showed that it was orchestrated by oligarchic politicians from the Yanukovych government and by the oligarchic Maidan opposition with involvement of the far-right Right Sector. Such evidence revealed that the Maidan opposition leaders knew in advance about the police dispersal, that the head of the Yanukovych presidential administration from a rival oligarchic clan was involved in orchestrating the dispersal by the Berkut police and its filming and misrepresentation by his Inter TV channel, and that the Right Sector activists attacked the Berkut police during this dispersal (Katchanovski, 2020, 2020, Forthcoming).

The various evidence suggests that these highly publicized cases of violence against Maidan activists were rationally organized and staged with involvement of elements of the Maidan leadership and in part of the cases the far-right in order to reignite the anti-government Euromaidan protests by using the mechanism of state repression backfire.

Table 7.1 summarizes the key evidence of the Maidan massacre on February 18–19, 2014, and other related cases of violence during the Maidan.

Table 7.1 Summary of the Maidan massacre on February 18–19, 2014, and other related cases of violence during the EuroMaidan

Summary	Source
Various evidence shows that violent attack of the Ukrainian parliament and the Party of Regions headquarters was initiated on February 18 by Maidan leadership and Maidan Self-Defense, including far-right Svoboda and Right Sector, and that the Security Service of Ukraine and police launched an attempt to clear the Maidan in response	Videos; live streams; radio communications recordings; witness testimonies
Various evidence suggests massacre of both Maidan activists and police and Internal Troops members by Maidan snipers with involvement of Maidan leaders	Videos; live streams; radio communications recordings; witness testimonies; forensic examinations by government experts; use of hunting ammunition
No convictions for killings of 25 and wounding 140 Maidan activists and killing 9 and wounding 127 police and Internal Troops members on February 18–19, 2014 on the Maidan, and killings of two Maidan protesters in Khmelnytskyi and two traffic policemen in Kyiv on February 19 and killings of two Berkut members in Lviv on February 20	Prosecutor General of Ukraine investigation; Ukrainian court decisions
Kyiv prosecutor office investigation found that killers of two traffic policemen in Kyiv on February 19 were among Maidan snipers and were linked to deputies of Ukrainian parliament from an oligarchic Maidan Party	Leaked Kyiv prosecutor office investigation in Ukrainian media
Various evidence suggests false-flag killing of an elderly female Maidan protester and wounding of several other Maidan protesters in Khmelnytskyi on February 19, 2014	Videos; investigation by the Military Prosecutor Office in Lviv; forensic ballistic examinations by government experts; Security Service of Ukraine
Various evidence suggests that kidnapping, torture, and crucifixion of Dmytro Bulatov were staged	Videos; Ukrainian police investigation; testimonies; forensic examinations by government experts
Various evidence of false-flag killings of three Armenian, Belarusian, and Western Ukrainian Maidan activists in January 2014	Videos; admissions; forensic examinations by government experts; partly government investigation
Various evidence suggesting that beating of Tetiana Chornovol in December 2013 was staged	Videos, testimonies by members of Maidan leadership; partly Ukrainian trial sentence
The various evidence shows that the violent dispersal of Maidan protesters by the Berkut police on November 30, 2013, was orchestrated by oligarchic politicians from the Yanukovych government and by the Maidan opposition with involvement of the far-right Right Sector, which attacked the police during this dispersal	Videos; witness testimonies; admissions by the Right Sector organizations and leaders; Ukrainian media; social media

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CHAPTER 8

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

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

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

8.1 THE MAIDAN MASSACRE TRIAL VERDICT¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.2 COVERUP, STONEWALLING, AND EVIDENCE TAMPERING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(continued)

Table 8.1 (continued)

The conviction of three Berkut officers in absentia for murder of 31 of 48 Maidan protesters and attempted murder of 44 out of 80 Maidan activists and the deputy Berkut regiment commander also for manslaughter of 4 activists and wounding 8 others was based on collective responsibility and a single forensic examination, which was conducted 5 years after the massacre, reversed results of some 40 previous forensic bullet examinations, including a computer-based examination which showed that bullets of Berkut Kalashnikovs did not match bullets from bodies of killed Maidan protesters. This 2019 forensic bullet examination contradicted synchronized videos, which show that times and directions of gunshots by Berkut members did not coincide with times and directions of killings of Maidan activists, wounds locations and directions in forensic medical examinations, on-site investigative experiments by government ballistic experts pointing to bullet trajectories from Maidan-controlled areas, and testimonies of the absolute majority of wounded Maidan activists and several hundreds of prosecution and defense witnesses and other witnesses concerning snipers in Hotel Ukraine and other Maidan-controlled locations Disappearance of almost all shields and helmets of killed and wounded protesters, many bullets extracted from bodies or objects, several trees with bullets and/or bullet holes, recordings of live online streams, web cameras, and security cameras showing the massacre and the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas	Maidan massacre trial & investigation
Cover-up and tampering with evidence such as unexplained reversals of testimonies of many wounded protesters concerning snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and reversals of some 40 previous forensic examinations of bullets. Bullets of many killed and wounded Maidan protesters without any documentation or other chain of custody appeared, disappeared, changed size, shape and packages, or were not sealed	Maidan massacre trial & investigation

Two out of five Berkut policemen charged with the Maidan massacre were released by the trial judges because of the lack of evidence. All 5 Berkut policemen were exchanged to Donbas separatists on President Zelensky order. Two of them returned to face the trial in Kyiv. For over 10 years after the massacre, nobody has been convicted with real prison sentence for killing of all 74 and wounding all 312 Maidan activists on February 18–20, 2014 on the Maidan. Nobody is convicted for killing all 13 and wounding of all 190 police and Internal Troops members and murder of a computer specialist at the Party of Regions headquarters on February 18–20 on the Maidan. Nobody is convicted for murders of 4 other police members in Kyiv and Lviv and 2 Maidan protesters in Khmelnitskyi	Maidan massacre trial; media
Far-right activists attacked and threatened the Maidan massacre trial several times	Maidan massacre trial; media

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CHAPTER 9

Conclusion and Implications for the Russia-Ukraine War and Other Conflicts in Ukraine

The final chapter summarizes the main findings of the comprehensive evidence-based and theoretically-based analysis of the Maidan massacre in Ukraine. The analysis of various evidence, such as synchronized videos, audio recordings, testimonies of the absolute majority of wounded Maidan protesters, and some 500 other witnesses, shows beyond any reasonable doubt that the Maidan protesters and the police were massacred by Maidan snipers located in Maidan-controlled buildings in a rationally organized operation with involvement of far-right and oligarchic elements of the Maidan opposition. This mass killing led to the overthrow of the Yanukovych government and ultimately to the Russian annexation of Crimea, the civil war and Russian military interventions in Donbas, and the Ukraine-Russia and West-Russia conflicts which Russia escalated by illegally invading Ukraine in 2022.

The systematic analysis of various evidence found that the Maidan massacre of the protesters and the police on February 18–20, 2014, was a successful false-flag operation that was rationally organized and conducted by elements of the Maidan leadership and concealed groups of Maidan snipers in Maidan-controlled buildings in order to win the asymmetric conflict during the “Euromaidan” and seize power in Ukraine. This massacre was a key element in the violent overthrow of the semi-democratic government of Viktor Yanukovych in Ukraine.

The various types of evidence analyzed indicate that elements of far-right organizations, such as the Right Sector and Svoboda, and oligarchic Maidan parties, such as Fatherland, were directly or indirectly involved in various capacities in this massacre of the protesters and the police. Such a false-flag massacre by its nature could have been covertly organized and successfully carried out by only a small number of Maidan leaders and snipers.

The study shows that concealed armed groups of Maidan snipers, based in particular, in the Music Conservatory and Hotel Ukraina, started the most deadly massacre in the early morning on February 20 by targeting Berkut and Internal Troops units on the Maidan with live ammunition fire, inflicting their mass casualties, and forcing them to retreat. The armed Maidan groups of snipers, in particular the same ones, then massacred the unsuspecting Maidan protesters from concealed positions in more than 20 Maidan-controlled buildings and areas, in particular Hotel Ukraina, Zhovtnevyi Palace, and Bank Arkada.

Content analysis of synchronized videos, audio recordings, and photos, and analysis of various publicly available evidence showed that killed and wounded policemen and at least the absolute majority of 49 killed and 172 wounded Maidan protesters were massacred on February 20 by snipers in Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. The content analysis shows that at least eight videos filmed snipers in Maidan-controlled buildings and areas aiming or shooting at the Berkut police during the Maidan massacre. Their and other Maidan snipers' admissions, witness testimonies, and content analysis revealed that six of these videos show Maidan snipers, in particular, from the far-right-linked special armed Maidan company. Snipers in Maidan-controlled buildings aiming at or shooting Maidan protesters are filmed in at least 14 videos. They included 10 videos in which these snipers were identified as Maidan snipers by Maidan protesters, journalists, content analysis, and other evidence. At least 26 videos show groups of armed Maidan snipers and spotters moving into, looking for, changing, or leaving shooting positions in Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. There were also more than 100 videos and reports of protesters, journalists, and policemen during the Maidan massacre itself pointing to or testifying about Maidan snipers or snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings. This is consistent with the audio recordings of a group of such snipers shooting on commands.

The statement by the far-right Svoboda Party, videos, and testimonies by the Maidan self-defense commander, Maidan protesters, Ukrainian

journalists, and Hotel Ukraina staff show that this hotel was guarded and controlled by the Maidan opposition, specifically Svoboda, before, during, and immediately after the massacre of the protesters and the police by snipers located in this hotel. Similar evidence shows control by the Maidan opposition of other buildings and areas from which snipers shot protesters and police.

Several hundred witnesses also reported in the media and social media snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings during the massacre. A dozen of Maidan politicians and activists publicly stated that they witnessed the involvement of specific top Maidan leaders from oligarchic parties and far-right organizations in the massacre, such as their advance knowledge about the massacre, deployment of snipers, and evacuation of snipers who were captured by Maidan protesters. This is consistent with other evidence, such as testimonies by 14 self-admitted members of Maidan sniper groups, particularly from a far-right-linked Maidan company and Georgia.

Synchronized videos show that specific times and directions of shooting by the Berkut policemen did not coincide with the specific times and directions of shooting of specific protesters on February 20. A long German ARD TV video, which simultaneously captured the killings and wounding of protesters and the positions of the Berkut Police, also shows this. This visual evidence alone shows that the Berkut policemen, who were charged with the massacre of the protesters, did not massacre at least the absolute majority of killed and wounded Maidan protesters.

Various videos reveal snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings and show that Maidan protesters were lured and then massacred by snipers from such Maidan-controlled buildings as Hotel Ukraina.

There is no specific evidence that Yanukovych or his ministers and commanders ordered or were involved in other ways in the massacre of Maidan protesters. Bullet hole locations showed that Berkut policemen were mostly shooting above and in front of the Maidan protesters, particularly above the protesters on the second and higher floors of Hotel Ukraina, which was the main location of the snipers, and in trees, poles, walls, and the ground. Evidence, such as videos and testimonies, also shows that American, British, German, Polish, and Russian journalists were shot at by snipers located in Maidan-controlled buildings.

There was no evidence of any “third-force” snipers, in particular Russian ones. Several Georgian self-admitted members of sniper groups testified in the media and for the Ukrainian trial and investigation that

they and other Georgian and foreign snipers received orders from the Maidan opposition and ex-Georgian leaders.

The findings are corroborated by evidence from the Maidan massacre trial and investigation in Ukraine. Such evidence includes testimonies of the absolute majority of wounded Maidan protesters that they and other protesters were shot on February 20 by snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings, and testimonies by nearly 100 prosecution and defense witnesses concerning such snipers. The evidence also includes videos presented at the trial, findings of forensic medical examinations that almost all the protesters were shot from steep directions from the sides or the back, determinations by government ballistic experts that many protesters were shot from Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings, and initial ballistic examinations that did not match bullets extracted from the bodies of killed protesters to the Berkut Kalashnikovs. The cover-up of the snipers and the key evidence and stonewalling of the investigations and trials by the Maidan governments and the far-right, the denial by the prosecution and Maidan victims' lawyers that there were any snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings, the failure to convict anyone for the massacre of the police, and the striking fact that nobody has been serving prison sentence for the massacre of activists for more than 10 years after one of the most documented mass killings in history also corroborate this study.

Careful analysis of publicly available evidence, revealed during the Maidan massacre trials and investigations, shows beyond reasonable doubt that the four killed and several dozen wounded policemen, and nearly all of the 49 killed and 172 wounded Maidan protesters, on February 20, were shot by snipers in Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. Even the Ukrainian Prosecutor General Office investigation determined that about half of Maidan protesters were wounded from locations other than the Berkut police positions and did not charge anyone with their attempted murder. The GPU investigation also initially found that the snipers in the Hotel Ukraina massacred the protesters but cover-up this.

The absolute majority of wounded Maidan protesters, with whose shooting Berkut policemen are charged and whose testimonies were revealed at the trial, testified at the trial and the investigation that they were shot on February 20 by snipers from Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings or witnessed snipers there. Nearly

100 witnesses, including dozens of the prosecution witnesses, also testified about snipers in these Maidan-controlled locations, in particular, massacring the police and the protesters.

Synchronized videos presented at the trial show that the times and directions of the shots by the Berkut policemen did not coincide with the times and directions at which specific protesters were killed. Other videos showed Maidan protesters being lured into positions that were exposed to snipers from such Maidan-controlled buildings as the Hotel Ukraina.

Forensic medical examinations by government experts determined that the majority of the protesters were shot on February 20 from a steep angle from either the side or back. This is consistent with locations of the Maidan-controlled buildings, and inconsistent with the locations of the Berkut police on the ground. Also, the initial ballistic examinations did not match the bullets extracted from the bodies of killed and wounded to the Kalashnikov rifles used by Berkut.

Nor did the trials and investigations reveal any evidence that President Yanukovych or his law enforcement ministers and commanders ordered the massacre. Forensic examinations of the bullet holes by the government experts and the videos they presented showed that the Berkut policemen were mostly shooting above the Maidan protesters, and in particular, into the Hotel Ukraina, which was the main location of the snipers.

The accidental killing and wounding of a small number of protesters by the Berkut police by ricochet bullets, or in a crossfire with snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings, cannot be completely excluded because of the lack of publicly available data or because of contradictory data. But their killing and wounding together with other protesters suggests that they were also likely shot by the Maidan snipers.

There are various indications of stonewalling and cover-up of key evidence. It is noteworthy that the government investigation and Maidan victims' lawyers denied presence of any snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings, in spite of its own initial findings that no fewer than 13 protesters were killed, and at least 77 wounded, from shots fired from the Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. When bullet trajectories, as determined by government ballistic experts and lasers in on-site-investigative experiments, showed that many Maidan protesters had been shot at from Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings, this result was covered-up and ballistic experts were no longer used. The GPU did not use ballistic experts to determine the bullet trajectories and locations of

shooters in the overwhelming majority of cases even after being ordered to do so by the judge and the jury.

Unexplained reversals of results of some 40 forensic ballistic examinations, including computer-based examination which showed that bullets of Berkut Kalashnikovs did not match bullets from bodies of killed Maidan protesters, also suggest a cover-up and evidence tampering. Synchronized content analysis of the videos of the Berkut police and killed and wounded protesters along with locations and directions of wounds in forensic medical examination, testimonies of eyewitnesses among Maidan protesters, and on-site investigative experiments by government ballistic experts show that Maidan protesters could not have been physically shot from the Berkut positions.

The Maidan massacre trial verdict, which was issued by a Kyiv court in October 2023 shortly before the 10th anniversary of the Euro-maidan, confirmed that many Maidan protesters were killed and wounded and BBC and ARD TV journalists were shot at not by Berkut or other law enforcement officers but by snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan locations and that this hotel and these locations were not controlled by the government forces but were Maidan “activists-controlled.” The verdict also confirmed that there were no Russian snipers involved in the massacre and that there were no massacre orders from Yanukovych or his ministers.

The verdict decision to convict in absentia the Berkut policemen, who were exchanged by Zelensky to Donbas separatists, for the murder of 35 protesters was politically motivated. It was based on a single forensic examination of bullets, which in 2019 reversed results of some 40 previous forensic examinations of bullets. This forensic examination also contradicted synchronized videos, forensic medical and ballistic examinations by government experts, and testimonies of the absolute majority of wounded Maidan protesters and several hundred witnesses. The Maidan massacre trial verdict along with the findings of the investigation by the Prosecutor General Office comprise a de facto official admission by the Ukrainian justice system that at least 10 of the 49 killed Maidan activists and 115 of the 172 wounded activists were shot on February 20, 2014, not by Berkut or other law enforcement members from government-controlled areas but by snipers from Maidan-controlled locations, in particular, Hotel Ukraina. Such de facto official admission that the absolute majority of Maidan protesters were wounded not by the government forces from Maidan-controlled locations is another evidence that at

least the absolute majority of the protesters were also killed by Maidan snipers since they were shot at the same time and place. Nobody has been convicted with real prison sentence for killing of 76 and wounding over 300 Maidan activists in Ukraine on February 18–20, 2014, more than 10 years after one of the most documented cases of political mass killing in history. Nobody is convicted for killing of all 17 and wounding about all 200 police and Internal Troops servicemen on February 18–20, 2014, on the Maidan and other locations in Ukraine.

This book also shows visually, based on synchronized videos, bullet hole locations in shields and helmets, wound locations and directions in forensic medical examinations, an on-site investigative experiment by government experts, and testimonies of eyewitnesses among Maidan protesters, that the SITU architecture model produced for the Maidan victims' lawyers misrepresented locations of the wounds and directions of the gunshots that killed three protesters.

The evidence also suggests that there were armed Maidan shooters linked to the far-right and to the oligarchic Fatherland Party and that they killed and wounded both the police and the protesters on February 18 and 19, 2014. The Maidan leaders initiated the violent storming of the parliament on February 18. The first casualty was the computer technician in the Party of Regions office, who was killed during the arson of the building by Maidan activists, including the far-right. The Trade Union building on the Maidan was set on fire by the far-right activists during the attempt by the Security Service of Ukraine Alfa unit to storm this building. The evidence shows that such other major cases of violence during the Euromaidan, as killings of the first three protesters in January 2014, violent dispersal of the Maidan protesters on November 30, 2013, beating of a female Maidan activist, and kidnapping and crucifixion of another prominent activist were also staged in order to galvanize anti-government protests.

Consistent with the proposed moral hazard theory of state repression backfire, this false-flag mass killing on February 18–20, 2014, produced public backlash against the incumbent Yanukovych government and its forces, which were immediately blamed by the Maidan opposition, Western governments, a part of the ruling party, and Ukrainian and Western media for ordering and perpetrating this massacre. The condition reported by Maidan leaders, including the far-right Svoboda Party leaders, from a Western government representative before the massacre

that the Western governments would turn on the Yanukovych government after casualties among protesters would reach 100, created rational incentives to the Maidan leaders to “sacrifice” 100 Maidan protesters and attribute their killing to the government forces. The killed protesters were called Heavenly Hundred immediately after the massacre, and protesters who died from illnesses and people who were not on the Maidan were included to bring the number of victims to 100.

Such information on Western involvement and the de facto backing of the violent undemocratic overthrow of the Ukrainian government by means of the Maidan massacre and the misrepresentation of this massacre by the Western governments, despite the evidence, including in the phone call between the Estonian foreign minister and the EU foreign affairs chief, that this mass killing was perpetrated with the involvement of the elements of the oligarchic and far-right Maidan opposition, requires further research and analysis of evidence which is not made public by these governments. But this and the overwhelming publicly available evidence concerning involvement of the oligarchic and far-right elements of the Maidan leadership and Maidan snipers suggests that the US and other Western governments at least knew about the actual perpetrators of this false-flag massacre.

The denial of the false-flag Maidan massacre in spite of such overwhelming evidence is politically motivated. The book shows that the Maidan massacre narrative that was propagated by the governments and the mainstream media in the West and Ukraine, as well as Wikipedia was false. They called the Maidan a peaceful protest and presented the massacre of the Maidan protesters as perpetrated by the government snipers on the orders of Yanukovych and his government. The prosecution, Maidan victims’ lawyers, and the mainstream media with some notable exceptions denied presence of snipers in Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled buildings, their shooting of the Maidan protesters, and the far-right involvement in this mass killing and claimed that this was “a conspiracy theory” and “propaganda.” Similarly, the Russian government claims that this was a fascist or Nazi coup are also false.

This false-flag killing of the protesters and police, along with several assassination attempts that followed, led to Yanukovych fleeing Kyiv and then Ukraine and to the violent overthrow of the Ukrainian government. The false-flag massacre was a key part of the violent undemocratic overthrow of the government in Ukraine and a major human rights violation and crime.

The massacre of Maidan protesters and the police was a trigger or a tipping point in the conflict that spiraled into other major conflicts in Ukraine and conflicts between Ukraine and Russia and between the West and Russia, in particular, the Russian annexation of Crimea, the war in Donbas, the illegal and devastating Russian invasion and the war with Ukraine, which also became a dangerous proxy war between the West and Russia. The Maidan massacre does not justify the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine. Conversely, the Russian invasion does not justify the Maidan massacre of the police and the protesters.

Therefore, the Maidan massacre and the failure to ensure justice ultimately have significant indirect global consequences, which can further increase in unlikely but not excluded case of a direct war between NATO and Russia with a danger of a nuclear war over Ukraine. The different narratives of the Maidan massacre and regime change in Ukraine have complicated peaceful resolutions of the conflicts in Crimea and Donbas and Russia-Ukraine and the West-Russia conflicts, which escalated, respectively, to the largest war in Europe since World War II and a proxy war between largest nuclear powers. Bringing the actual perpetrators and organizers of the Maidan massacre in Ukraine to justice can help resolving these dangerous conflicts.

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