

Resources for individuals seeking to collect or preserve evidence of serious human rights violations and atrocity crimes in Ukraine

Gathering information or evidence of violations of international human rights law is a specialized skill set and ensuring that the evidence is usable by legal tribunals in the future requires careful compliance with domestic and international standards. Ukrainian civil society experts have been engaged in evidence collection for years already and many such organizations have dedicated teams already addressing these issues in the current crisis.

This non-exhaustive list attempts to provide resources that can help inform individuals facing the need to preserve information and evidence without that training.

I am continuing to update this list, but I strongly recommend that you use the [Public International Law Policy Group's Ukraine Transitional Justice & Documentation Portal](#), which is storing resources and making them available in Ukrainian, if possible.

If you have additional resources that you would like to add to this list, please contact me via DM on Twitter [@WesRist](#). I am specifically working to identify Ukrainian language resources that can be shared as well.

[Збір фактів порушення прав людини](#) (Collection of facts of human rights violations) by the [Office of the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy](#)

The Office of President Zelensky has launched a website to collect evidence to "make it possible to prosecute the Russian Federation & defend Ukraine's interests in international courts."

[eyeWitness App](#) (supported by [Int'l Bar Association](#)):

The eyeWitness app is a secure mobile app that turns any Android smartphone into an evidence gathering resource. It is designed to be easily disguised, in case of authorities searching individual phones. It also records digital photos and videos with careful security protocols, allowing the evidence to be verified by third party reviewers, who can submit it to international or national investigations.

[User Guide \(English\)](#)

[How to Post Verifiable Photos & Videos Using the eyeWitness to Atrocities App](#)

[Pursuing Justice for Mass Atrocities Handbook](#) (Created by the [U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)):

Specifically, Chapter Four, "[Gathering and Sharing Information](#)" speaks directly to some of the issues that need to be considered when seeking to secure evidence for future use by national or international tribunals.

[Handbook on Civil Society Documentation of Serious Human Rights Violations](#) (Created by the [Public International Law & Policy Group](#)):

This exhaustive guide includes principles and best practices around documenting serious human rights abuses. “The purpose of this Handbook is to provide guidelines and best practices for the collection and management of information on serious human rights situations for those that are not professionally trained in such documentation practices.”

Field Guide for Civil Society Documentation of Serious Human Rights Violations (Created by the [Public International Law & Policy Group](#)):

“The purpose of this field guide is to provide practical assistance to those who encounter information of gross human rights violations on how best to document such information when (a) no professional investigative authority is immediately available AND (b) danger exists that the information or evidence might be damaged or lost. Improper investigation and documentation may cause irreparable damage to information. This may negatively affect future use of such information, for example as evidence in court. If possible, always refer to a professionally trained investigator as a matter of first choice.”

Berkeley Protocol on Digital Open Source Investigations (Created by the [UC Berkeley School of Law Human Rights Center](#)):

“The Berkeley Protocol does not focus on specific technologies, platforms, software or tools, but rather on the underlying principles and methodologies that can be consistently applied, even as the technology itself changes. These principles outline minimum legal and ethical standards for conducting effective open source investigations. By following the guidance in the Berkeley Protocol, investigators will help to ensure the quality of their work, while minimizing the physical, psychosocial and digital risks to themselves and others.”

Video as Evidence Field Guide (Created by [Witness](#)) [Доступна українська версія]:

“The Video as Evidence Field Guide helps filmmakers use videos to expose abuse and bring about justice. This resource helps ensure that more cameras in more hands can lead to more exposure and greater justice.”

Torture & Other Human Rights Violations Reporting Form (Created by the [International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims](#)):

“A Form for You to Document and Report Torture and Other Human Rights Violations during Protest. This form has been created for use by all victims and witnesses of torture and other human rights violations during protest, arrest, and detention. This form is intended to assist you to document and report your experience and any evidence of physical harm. If you wish to file a legal complaint, this form can help you to document your experience and injuries. However, an interview with a legal advocate is still recommended. This form does not solicit all information necessary for the filing of a legal complaint, such as witness or perpetrator identities.”

Пам’ятка щодо фіксації доказів злочинів проти цивільного населення (Memo to Record Evidence of Crimes Against Civilians) (Created by the [Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union](#)):

This brief document defines a war crime, gives examples, and explains how to record instances that may be observed.

Guidelines on International Human Rights Fact-Finding Visits and Reports (Created by the [International Bar Association Human Rights Institute](#) and the [Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law](#)):

This set of human rights fact-finding guidelines are the result of several years' work and wide consultation. They arose out of concern that, despite there being no agreed international standards for human rights fact-finding reporting, such reports are frequently referred to by courts and tribunals as evidence of the facts alleged in them, as well as by governments, NGOs and other interested people. The guidelines aim to fill this gap by setting an agreed international standard of good practice in the conduct of fact-finding visits and in the compilation of reports. More information is available on the website <http://www.factfindingguidelines.org>.

Basic Investigative Standards For International Crimes Investigations (Developed by [Global Rights Compliance](#))

The Basic Investigative Standards for International Crimes ('BIS') developed by Global Rights Compliance ('GRC') provides a range of minimum standards for the investigation of international crimes. The BIS relies on the most widely accepted international standards, including those employed by the International Criminal Court, increasing the likelihood that relevant information is collected in ways that preserve its potential to be useful evidence in future national or international trials or accountability mechanisms.

Guidelines for Remote Interviewing (Developed by the [Institute for International Criminal Investigations](#))

These guidelines focus on remote investigative interviews that may form part of non-criminal and criminal investigations into international crimes or grave human rights violations. "Remote" includes interviews conducted via online video-calls and audio-only phone calls. The guidelines mainly concern investigations that take place in resource-constrained, conflict-affected or similarly challenging contexts and where the interviewer(s) is not in the same location as the interviewee.

Guidelines on investigating violations of IHL: Law, policy and good practice ([Developed by the International Committee for the Red Cross](#))

These Guidelines aim to bring much needed clarity and support for the conduct of effective investigations into violations of IHL. The Guidelines are the result of a five-year project, initiated in 2014 by the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights and joined in 2017 by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The resulting publication is based on extensive research and is also informed by a series of expert workshops and engagement with stakeholders. The 16 Guidelines are each accompanied by a detailed commentary and provide guidance on the different aspects of investigations into violations of IHL, from the early stages of recording information and identifying the incidents that require investigation, through to the structural and procedural aspects of investigative bodies.

Current international organization, government, and NGO statements, and news stories about documentation of evidence

International Organization Statements

February 27: [Ukraine Institutes Proceedings Against Russian Federation](#)

February 28: [Statement by ICC Prosecutor Karim A.A. Khan on Ukraine Investigation](#)

March 1: [International Court of Justice to hold Public Hearings on Allegations of Genocide Convention Violation \(Ukraine v. Russia Federation\)](#)

Government Statements:

March 2: [Request by ICC Member States to refer situation in Ukraine to the ICC](#)

March 9: [Collection of Facts of Russian Crimes and Human Rights Violations in Ukraine](#) (Office of the President of Ukraine)

NGO Statements:

[Kyiv Declaration: Statement from Ukrainian Civil Society Leaders](#)

March 2: [Human Rights Watch statement about ICC investigation](#)

March 3: [Civil Society Groups call for ICC investigation funding](#)

News Coverage:

March 3: [Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe to set up investigation into war crimes by Russia in Ukraine](#)

March 5: Asymmetrical Haircuts Podcast: [Ukraine: All Roads Lead to the Hague](#)

March 6: [‘Leave no stone unturned’: how investigators gather evidence of war crimes in Ukraine](#)