

# Falsification of Images, Incoherent Information? Russia Willing to Investigate Bucha's Tragedy

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*The alleged massacre of civilians in Bucha is one of the most talked about topics around the world in recent hours. Russia has been repeatedly accused by Western governments and mainstream media, and there are already calls for Russian President Vladimir Putin to be prosecuted for war crimes and human rights violations. However, there is a series of controversies in the case, from possible falsifications in the images released by Ukrainian forces to incoherent information about the dates of the massacre, which demands a deep investigation.*

According to the official Kremlin's position, the Russian government categorically denies any involvement by its forces in operations that killed civilians in Bucha. Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov stated on Monday, April 4, about the case, making it clear that Moscow, in addition to denying participation in the massacre, supports the immediate launch of high-level investigations on the occurrence. The Russian authorities also committed to take the discussion forward to the UN Security Council in order to conduct an international investigation in the grave tragedy.

Furthermore, Peskov made it clear that the Russian government does not trust the veracity of all the information contained in the videos and photos of dead civilians released by the Ukrainian government. There are reports from Russian experts pointing out possible forgeries and frauds in the content of the videos.

Other Russian officials also commented on the case, pointing out that there is evidence that the videos were forged or performed. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, for example, claimed during a meeting with UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths that the Ukrainian press had released fake videos about Russian operations in Bucha, and that there had been a staging organized by Kiev's forces in the region days after the departure of Russian troops.

In the same vein, the official representative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maria Zakharova, said that the videos and photos released by the Ukrainian press and the Western statements about them appear to be a “custom-made story”. Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu also spoke out, claiming that the case is a production by the Kiev regime for Western media that sounds like a provocation against Russia. Finally, the head of the Russian Investigative Committee, Alexander Bastrykin, also expressed distrust about the veracity of the material released by Kiev and requested a procedural assessment on the possible massacre of civilians.

Despite the distrust, which seems justified in the face of a long history of fake news and information warfare on the part of the NATO-Kiev axis, Moscow seems open to hearing contrary opinions, which is precisely why the government seems so interested in launching an investigation, both using its official experts and international agents convoked by the UNSC. It is possible that, in addition to the obviously fake and staged videos, there is also real material, with actual images of dead people. The Kremlin’s main point is that, regardless of whether the videos and photos are real or not, there is no Russian involvement in cases of massacre of civilians.

Considering the evident victory of the Special Operation in Bucha region, there would be no strategic advantage for the Russian military to shoot civilians, which would cause unnecessary harm to the country. Now, Zelensky, Biden and other Western leaders are calling for Putin to be condemned by international courts and planning an increase in sanctions. So, it does not seem at all reasonable that Russian forces would have deliberately planned and carried out a massacre of civilians, considering that these would be the obvious consequences of such acts.

Another point that needs to be mentioned is that there is an evident time lapse in the case. The Russians withdrew from Bucha on 30 March. The Ukrainians entered Bucha on March 31, and the “retake” of the city was announced by the mayor on the same day. Azov’s paramilitaries entered the city only on April 1. So how were the “bodies in the streets” found only on April 3?

If international society is really interested in the truth, it must heed the Russian request for an investigation at the UNSC. If Western governments refuse to cooperate with the investigation, it will be possible to conclude that they have something to hide. The UN must remain neutral and commit itself to the search for the truth of the facts, even if this truth is unpleasant for the West.

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*Featured image: Destroyed car in Bucha with a dead person inside, 2 April 2022 (Licensed under CC BY 4.0)*

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