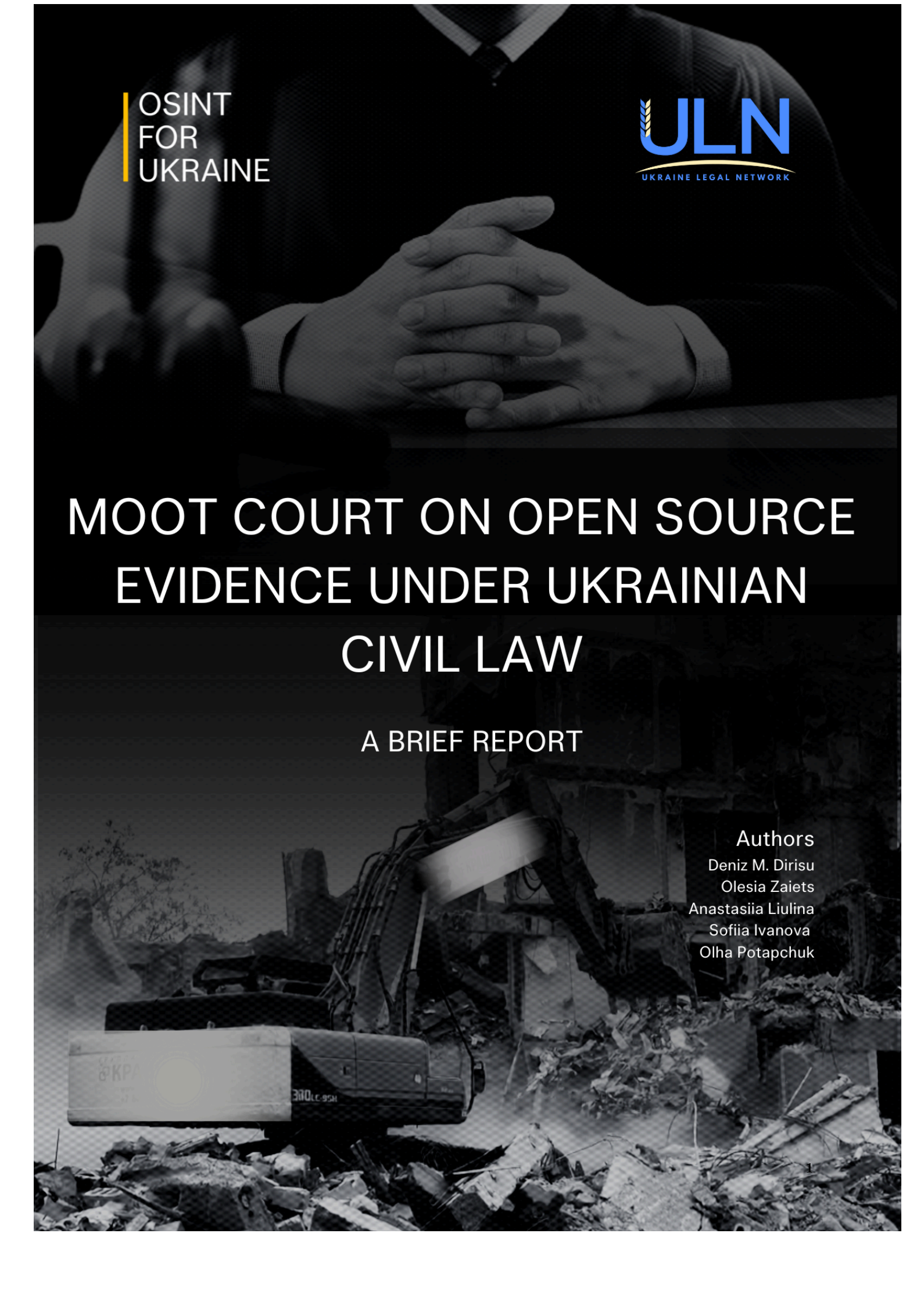




OSINT
FOR
UKRAINE



MOOT COURT ON OPEN SOURCE EVIDENCE UNDER UKRAINIAN CIVIL LAW

A BRIEF REPORT

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OSINT FOR UKRAINE

OSINT FOR UKRAINE (OFU) is a Netherlands-based independent non-profit which harnesses the potential of OSINT to conduct thorough and transparent investigations into international crimes, to combat the pervasive spread of disinformation, and to support civil society and official accountability bodies.

The International Crimes Investigation Group (ICIG) of OFU focuses on providing guidance, investigative support, and potential evidence for International and European accountability bodies and like-minded nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in order to promote and defend the rule of law and Justice.

OFU is a mission-driven team of investigators, analysts, lawyers, and technologists who lead impactful investigations, develop open source tools, and train others to empower them to do the same.

From OSINT FOR UKRAINE several investigators from the International Crimes Investigation Group were involved directly with the pre-trial investigation for the victim's legal team. Their identities are kept anonymous due to operational security rules.

Ukraine Legal Network

Ukraine Legal Network (ULN) is a network of Ukrainian and international lawyers working with and for Ukrainian survivors of international crimes and grave human rights violations in their search for justice. The network was created by the Nuhanovic Foundation (NF), a Dutch NGO serving armed conflict survivors in accessing justice and seeking reparations.

ULN was established to support Ukrainians in the Netherlands, particularly those who may be victims or witnesses of international crimes, as well as their families, and those in need of support and empowerment in their daily struggle for their rights, their lives, and justice.

The ULN Team was directly involved in the fictional court proceeding in the following capacities:

The Judge — [Olha Potapchuk](#), Ukrainian advocate, with legal experience of over 20 years, including 10 years in the prosecutor's office.

[Sofia Ivanova](#) — LLM in Public International Law (Utrecht University). Intern in the OPCW and legal consultant for Amnesty International Ukraine. Sofia represented the victim in the moot court.

[Anastasiia Liulina](#) — PhD candidate at the University of Groningen, specialising in digital open source evidence of international crimes, former intern at the IPHR OSINT team. Represented the victim in the moot court.

[Olesia Zaiets](#) — Project Officer from ULN, coordinated and co-organised the moot court together with the ULN team.

[Bogdana Cherniavska](#) — ULN Project Coordinator, assisted in the event's organization.

[Julia Marko](#) — ULN Communications Officer, led communications to promote the event, highlight OSINT-based evidence, and engage key audiences.

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1. Purpose of the Project

ULN, in collaboration with OSINT Investigators from OSINT FOR UKRAINE, initiated this fictional hearing to gain deeper insights into the legal challenges of using open-source information as evidence in civil proceedings. The primary objective was to explore how victims who face difficulties in gathering evidence through conventional means due to restricted access to occupied territories can strengthen their claims with the support of qualified OSINT investigators.

The appointed judge assessed the case in accordance with the Ukrainian Civil Code and Civil Procedural Code, placing particular emphasis on the relevance and admissibility of OSINT-derived evidence. This exercise demonstrated the critical role that such evidence can and is already playing in Ukrainian legal practice.

By exploring the application of OSINT in proving property damage claims, this fictional hearing highlighted the importance of this method of collecting data as a legitimate tool for victims who might otherwise struggle to substantiate their cases. The findings underscore the necessity of learning national and international frameworks and judicial practices that accommodate modern investigative techniques, ensuring that affected individuals can access justice even in the most complex and restrictive circumstances.

One of the key objectives of this project for OSINT FOR UKRAINE was to rigorously test and refine our internal investigative and OSINT methodology within a structured and realistic legal setting. The initiative aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of our investigative approach, including the use of standardized documentation templates and internal Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Specifically, this exercise was beneficial in examining how well our documentation templates facilitated the collection, documentation, organization, and presentation of open source information (OSINF) and open source evidence (OSE) in a legal framework. Our SOPs supported a methodical, transparent, and legally sound approach for providing open source information in court. Additionally, our SOPs played a critical role in ensuring the replicability of our investigation. A well-structured methodology is essential for maintaining consistency and allowing different analysts/investigators to follow the same or similar procedures while arriving at verifiable conclusions.

Another significant rationale for this moot court was to test the applicability of OSINT in the Ukrainian civil law system. Issues surrounding the admissibility of OSINT and OSE have predominantly focused on criminal law, both in Ukraine and globally. However, the role of OSINT in civil law accountability has been largely overlooked. While civil law mechanisms have long been established as an avenue for accountability, they have not been a primary focus for OSINT groups, as much of the attention has been directed toward criminal processes.

This moot court provided an opportunity to explore how OSINT can be effectively integrated into civil legal proceedings, assess the legal thresholds for admissibility, and determine its potential impact on civil law accountability. By doing so, we aimed to bridge the gap in OSINT application, expanding its relevance beyond criminal justice and into broader legal mechanisms that can provide redress and accountability.

2. Fabula of the Case and Explanation of the Circumstances on the Ground

Mariupol, Ukraine's main port on the Sea of Azov, was heavily impacted by Russia's full-scale invasion in early 2022. Pre-war, the city had a population of around 446,103, but this has since dropped to approximately 120,000. In February 2022, Russian and Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) forces took control of the city, beginning a prolonged occupation.

The initial stages of the full-scale invasion saw extensive damage to buildings due to artillery and air strikes. More recently, Mariupol has experienced a campaign of demolition and reconstruction under Russian and DPR (Russian proxy forces) authority. This investigation focuses on the destruction of an apartment in a residential building during this later phase.

Since the full-scale invasion, thousands of civilians fled the city, leaving behind properties at the mercy of occupying forces. Over the past two and a half years, there has been no clear accountability for damage or demolition of civilian property, raising concerns under both Ukrainian and international law.

On October 21, 2024, OFU and ULN organized a moot court at the University of Amsterdam, reviewing the fictional case “Ivashchuk vs. Russian Federation and Construction Companies.” The proceedings were organized according to the real provisions of Ukrainian civil procedural law.

For our moot court, we used the **following fictional scenario**: a Mariupol resident, Mariya Ivashchuk was forced to leave her hometown due to Russian aggression; her apartment was damaged by shelling and later demolished by a Russian construction company following an order by the occupation authorities; this land spot was further leased to another Russian construction company to build a new house. Since Ivashchuk lost her home due to Russian military action in Mariupol, she filed a claim to a Ukrainian court looking for compensation for the material and moral damage she suffered. Although the name of the victim and the apartment number were made up, the address, the date of shelling, the order on demolition and lease of the land, and the company's details, as well as the supporting OSE, were real. This investigation specifically examined the real-life demolition of a residential building on Lenina (Myru) Ave, 86, Mariupol, where the fictional claimant owned apartment 15 on the 4th floor according to the case scenario. Based on the real evidence, the building was allegedly demolished by the contracted company “CrushMash” without legally defined permission or notification of the owner.

In our case, and as it often happens in real life too, OSE might be the only available proof of the property destruction since Ukrainian authorities do not have access to the occupied territories to verify the damage, and an owner might not have been present at the moment of or upon which the damage was done because he/she had evacuated to safety.

3. Court Hearing and Legal Questions Analyzed by the Court

Ukrainian courts often deliberate on cases based on similar circumstances: as of 29 March 2024, there were [397 judgments](#) issued in Ukraine on Russian liability for its aggression. These cases have many specific features: for example, the accused in most criminal cases is tried in absentia, and Ukrainian courts exercise their jurisdiction over Russia based on the position of the [Ukrainian Supreme Court](#), according to which Russian acts of aggression cannot be considered an exercise of sovereign power. These issues present an interest for future legal analysis and were not a subject of our moot court.

The case of Ms. Ivashchuk was conducted in a simplified format, as the hearing lasted only two hours. The moot court focused directly on the merits of the case, omitting the preparatory stage, and concentrated primarily on the examination of OSE during the proceedings.

It is important to note that, under Ukrainian civil procedure, a court hearing is the procedural form for examining civil cases on the merits. A court hearing consists of several stages, namely:

1. the preparatory stage;
2. the examination of the case on the merits;
3. the judicial debates;
4. the adoption and pronouncement of the court decision.

The examination of the case on the merits constitutes the core and central part of the court hearing, during which the factual circumstances of the case are clarified in order to resolve the civil dispute.

This stage begins with the judge's report on the content of the claim. In our case, this concerned the claim for compensation for material and moral damages resulting from the destruction of property due to Russian aggression.

Accordingly, the court heard the statements of Ms. Ivashchuk's legal representatives and established the procedure for clarifying the facts cited by the parties as the basis for their claims, as well as the procedure for examining the evidence supporting those claims. In this case, the main body of evidence consisted of OSE.

3.1.Review and assessment of claims during the hearing

As stated above the hearing was opened by the judge and representatives of the plaintiff presented the claim's requests. The plaintiff's representative submitted an OSINT investigation report as supportive proof of the claim and its requests. The plaintiff seeks

compensation for damages caused to her property and non-pecuniary damages due to the actions of Crashmash Group LLC, NW Temp-8o LLC, and the state of the Russian Federation.

The plaintiff argues that the Russian Federation's illegal invasion and subsequent artillery shelling of Mariupol directly caused significant damage to her apartment. Following this, the so-called State Defence Committee of the DPR, under Russian control, unlawfully decided to demolish the building, further exacerbating the damage. The plaintiff claims that these actions deprived her and her family of their home without any compensation.

The plaintiff also asserts that the decisions of two limited liability companies (LLCs) to act as contractors for the occupation authorities led to the destruction of her property and prevented its restoration. She seeks compensation for the full value of her destroyed apartment, supported by an expert's assessment.

3.2. Definition of the experts vs specialist in Ukrainian Civil procedural law

During the presentation of evidence, the judge asked questions about the status under which the OSINT investigators are in the trial and in what capacity their report is submitted.

The Civil Procedure Code of Ukraine distinguishes between an expert (Article (Art.) 72) and specialist (Art. 74). For the purpose of the moot court, the investigators were treated as forensic experts.

However, this would hardly be possible in the real trial since there is a strict list of requirements a person should meet to be considered a forensic expert: he/she must have a relevant higher education; have undergone appropriate training in state specialized institutions of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine; have been certified and have received the qualification of a forensic expert in a certain specialty in accordance with the procedure provided for by the Law on Forensic Expertise (Art. 10). Since there are no university majors in open source investigations or procedures, according to which qualification in this field can be proved, the OFU investigators cannot qualify as experts. They can participate in the proceedings as specialists; however, according to Chapter 5 of the Civil Procedure Code of Ukraine, only the conclusions of experts, not specialists, can be used as self-standing evidence. So, if OFU investigators take part in a trial as specialists, their reports can be submitted only as corroborative evidence along with other evidence, such as witness testimonies. However, during our moot court preparation, and then court hearing, we have not been able to find examples in the civil law, where a person collecting OSE would be explicitly called an OSINT specialist. Nevertheless, OSE is being actively collected, and some case law gives us an idea of the qualifications the person collecting this evidence might have had. For example, in decision [119823787](#) in the criminal case № 496/2300/23, the protocols of analyses of open sources and social media profiles of the accused were submitted along with the witness and victim statements. This case mentions that a 'specialist for reviewing open sources (Internet-sources)' was involved in the proceedings 'to identify and record information about the circumstances of the crime and to identify information relevant to criminal proceedings'. Since this specialist was involved at the pre-trial investigation stage, there is no more detailed information about this person's qualifications in open access. Another case sheds a bit more light on this issue: in the decision [119249750](#), the court said:

“According to the said [Berkeley] protocol, among other things, obtaining information from electronic information systems or its part, access to which is not restricted by its owner, holder or keeper or is not related to overcoming the logical protection system, does not require the permission of the investigating judge. The review of information contained in the public domain, its course and results shall be recorded in the relevant review protocol. A specialist in the field of information technology is involved in the investigative (detective) action.” Thus, we see that in this case a person who was involved to carry out an OSINT investigation was an IT specialist. However, since both of these cases are criminal cases, they cannot be used as examples, since we cannot apply analogy from criminal procedural law to civil procedural law.

3.3. Admissibility of OSE in Ukrainian civil law for damages claims

In our claim, we proved the admissibility of OSE based on the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code of Ukraine and Ukrainian case law. According to Article 76 of the Civil Procedure Code, evidence includes any data on the basis of which the court establishes the presence or absence of circumstances (facts) that substantiate the claims and objections of the participants in the case, as well as other circumstances that are relevant to the resolution of the case. These data can be established, among others, through electronic evidence, as well as expert conclusions. [Guidelines adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 30 January 2019 on electronic evidence in civil and administrative proceedings](#) also recommend that: “Courts should not refuse electronic evidence and should not deny its legal effect only because it is collected and/or submitted in an electronic form”, and “As far as a national legal system permits, and subject to the court’s discretion, electronic data should be accepted as evidence unless the authenticity of such data is challenged by one of the parties”.

As for the particular types of electronic evidence:

- Satellite images: used in the decision [113842163](#) and many others.
- Data from Google Maps: According to the [Ukrainian Supreme Court's ruling 111724996](#), data from Google Maps can be considered admissible and reliable evidence, as they are collected from various sources such as satellites, car cameras, user applications, and other sources. Google continuously updates and verifies the data to ensure its accuracy and relevance.
- Evidence from social networks: In the [decision 116047178](#) in a civil case, photos from Viber and Telegram messengers are mentioned as confirmation of the fact that the apartment in which one of the plaintiffs permanently lived was damaged by shelling and completely destroyed by fire. In the period between 24 February 2022 and 24 February 2025, there were around 70 decisions issued by Ukrainian courts in war crimes cases that relied, among other evidence, on digital OSE. Most often, the courts relied on photos from the social media profiles of perpetrators to confirm their identity.

During the trial, the judge asked a lot of questions to establish the authenticity of the evidence. To do this, the representatives of the plaintiff referred to the report prepared by the OFU with the list of evidence. Each piece of evidence was saved both offline on the hard drive

and online on cloud servers. The report provided the links to the sources and dates where and when the evidence was found. The investigators also preserved the links via InternetArchive to maintain access to the original source in case the link is edited or deleted. Satellite images were a piece of evidence of a very technical nature, so the court asked one of the OFU investigators to join the proceedings as a witness to explain it. Since one of the investigators did not speak Ukrainian, a translator also had to be involved to facilitate the trial.

3.4. Could private actors be liable in cases related to Russian aggression?

Under Ukrainian civil law, the liability of legal entities including those from Russia, can be established. To hold these private actors accountable for damages, the claimant must provide sufficient evidence to the court. Additionally, as legal entities do not have immunity from the jurisdiction of foreign courts, it may be less complex to pursue such cases within the jurisdiction of a Ukrainian court.

In civil procedure, the process of proving a case is primarily guided by the principle of "preponderance of the evidence," also referred to as the "balance of probabilities".¹ This standard differs significantly from that used in criminal cases, which is known as "beyond reasonable doubt." By presenting sufficient evidence and demonstrating proper notification of the defendant to the court,² a claimant greatly increases their chances of establishing the liability of private actors for damages.

One significant caveat of decisions made by Ukrainian courts is their lack of enforceability. While these court rulings may not yet produce the desired outcomes for claimants domestically, they can serve as strong evidence for pursuing damages on an international level. Claimants have the option to submit these court decisions as proof to the Register of Damage, which is dedicated to collecting claims for compensation related to the damages, losses, and injuries caused by Russian aggression.

4. Methodology of Investigation and Conduct of OSINT

According to the Berkeley Protocol, "Open source evidence is open source information with evidentiary value that may be admitted in order to establish facts in legal proceedings." Open source information "encompasses publicly available information that any member of the public can observe, purchase or request without requiring special legal status or unauthorized access." If such information is gathered for a specific purpose, it is called open source intelligence.

Open source evidence or OSINT evidence comes in a variety of forms. In our fictional scenario, we used real satellite images reflecting the gradual destruction of the applicant's house and surrounding buildings, and photos and videos from Telegram and VKontakte,

¹ The Supreme Court as part of the panel of judges of the Commercial Court of Cassation, *Resolution in Case No. 902/1068/20* (25 September 2023), <<https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/113738414>> accessed 27 February 2025.

² Civil Procedure Code of Ukraine [2004], 1618-IV, Art. 128 p. 8, <<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/en/1618-15>> accessed 27 February 2025.

confirming that there was a fire in the building where the apartment of the applicant was located and the further demolition of that and adjacent houses, Google Maps screenshots verifying these data, webpages of Russian companies, and articles of pro-Russian media sources about plans of ‘reconstructing’ Mariupol, confirming the plans to construct new buildings in place of the destroyed ones. The judge, whose role was performed by a former Ukrainian prosecutor, found all of the evidence admissible. This was confirmed in court by the interrogation of experts who supported this evidence. Nevertheless, OSE raised some legal questions that will be discussed further.

4.1 Legal briefing with legal team and investigators

Post-incident, a meeting was conducted with legal analysts, lawyers, and investigators to onboard the investigative team on the key legal framework surrounding the claim and investigation. During this session, critical legal elements that needed to be considered and identified were discussed. The objective was to ensure that all team members were fully aware of the ethical and legal frameworks applicable to the investigation, setting the groundwork for a legally sound and methodical investigative process.

4.2 Preliminary assessment

A preliminary assessment was used to verify whether or not, taking into account our areas of interest, capacity, abilities, manpower, and available information, we could—and should—undertake a certain investigation. This stage was essential in determining the feasibility and strategic value of proceeding with a case, ensuring that resources were allocated effectively.

A comprehensive risk assessment was also conducted during this phase. This included an evaluation of potential digital threats, assessing cybersecurity risks associated with the investigation, and identifying any vulnerabilities that could compromise the integrity of the research. Additionally, personal security risks to investigators were analysed, particularly in cases where sensitive or high-risk information was being handled.

4.3 Review of preliminary findings, hypothesis creation and adjustment

Following the preliminary assessment, an investigation plan was developed to outline the next steps necessary to achieve the set objectives. This phase involved refining initial findings, identifying potential gaps in the available data, and adjusting the investigative strategy accordingly. By reviewing the preliminary evidence, we were able to formulate hypotheses regarding key aspects of the case and adjust them as more information became available.

Archiving and documentation methods were also established at this stage. A structured approach to data storage and retrieval was crucial for maintaining a clear and transparent

investigative process. Additionally, custom documentation and reporting templates were either adjusted or newly created to meet the specific needs of the investigation.

4.4 Information and evidence collection

The conduct of OSINT

The investigation relied on OSINT to collect evidence from publicly accessible sources. Evidence was collected using information and data from openly available sources, including blogs, websites, social media, and online maps. Address-specific keywords such as “Проспект Мира 86, Мариуполь” and “Проспект Ленина 86, Мариуполь” were used to search for relevant data.

Different OSINT tools were utilised to collect information, including satellite imagery from public sources and analysis of open online databases. Specific platforms/tools used:

- Web search (Google, Yandex, DuckDuckGo)
- YouTube
- Real-estate websites (ex: Ligakvartir)

Clarification of the OSINT Collection Process

Search terms like “Lenina Ave 86 Mariupol destruction” were used across multiple search engines (Google, Yandex, DuckDuckGo) to locate visual and textual data regarding the destruction and demolition of the building. The results were carefully filtered to include only reputable and verifiable sources.

SOCMINT (Social Media Intelligence)

Social media was a vital resource for gathering information regarding the status of Building 86. A search for geotagged posts and local community posts was conducted to track updates on the building's condition.

Collection of Information via search on social media, primarily through platforms such as:

- Telegram
- VKontakte

Techniques used while searching social media:

- Analysing geotagged posts
- Tracking reports from local community members
- Verifying the authenticity of video and image evidence by cross-referencing them with other data sources, such as satellite images and official documents.

All geotagged posts and videos were validated by comparing their locations and timestamps with corresponding satellite imagery, ensuring the authenticity and reliability of the information. This step minimised the risk of manipulated or false content being used in the investigation.

GEOINT (Geospatial Intelligence)

Geospatial data was used to provide satellite imaging and confirm geolocation verification of Building 86 and its surroundings. Satellite data played a crucial role in observing the building's structural changes and eventual demolition.

Key techniques used:

- Cross-referencing location data with timestamps
- Comparing pre- and post-attack visuals
- Sentinel-1 SAR for detecting structural changes



Fig 1. Google Earth screenshot of Lenina (Myru) Ave, 86, Mariupol residential area.

Specific platforms/tools used:

- Google Earth
- Google Maps
- Sentinel-1 SAR (European Commission and the European Space Agency)

5. Processing of audio-visual information

The analysis of audio-visual materials played a crucial role in the investigation, enabling the extraction and verification of key evidence. Collected videos, images, and satellite images were carefully examined to identify relevant details, including timestamps, geolocation data, and contextual clues that could support the broader findings. This processing stage was essential in setting the foundation for further in-depth analysis.

To ensure accuracy and reliability, metadata analysis was conducted to verify the authenticity of digital media files. Advanced tools were used to detect potential alterations, assess source credibility, and corroborate information with independent sources.

Visual information was annotated to highlight critical findings, allowing for a structured and systematic review of key elements within the media. This annotation process not only facilitated internal analysis but also ensured clarity and precision when presenting findings in the courtroom.

6. Analysis of potential evidence

Sentinel-1 SAR Analysis:

- Sentinel-1's radar imagery allowed for precise detection of structural changes between 2022 and 2024. This data confirmed the significant damage to Building 86, even in cases where visibility was limited by weather or lighting conditions. Sentinel-1's radar technology ensured reliable monitoring of urban changes, demonstrating the building's destruction with accuracy.

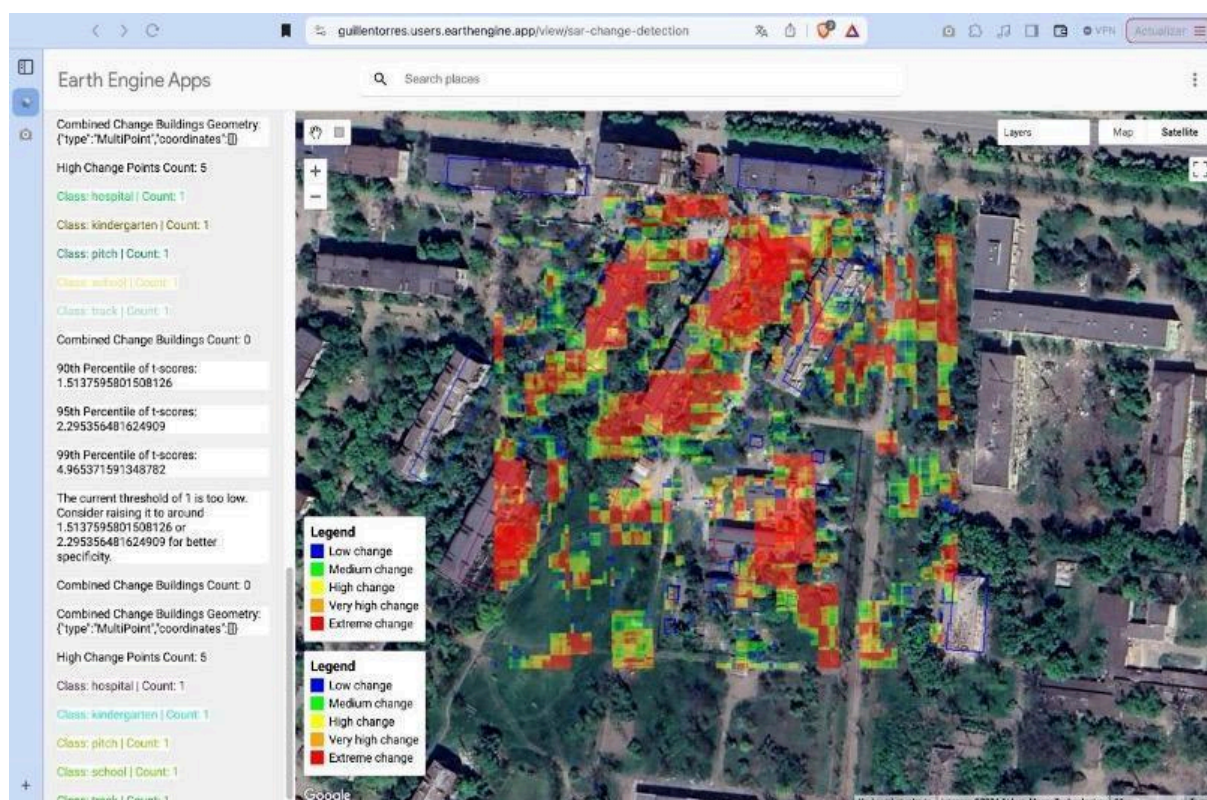


Fig 2. SAR analysis of apartments in (Myru) Ave, 86, Mariupol (screenshot)

Cross-verification of evidence:

- To ensure the reliability of the findings, each piece of evidence was cross-verified across multiple sources. Social media posts were compared with satellite imagery from Sentinel-1 SAR and Google Maps, official demolition orders from the Pushilin declaration, and videos uploaded to YouTube. This triangulation of data strengthens the claim that Building 86 was not only severely damaged during the occupation but was also demolished without proper notice to its owners.



Fig 3. Screenshot of cross verification of videos from social media.

4.7. Holistic view of the OSINT process

A fundamental aspect of open source investigations and the conduct of OSINT in investigations is ensuring a clear and verifiable path of discovery to maintain the integrity of collected evidence. Establishing a strong chain of custody is essential to proving the originality and authenticity of open-source findings, particularly when large visual datasets are presented in legal proceedings.

For OSINT investigators, proper documentation of the discovery process was critical. Every piece of evidence, from initial data collection to final analysis, had to be systematically recorded, including timestamps, sources, and methodologies used to extract the information.

Unlike criminal trials, evidentiary rules in civil law are generally more flexible, allowing for greater participation from civil society OSINT groups such as OSINT For Ukraine (OFU). This means that, unlike cases such as the MH-17 trial (ECHR)—where the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) did not use Bellingcat's evidence directly but cited and referenced their reports

—civil law trials can incorporate OSINT and open-source information directly from civil society organizations (CSOs). As a result, CSOs will need to hold themselves to a higher standard to ensure that their findings are robust and verifiable.

5. Key Insights and Future Takeaways – Conclusion

While electronic evidence is widely accepted and used in Ukrainian judicial practice, the legal ULN team encountered challenges related to the involvement of experts and specialists in the evaluation and presentation of such evidence during the court proceeding.

One of the key takeaways from this exercise was the complex distinction between expertise and specialization in the OSINT field. Unlike traditional forensic analysts or legal experts, OSINT practitioners often lack formal accreditation but possess extensive hands-on experience that is difficult to objectively quantify. This discrepancy raises concerns about the admissibility of OSINT findings in legal proceedings, particularly in jurisdictions with strict requirements for expert testimony.

This issue is even more pronounced for foreign OSINT investigators supporting Ukraine, as their credibility may be further questioned due to the lack of formal recognition within the Ukrainian legal framework. In Ukraine, experts must be officially registered in the national register of experts to provide testimony in court. Those who are not registered are considered specialists, meaning they must prove their capacity to present expert opinions in legal proceedings. This procedural requirement should be taken into consideration by OSINT professionals seeking to contribute to accountability efforts, as it allows them to be involved as specialists rather than experts. The next area of research will be to explore whether there is any potential to limit the impact of open-source investigations in such legal cases.

In tandem, another critical factor observed during the moot court was the necessity of accurate translation when foreign OSINT investigators participate in legal proceedings. Given that many OSINT professionals supporting Ukraine come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, ensuring that their reports, findings, and testimonies are properly translated into Ukrainian is crucial for their admissibility in court.

Moving forward, addressing this challenge will require greater dialogue between OSINT practitioners, legal experts, and policymakers. Developing standardized accreditation processes, fostering institutional recognition, and creating clearer legal pathways for OSINT evidence to be considered in court could enhance the role of OSINT in supporting justice and accountability – both in criminal and civil settings.