

Kiev's Forces Once Again Using Civilians as Human Shields - UK Media Reports

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There seems to be no limits to the criminal practices of the Ukrainian neo-Nazi regime. As well known, in addition to deliberately killing civilians in Donbass, Kiev also uses ordinary non-combatant people as human shields. Although the Russian side frequently denounces this reality and is accused of "disinformation" by the West, now even some Western media outlets are starting to admit some of the Kiev's crimes.

According to the British TV channel Sky News, the Ukrainian forces would be allocating combat equipment in residential areas in the city of Artemovsk (renamed as "Bakhmut" by Kiev after the Maidan Coup) located in the Ukrainian-occupied part of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR). Footage of the Ukrainian operations in the region was obtained by Sky News' correspondent Alex Rossi during an on-the-ground investigation.

According to Rossi, several Ukrainian Soviet-era tanks were positioned among the city's residential buildings. Armored vehicles and other war equipment have also been placed there. The city's population has been significantly reduced as a result of the migration and displacement to escape hostilities, which is why Rossi says the streets are deserted. However, the civilians who remained there are currently suffering seriously as they are being held hostage by the Ukrainians and forced to obey their orders, with no possibility of escape.

"Lines of Soviet-era tanks and armored vehicles are concealed amongst the buildings (...) Inside the city, we saw Ukrainian forces laying traps and bringing in reinforcements (...) People have left the city. It's very scary just being here. The fighting is very, very close", he said during a recent report to Sky News.

Indeed, Kiev's practice of using civilians as human shields appears to have become commonplace. Since the beginning of the Russian special military operation, the Ukrainian side has sought "protection" in populated areas, with soldiers hiding in residential buildings.

The aim is to discourage the Russians from continuing attacks or, if the attacks occur, to use them as rhetoric to move the global public opinion against Moscow. On the Russian side, however, saving civilian lives is a significant principle. The very main purpose of the special operation is precisely to end the killing of civilians, which had been taking place on a large scale since 2014.

Therefore, Moscow's forces act strategically, with military advances carefully planned in order to avoid civilian casualties. On the one hand, artillery hits infrastructure and military barracks; on the other, the soldiers on the ground engage in a slow-moving combat, taking the necessary precautions not to cause civilian casualties. Consequently, in regions where there is a human shield, as is precisely the case of Artemovsk / Bakhmut, the battles are particularly intense and prolonged. If it were Russian intention to quickly take control of these regions, it could use heavy artillery and air bombings against Ukrainian forces placed in civilian areas, but this type of attitude is not part of the Russian military doctrine.

The most important thing to do now is to spread the information as much as possible, making public in Western countries aware that Kiev is deliberately inflicting suffering on civilians. The fact that a western media agency has recognized the existence of human shield is important, but there is still more to be done. It is necessary to give more voice to the on-the-ground reporters, who always denounce the Ukrainian reality and most of the time are attended only by the Russian media, while in the West they are seen as "misinformation agents".

International organizations also play an important role in this regard. For example, Amnesty International has since August 2022 released reports on how Ukrainian forces put civilians at risk. Even so, no action is taken within the scope of the UN, where there seems to be a hegemony of the Western narrative that Kiev is the "invaded" nation, "needing" to use all the necessary means to protect itself from the "invading country".

"We have documented a pattern of Ukrainian forces putting civilians at risk and violating the laws of war when they operate in populated areas (...) In the cases it documented, Amnesty is not aware that the Ukrainian military asked or assisted civilians to evacuate nearby buildings - a failure to take feasible precautions to protect civilians", an Amnesty International's spokesperson stated in August.

The lack of international response to the evidence that Kiev kills civilians only reinforces that NATO's countries act hypocritically about the current conflict. As far as the military scenario is concerned, however, Ukrainian human shields have already proven to be ineffective, since the Russians do not retreat in the face of this type of obstacle, but engage in slow combats, both avoiding casualties and gaining ground at the same time. With Kiev's disregard for the lives of Donbass' citizens and international inertia in trying to resolve the problem, Russian military victory seems to be the only hope of saving the lives of these civilians.

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