

The “Snipers’ Massacre” on the Maidan in Ukraine (Revised and Updated Version)

Ivan Katchanovski, Ph.D.

School of Political Studies &
Department of Communication
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, ON
K1N 6N5, Canada
ikatchan@uottawa.ca

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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).*

¹ There was a trumpeter playing during the “snipers’ massacre,” but he came under live ammunition fire from the shooters at the Hotel Ukraina. See Vasil Ponamariov, “Кровавый Расстрел Украинцев На Майдане 20-февраля! Krwawy Rozstrzał Ukraińców na majdanie!” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nx34GTJTIYM>.

Abstract

This paper is an updated and revised version of the first academic study on the mass killing of the “Euromaidan” protesters and police in the Maidan area of Kyiv, Ukraine, on February 20, 2014. This massacre is crucial from both political science and politics perspectives because it represented a turning point in Ukrainian politics; in particular, it led to the government’s overthrow and was a tipping point in the escalating conflict between the West and Russia over Ukraine. The research question is which side was involved in the “snipers’ massacre.” This study relies on the theoretical framework of rational choice and the Weberian theory of rational action. It uses interpretative and content analysis of the following evidence: publicly available videos and photos of the protesters’ massacre, as well as the police and suspected shooters; recordings of live statements by the Maidan announcers; radio intercepts of the Maidan “snipers” and the snipers and commanders from the special Alfa unit of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU); ballistic trajectories; eyewitness reports by both Maidan protesters and government special unit commanders; public statements by both former and current government officials; the bullets and weapons used; and the types of wounds among both protesters and the police. The paper also includes a brief analysis of other cases of violence during and after “Euromaidan.” This study establishes a precise timeline for various events of the massacre, the locations of both the shooters and the government snipers, and the specific timeline and locations of nearly 50 protesters’ deaths. It presents unreported, suppressed or misrepresented videos and other evidence concerning the involvement of armed groups, leadership elements of far-right organization such as the Right Sector and Svoboda, and oligarchic parties, such as Fatherland, which were directly or indirectly involved in this massacre in order to seize power, which led to the subsequent government investigation being falsified.

The “Snipers’” Massacre Question

The massacre of several dozen Maidan protesters on February 20, 2014 was a turning point in Ukrainian politics and a tipping point in the escalating conflict between the West and Russia over Ukraine. The mass killing of the protesters and mass shooting of the police that preceded it led to the overthrow of the highly corrupt but democratically elected government of Viktor Yanukovich and gave a start to a large-scale violent conflict that continues now in Donbas, in Eastern Ukraine. The conclusion promoted by the post-Yanukovich governments and the Ukrainian media that the massacre was perpetrated by government snipers on a Yanukovich order has been nearly universally accepted by the US and other Western governments, as well as the media, at least publicly, without concluding an investigation and without all evidence being considered.¹ For instance, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, in his speech to the US Congress on September 18, 2014, stated that the Yanukovich government’s overthrow resulted from mass peaceful protests against police violence, in particular the killings of more than 100 protesters by snipers on February 20, 2014.²

The research question is which side was involved in the “snipers’ massacre.” Related questions include which side broke the truce agreement and killed and wounded protesters and police, and whether this was this was a spontaneous or organized massacre. This paper is the first academic study of this crucial case of the mass killing that led to the escalation of the violent conflict in Ukraine, an overthrow of the government and ultimately a civil war in Donbas, Russian military intervention in Donbas and Crimea, and the annexation of Crimea.

A book-length study of “Euromaidan” offers a generally standard narrative of the massacre and attributes the killings to the government police and security forces, but it also cites a leader of Spilna sprava, a Maidan organization, as saying that one of the snipers was killed at

the Hotel Ukraina.³ In contrast, another book suggests that a theory of the massacre as a false flag operation carried out by elements of the Maidan opposition cannot be dismissed and needs to be researched.⁴

The governments and mainstream media in the West generally accepted the Maidan narrative of the “snipers’ massacre” as being perpetrated by the government forces on Yanukovich’s order, with possible Russian government involvement, but did not provide evidence of such involvement. These conclusions were mainly based on the manifest content of videos and media reports on the Berkut special company firing live ammunition at unarmed protesters and the absence of similar evidence for armed groups of protesters. The dominant representation of the massacre by governments and the media in the West and Ukraine is a part of the narrative presenting “Euromaidan” as a democratic, peaceful mass-protest movement and a revolution led by pro-Western parties. The role of far-right parties and organizations, such as Svoboda and the Right Sector, is regarded as marginal. The same concerns violence by the Maidan side. Such violence and the presence of arms were represented as marginal, or as in the case of the December 1, 2013, attack of the presidential administration, which was often attributed to provocateurs. In a leaked intercepted telephone call with the EU foreign affairs chief, the Estonian minister of foreign affairs referred to one of the Maidan doctors, in particular Olha Bohomolets, pointing 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.⁵ However, EU states and the US government showed little interest in an international investigation of this mass killing and did not release their intelligence assessments and other information that they reportedly have concerning this case.

In contrast, the Russian government and media, as well as ex-president Yanukovich and his top officials, who fled to Russia following the massacre, generally present the mass killing of the police and protesters as a part of fascist coup organized by radical elements of the Maidan opposition and the US government, with help from the Central Intelligence Agency. However, they have not offered any evidence in support of such claims, although the Russian security services likely intercepted telephone call between the EU foreign affairs chief and the Estonian foreign affairs minister.

The snipers' massacre played a key role in the overthrow of the Yanukovich government, and the Maidan-led government commemorated the massacre and its victims among the protesters with the help of the Ukrainian media, such as by awarding them Hero of Ukraine titles and establishing February 20 as a day in their honor. A large group of investigators was specifically tasked with solving this massacre case, and their investigation involved the interrogations of more than 2,000 people and more than 1,000 ballistic, medical and other expert reports. Therefore, it appeared irrational that the official government investigation—a year since the massacre—failed to reveal evidence and to bring any convictions in such a crucial case.

The investigation of the “snipers’ massacre” by the Prosecutor General Office in Ukraine and by other government agencies, such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Security Service of Ukraine, concluded that commanders and members of a special Berkut company killed 39 out of the 49 protesters who died on February 20. The investigators announced that this was done primarily with AKM assault rifles and hunting ammunition used in their pump rifles, even though it would have been irrational to use such ammunition because it was unfamiliar and less powerful and precise than their standard Kalashnikov rifles of 7.62mm caliber. At least 25 protesters were killed with 7.62mm caliber bullets, including 16 from AKMS. In addition, at

least 17 protesters were killed with pellets; one by a 9mm bullet from a Makarov gun; and six by other ammunition, such as hunting bullets, but no information about which ammunition killed which protesters was revealed. While the Maidan activists and the Ukrainian media initially claimed that government snipers from the Alfa unit of SBU massacred many protesters, the investigation produced no evidence that they had shot protesters. In the beginning of April 2013, the Prosecutor General Office issued a statement that a Simonov “sniper rifle” was used in the Hotel Ukraina to shoot protesters, even though the Simonov rifle is not a sniper rifle but a semi-automatic carbine that uses 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. However, during the first press conference presenting the investigation’s results in April 2014 the Prosecutor General, from the far-right Svoboda party, did not mention that the Simonov carbine was used and that any “snipers” were in this hotel. The same was done in November 2014 at the subsequent press conference by the Prosecutor General Office when it was headed by a Fatherland member.⁶ A new head of the investigation, reported the same findings concerning the Berkut involvement but admitted that there might have been unknown non-governmental snipers who shot some protesters from the Hotel Ukraina.⁷

Specifically, the official investigation concluded that Yanukovich and his top officials in the SBU and Ministry of Internal Affairs organized the massacre. However, no such evidence was provided. Interrogations of Yanukovich government officials who did not flee, as well as of police commanders and members, produced no confessions or witness testimonies about such an order or about the involvement of the Berkut and other such formations in the massacre of the protesters.

The Berkut special company's commander and two members of his unit were arrested and charged with killing 39 protesters, and the court hearing in this case began in January 2015. It appeared irrational that the purported killers would remain in Kyiv and not hide from the prosecution. The lawyers of the two arrested Berkut members stated that the 71-volume investigative file did not specify who the Berkut members killed, and the evidence relied on their presence in the area of the massacre. The investigation established the place of the shooting for only half of these 39 protesters.⁸ A pro-Maidan journalist reported that the government investigation failed to establish circumstances of 9 other protesters' killings.⁹

On November 19, 2014, the Prosecutor General Office claimed during its press-conference devoted to this issue that their extensive investigation produced no evidence of "snipers" at the Hotel Ukraina, Zhovtnevyi Palace and other locations controlled by Maidan. However, no evidence has been made public in support of such findings, with the exception of videos that show them shooting with AKMs. Official results from the ballistic, weapons, and medical examinations and other evidence collected during the government's investigation of this massacre have not been made public. Crucial evidence, including catalogues of Berkut's bullets and weapons and those of other police units, as well as some 200 investigative cases of specific victims of the massacre, either disappeared or were destroyed under the post-Yanukovich government.¹⁰ The Ukrainian government failed to investigate the killing and wounding of policemen on February 20 and on two previous days.

Interpol put ex-president Yanukovich on its wanted list for financial charges but specifically rejected the Ukrainian government's request concerning murder charges for the Maidan "snipers' massacre."¹¹ While the Ukrainian Parliament asked the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate the massacre and other cases of violence during "Euromaidan"

following the overthrow of Yanukovich, the Ukrainian Prosecutor General Office reportedly informed the court representatives in the fall of 2014 that Ukraine was not interested in assisting such an investigation. Based on its statutes—which are limited to genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity—and the previous cases pursued or not pursued by the ICC, it is unlikely that the ICC would pursue this case and prosecute those responsible for the “snipers’ massacre.”

However, a Reuters investigation uncovered that the prosecution case against three Berkut members charged with the killings primarily relied on videos and photos, and some key pieces of such evidence were misrepresented or ignored.¹² *Monitor*, a German TV program, presented evidence during its investigation that shooters were based in the Hotel Ukraina and that the government investigation was manipulated.¹³ 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.¹⁴ A *New York Times* investigation concluded that the police forces and Yanukovich 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.¹⁵ However, they did not produce similar investigations into the killings of the protesters and assumed that the police massacred the protesters in reaction to the killing of the policemen. Similarly, the *Daily Beast* reports 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.

The Maidan leaders, in particular Andrii Parubii, the commander of the Maidan Self-Defense, denied that the killed and wounded protesters received any orders to advance or that

any Maidan formations were armed and shot at the police, with the exceptions of some who were openly carrying pellet guns and hunting rifles. Moreover, they claimed that that any “snipers” were in the Hotel Ukraina, Music Conservatory, or the Trade Union headquarters, or that these buildings were controlled by Maidan during the massacre. Ukrainian Maidan politicians and media have often inflated the number of victims of the Maidan massacre on February 20 and referred to the “heavenly hundred” of killed protesters. The official investigation reported that 49 protesters were killed by firearms but their names were not officially released. The names of 48 protesters killed or mortally wounded by live ammunition on February 20 are identified in this study from various media publications and other sources, such as a presidential decree awarding the Hero of Ukraine title to 99 protesters killed in Kyiv and other locations during and soon after “Euromaidan.”¹⁶

This study relies on the rational choice theoretical framework and the Weberian theory of rational action, and it employs interpretative and content analyses of a variety of sources. The rational choice theory views people as acting in a calculated and self-interested manner.¹⁷ 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.”¹⁸

However, the widely accepted narrative of the 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 Instytutaska Street also seems 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.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, 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. In addition to the use of media to increase electoral support and gains, both the government and the opposition use political technologies against their political opponents, including false flag political parties, newspapers and advertisements, specifically during election campaigns. Ukraine has been able to avoid large-scale political violence, but contract killings of rival businessman and politicians, such as the governor of the Donetsk region, were employed to

eliminate the competition. 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 unnamed politicians or oligarchs with whom he was previously allied might have been involved.¹⁹

Similarly, major cases of mass killings in modern Ukrainian history are often misrepresented by politicians and the media. This concerns, for example, the involvement of the OUN and the UPA in the mass killing of Poles in Volhynia and the Nazi-led mass murder of Jews during World War II. For example, the more than 2,000 primarily Jewish victims of Nazi-led executions whose remains were uncovered in the town of Volodymyr-Volynskyi in 2011–2014 were misrepresented by many Ukrainian politicians and the media as Poles executed by the Soviet NKVD, in spite of historical studies, eyewitness testimonies and German bullets being found.²⁰

While the “Euromaidan” opposition parties and leaders were often presented as pro-Western democrats opposing the violence of the undemocratic pro-Russian government of Yanukovych, both the “Euromaidan” coalition and the Yanukovych government and his Party of Regions expressed partly democratic and partly authoritarian political values and were allied, respectively, with the far-right Svoboda and the Communist Party. The parties on both sides included oligarchs, and there were media reports and other evidence of involvement in large-scale corruption and past links among some of their leaders to organized crime.²¹

Evidence

This study employs interpretative and content analyses of various sources of evidence concerning the Maidan massacre. Such evidence includes the following: publicly available videos and photos of the massacres of protesters and the police, as well as of suspected shooters; recordings of live statements by the Maidan announcers; radio intercepts of the Maidan “snipers” and of snipers and commanders from the special Alfa unit of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU); ballistic trajectories; eyewitness reports by both Maidan protesters and government special unit commanders; public statements by both former and current government officials; information on the bullets and weapons used; and the types of wounds among both protesters and the police. Other cases of violence during and after “Euromaidan,” such as violent dispersals of protesters on November 30, 2013; the killings of police and protesters on February 18 and 19, 2014; the Dmytro Bulatov case; and the Odessa Massacre are briefly examined since they help to establish whether the Maidan Massacre is a part of a pattern of politically motivated misrepresentations of violence.

The paper uses content analysis of all publicly available videos of the massacre, many of which were unreported, suppressed or misrepresented. In particular, it employs an unreported, time-stamped version of a previously widely seen, long video of the massacre on Instytutska Street, videos and reports of suspected snipers from live TV broadcasts and Internet video streams from Maidan (Independence Square). Live TV and Internet broadcast recordings of the massacre by Espresso TV, Hromadske TV, Spilno TV, Radio Liberty and Ukrstream TV were either removed from their websites immediately following the massacre or not made publicly available.²² These recordings were mostly made by Maidan supporters, but they received very limited attention or were removed from public access.²³ In particular, the analysis includes unreported, suppressed or misrepresented videos of Maidan groups, politicians and suspected

shooters involved in the massacre of the protesters, such as recordings of Spilno TV streams from the Hotel Ukraina and videos of shooters and spotters in the Hotel Ukraina and Zhovtnevyi Palace.

This paper establishes a timeline of various events during the massacre, as well as the locations and presence of both the shooters and the government snipers, based on the synchronization of the sound on the main Maidan stage, images and other sources of evidence that independently corroborate each other. It also, for the first time, matches the identities, locations and timeline of 48 specific protesters' killings. This analysis is based on social media sources, specifically videos posted on YouTube and similar sites; Ukrainian Facebook groups, which include many protesters who personally witnessed the killings; relatives of the killed protesters; collections of various materials concerning the massacre; and time-stamped Twitter and Facebook posts in different languages by various correspondents and observers who witnessed the massacre on February 20.

This study examines about 30 gigabytes of intercepted time-stamped radio exchanges from the Security Service of Ukraine's Alfa unit, Berkut, the Internal Troops, Omega and other government agencies during the Maidan protests. These files were posted by a pro-Maidan Ukrainian radio amateur on a radio scanners forum, but they were never reported by the media or acknowledged by the Ukrainian government.²⁴ In addition, time-stamped radio intercepts of SBU Alfa snipers from another pro-Maidan website are used.

This investigation also relies on various media reports by Ukrainian and foreign correspondents based in Kyiv on the day of the massacre, as well as videos and photos from such reports. It also uses analyses of live Internet and TB broadcasts on February 20 and on-site research on the site of the Maidan massacre itself and on Instytutska Street. Approximate

directions of live ammunition fire and entry wounds are established on the basis of specific evidence, such as videos, photos, eyewitness and media reports, and bullet impact points in trees and poles. While such estimates in each specific case can involve a certain degree of error because of incomplete or imprecise information, such estimates from a large number of cases provide a way to establish whether the fire came from the police or protester-controlled areas with sufficient certainty.

An Academic Investigation

A) Who broke the truce agreement and fired on police, and was this a spontaneous or organized action?

The first issue to examine is which side broke the truce agreement and first used live ammunition on the day of the massacre on February 20, 2014, and whether this was a spontaneous or organized action. This truce agreement was signed by then-President Yanukovich and leaders of the Maidan opposition parties around midnight on February 20, following clashes that transformed the mostly peaceful mass “Euromaidan” protests into a violent conflict that resulted in the killings of more than two dozen police and protesters on February 18 and 19. The “Euromaidan” leaders, such as Vitalii Klychko and Arsenii Yatseniuk, as well as most media reports in Ukraine, claimed on February 20 and afterwards that the Berkut broke the truce and tried to attack the unarmed protesters at Maidan, specifically by throwing Molotov cocktails at the Music Conservatory building in the morning.²⁵

However, analyses of various sources of evidence indicate that the cease-fire agreement was broken by the Maidan side in the early morning, 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. 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 5:30am on February 20; he saw his fellow Berkut member shot and was then shot himself at that location. Based on medical emergency service reports, the special parliamentary commission stated that the shooting at Berkut and Internal Troops from Maidan and neighboring streets on February 20 started at 6:10am. In an interview with a Ukrainian newspaper, one of the Maidan shooters said that he was firing on police from the conservatory building for about 20 minutes around 6:00am and saw about 10 other Maidan shooters doing the same. This and other features of his interview, as well as the name he used, are the same or similar to those of a Maidan shooter in a BBC interview.²⁶ 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 7:00am that 11 members of his police unit were wounded by shooters from the Music Conservatory building.²⁷ This Berkut commander soon again informed him that, within half an hour, his unit’s casualties increased to 21 wounded and three killed.

Only fragmentary recordings of the live broadcasts and videos from this time period are publicly available, even though there were several such live Internet streams and TV broadcasts of this area of Maidan.²⁸ They include sounds of gunshots on Maidan during the night and in the morning before 9:00 am, as well as Berkut throwing Molotov cocktails at the second floor of the conservatory where the shooters were based. An STB news report briefly shows an apparent shooter there around 8:00am. Some BBC interview photos include Maidan shooters armed with hunting rifles and Kalashnikov assault rifles, or their Saiga versions. Videos show several members of these police units carried out and put into ambulances some time before 9:00am on February 20.²⁹ An Interior Troops officer reports being injured by pellets in the Maidan area

after 8:00am. In their radio communications, the Internal Troops units, stationed at Maidan near the Trade Union building, made urgent requests for an ambulance at 8:08am, a life support vehicle at 8:21am, an ambulance at 8:29am, two ambulances at 8:39am and five ambulances at 8:46am, before issuing retreat orders at 8:49 and 8:50am.³⁰

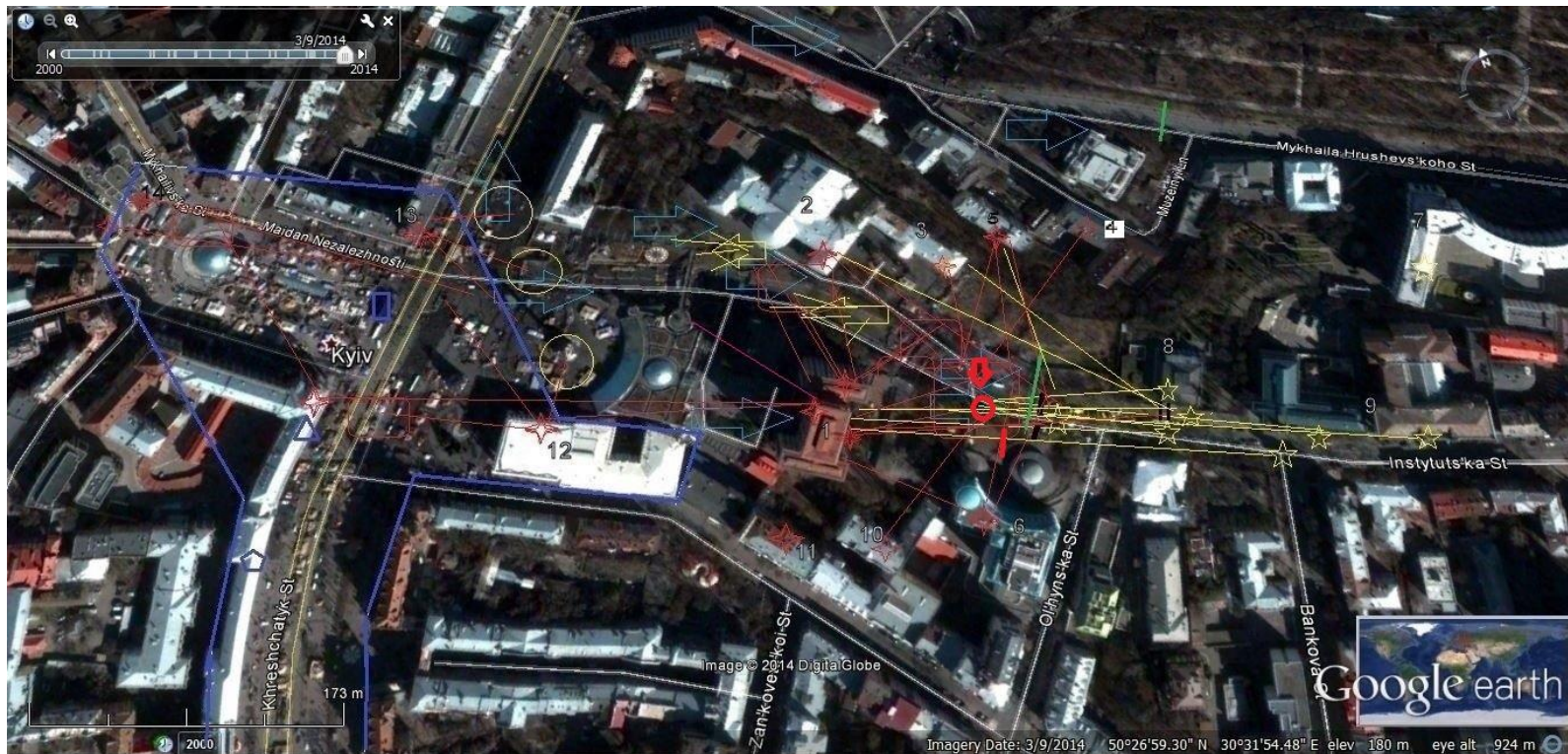
Similarly, reports in the morning of February 20 by the Internal Affairs Ministry; interviews by the former heads of the SBU and the Ministry of Internal Affairs; radio intercepts from Internal Troops; videos; and eyewitness accounts by the protesters, including a 5th Channel interview by a protester on the day of the massacre and an interview by a Swedish neo-Nazi volunteer, independently confirm that the police units at Maidan were shot with live ammunition from the conservatory and Trade Union buildings before 9:00am and that they swiftly retreated as a result of this fire and the many casualties that they suffered.³¹ The same sources indicate that Berkut and Internal Troops were killed and wounded by shooters from the second floor of the conservatory and from the Trade Union building by hunting rifles, pellets and bullets, including 7.62mm AK-type bullets. (See Map 1).

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 conservatory building at the time of the massacre.³² He denied any political or organizational affiliation by himself or his unit and said that he was a member of the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists in the past, a successor party of the Stepan Bandera faction of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. However, the presence of such a large armed unit at 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 Klychko's UDAR party. After playing a key role in the overthrow of the Yanukovich government, he served as a company commander in the Dnipro battalion, which was organized with the direct involvement of the Right Sector.

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 Yanukovich and would undertake decisive actions against the government forces.³³

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.³⁴ In a BBC interview, one of the Maidan shooters based in the conservatory said that he was recruited for such a mission at the end of January 2014. This anonymous shooter matches both the name and some key features of a shooter interviewed by a Ukrainian newspaper last fall. In both interviews, he stated that their guns were hidden at the main post office. This building was located directly across the street from the Music Conservatory, which was occupied by the Right Sector at the time of the February 20th shootings. His political leanings might be indicated by his service in the summer of 2014 in a volunteer battalion in a town near a sea, which was most likely "Azov," a Mariupol-based special police battalion. This unit was organized and led in May 2014 by the Social National Assembly, a neo-Nazi organization that was one of the founding members of the Right Sector during "Euromaidan."



Maidan-controlled before 8:50am	Berkut and Internal Troops positions before 8:50am	Locations of shooters and spotters	Bullet trajectories from Maidan shooters	Armed Berkut and directions of its shooting, 9:05-9:20am	Second Berkut and Omega barricade	Maidan Self-Defense headquarters	Wall
Maidan-controlled area during most of the massacre	Maidan advance since 8:50am	Locations of Alfa and Omega snipers	Bullet trajectories from Berkut and Omega	First Berkut and Omega barricade, 9:20-9:28am	Main areas of killings after 9:00am	Right Sector headquarters/ Main Post Office	Tree and direction the photo 1 was taken

1. Hotel Ukraina; 2 Zhovtnevyi Palace; 3 Kinopalats; 4 & 5 Muzeiny Lane; 6 Arkada Bank; 7 Cabinet of Ministers; 8 Club of Cabinet of Ministers; 9 National Bank; 10 & 11 Horodetskoho Street; 12 Music Conservatory; 13 Trade Unions building; 14 Kozatsky Hotel

Map 1. Map of the massacre on February 20, 2014

The Maidan shooter said that he was among a group of about 20 protesters who were asked at around 6:00pm 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. He saw some 10 other protesters shooting at the police from the conservatory building in the morning of February 20. Other armed protesters were reportedly in the conservatory. Maidan eyewitnesses among the 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.³⁵ Two hotel rooms of German journalists at Hotel Ukraina were shot at from the direction of the main post office, as a Ukrainian journalist working for the German TV reported on his Facebook page, or from the direction of the conservatory.³⁶

After Andrii Shevchenko notified Parubii at 8:18am about the first Berkut report of shooters targeting the police, “Euromaidan” tweeted at 8:21am that a “sniper” at the Music Conservatory was caught. This is consistent with BBC and Vesti interviews of the shooter, who said that he was “captured” by the Parubii’s personal security unit and driven outside of Kyiv City. However, the Maidan leaders, including Parubii, denied later on the same day that their search had found any shooters there after this parliament member had informed Parubii and other opposition leaders about snipers there. However, the same Berkut commander again reported that his unit’s casualties increased to 21 wounded and three killed within a half an hour.

A senior Internal Troops officer stated that they had information that five “snipers” moved to the conservatory from the Trade Union building after it was burned down by the protesters during Alfa’s attempt to seize it after 11:00pm on February 18. 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.³⁷ At least 17 were killed and 196 wounded from gunshots on February 18–20, including three killed and more than 20 wounded on February 20.³⁸

The Berkut anti-riot police and Internal Troops units, which were besieging, storming and blocking Maidan for almost three months, hastily abandoned their positions at Maidan itself (Independence Square) and fled from these locations between 8:50am and 9:00am. These regular Berkut and Internal Troops units were then armed with and used anti-riot weapons, such as Fort-500 pump shotguns, along with rubber bullets, pellets and stun grenades. Therefore, a rational explanation supported by various sources is that the police retreated because of the use of live ammunition by small armed protestor units, who were using live ammunition against the police from concealed positions in these two buildings.

B) Who killed the protesters, and was it organized mass murder?

Following the retreat of the police units, crowds of protesters—the absolute majority of whom were unarmed—started to advance from their stronghold at Maidan up Instytutska and Hrushevsky streets. Their advance was guided by commands announced from the Maidan stage over loudspeakers, which were issued by Maidan leaders and company commanders of the Maidan Self-Defense. (See Video Appendix 1).³⁹

The first identified killing of a protester was during the protesters' advance and the retreat of the police units near the pedestrian bridge on Instytutska Street. Bohdan Vaida was killed at 9:00am, but the moment when he was shot was either edited out or not captured in various published videos. This killing took place several minutes before the Berkut special company was seen there, and it coincided with the place and time when protesters fired live

ammunition at the police water cannon trucks, which tried to stop this advance while the Maidan shooters moved from the conservatory to the Hotel Ukraina. However, more specific information is needed to make a more definite conclusion.

A time-stamped version of an over 40-minute-long video, which was filmed at a close distance on Instytutska Street starting at 9:06am, and other videos show members of the special elite unit of the Berkut anti-riot police and two snipers from the “Omega” Internal Troops elite unit temporarily halting the advance of protesters near Zhovtnevyi Palace starting at 9:05am, shooting with both live ammunition from the Kalashnikov assault rifles (AKMS) and rubber bullets from Fort rifles in the direction of the protesters.⁴⁰ Snipers were also pointing sniper rifles in the direction of the protesters.⁴¹ These Berkut members then were seen retreating and firing live ammunition rounds at the direction of the advancing protesters. This was presented by the Maidan leaders and activists, the government investigation, and the media in Ukraine and in the West as the primary prove that the Berkut members killed and wounded a large number of the unarmed protesters. For example, Arsen Avakov, the Minister of Internal Affairs stated that 17 protesters were killed by the Berkut from the area near Zhovtnevyi Palace.

But an apparent purpose of the Berkut company’s brief advance was to enable a retreat of Internal Troops soldiers remaining in Zhovtnevyi Palace, whose main entrance was seized by the protesters a few minutes after 9:00am. Both of this is confirmed by videos. Radio intercepts of Internal Troops contain a general order to the police units in the area to retreat, and this order was transmitted at 9:12am. A rational way to fulfil such orders for Berkut members was not to kill the unarmed protesters but to use live ammunition as warning shots or to shoot armed protesters.

In contrast, an order transmitted from the Maidan stage at 9:14am for four companies of the Maidan Self-Defense, consisting with small exceptions from unarmed protesters, to advance to the hill in front of Zhovtnevyi Palace was irrational unless the intended instrumentally rational but unspoken goal of an unidentified Maidan leader issuing such a command was to provoke killing of the protesters either by the police or the shooters in the Hotel Ukraina. One of the companies that advanced to this hill and suffered casualties was the Volhynian Company of the Maidan Self-Defense. Similarly, a video and testimony of Serhii Trapezun shows that the Svoboda-led Khmelnytskyi company of the Maidan Self-Defense also received shortly after 9:00am an order to go in the zone of live ammunition fire on Instytutska Street.⁴² The authority to issue such orders had the leadership of the Maidan Self-Defense, the “Euromaidan” alliance, or political parties, such as Svoboda, which controlled individual companies. Similar orders to guard the perimeter of the barricades were announced later during the massacre.

The analysis of specific killings in this area during the Berkut’s advance and retreat and their firing near Zhovtnevyi Palace firings indicates that at least four and at most eight protesters were killed in this general area during this time period. They include Bohdan Solchanyk, Andrii Sayenko, Vasyl Mojsei, and Valerii Opanasiuk. The evidence in the first three cases points towards shooters at the Maidan controlled Hotel Ukraina, while specific information about the killing of Opanasiuk is not publicly available. The maximum number of possible fatalities is obtained when all those protesters, whose general area of shooting is only identified as Instytutska Street and the time of their shooting is unknown, are included. However, this also means that the killing and wounding of some of the protesters by Berkut and Omega during their advance and retreat there cannot be excluded. (See Video Appendix 1).⁴³

Bohdan Solchanyk, a history instructor at the Ukrainian Catholic University, was killed at 9:08am shortly after another protester was shot near him on Instytutska Street between the Hotel Ukraina and Zhovtnevyi Palace. He was killed at 9:08am shortly after another protester was shot near him. His apparent position, which can be generally discerned by enhancing the video images; the blood on the right side of the neck; and louder and different sounds of several shots in rapid succession, compared to the AKMS shots fired by Berkut in the same videos filmed from the Maidan side of the hotel indicate that Solchanyk was most likely shot dead from the Hotel Ukraina. One of his fellow protesters concluded that Solchanyk could not have been killed from the Hotel Ukraine, because a medical expert determined that a 7.62mm bullet had entered Solchanyk from a relatively flat angle. However, ballistic trajectories estimated with the help of laser beams from bullet impact marks on trees indicate that there were also shooters on the lower floors of the hotel.⁴⁴ At that time, the Berkut company was to the left of Solchanyk, and a specific shot—which was presented in a video investigation of his killing—came from a Fort pump rifle of 12mm caliber.

A Radio Liberty video shows at least one protester shot near the Maidan side of Zhovtnevyi Palace at 9:10am and two other protesters on the ground near the middle section of this building at 9:19am.⁴⁵ The first location matches a place of killings of Vasyl Mojsei from the Volhynian company of the Maidan Self-Defense and shooting of another unidentified protester. Enlarged and enhanced images from the videos indicate that one of the two protesters shot near the flower clock at 9:14am was likely hit in his backside from a direction of the hotel. This was Andrii Sayenko, who died as result. There is an apparent bullet impact from the direction of the hotel near the spot and the time of the shooting of at least two protesters at 9:19am. A Maidan

medic, who was there at that time, said that the protesters were targeted from the roof of the Hotel Ukraina.

The government investigation and the media omitted this and other indications of the deadly fire from the Hotel Ukraina, such as bullet impact traces in trees, poles, and Zhovtnevyi Palace facade within meters of these spots of the killings. Similarly, they generally omitted reports by the Maidan protesters witnesses concerning shooters in the Hotel Ukraina at the time of these killings. At 9:10-9:11am, a few minutes after the killing of Solchanyk and shooting of at least one other unidentified protester, an announcer on the Maidan stage publicly warned the protesters about two to three snipers on the pendulum floor, i.e. 13th or 11th floor, depending on the location, of the Hotel Ukraina on the opposite side of the street.⁴⁶ Such warnings were generally transmitted from the Maidan stage after Maidan protesters witnessed the shooters and reported this information to the announcers on the stage. In addition to these specific warning about “snipers” in the Hotel Ukraina, a video shows protesters taking cover under a pedestrian bridge on Instytutska Street between the hotel and Zhovtnevyi Palace and pointing out at 9:23am live ammunition fire at them and other protesters from a top floor of the hotel.⁴⁷

A 55 minute long video, which was filmed from the Hotel Ukraina, and Zelenyi Front long video filmed from the Instytutska Street, and various pictures, show that a large group of advancing protesters was killed and wounded at that area at that time, but they omit moments when the protesters were shot there.⁴⁸ But analysis of their latent content and comparison with other sources reveal that shooters targeting this group of the protesters were based at the Hotel Ukraina.

Specifically, Oleh Sukhinsky, a protester in a lilac cover who is seen in the 55 minute video shortly before and shortly after his wounding, said in his interview that he saw that he was

shot from the Hotel Ukraina.⁴⁹ His wound on the right leg coincided with the position of advancing protesters and the shot from the direction of the hotel. However, he was then carried out at 9:27am to the make-shift hospital on the ground floor of the same Hotel Ukraina from which he was shot at.⁵⁰ Later many other killed and wounded protesters were carried out to this hotel and Zhovtnevyi Palace. This seemingly irrational decision from a point of a view of personal safety, turns to be rational if both buildings were controlled by the Maidan protesters and the concealed shooters there were from the Maidan side.

Serhii Bondarchuk was shot around 9:30am in the same area. The arrested Berkut members were charged with his killing, but his family members believe based on evidence that they collected that he was killed from the Hotel Ukraina. 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. A reported entry wound in the neck and exit wound in his torso suggest that Ivan Tarasiuk was killed in this general area from a direction at the top, which matches the Hotel Ukraina. Two holes in a metal poll in the green fence near which the protesters were killed point to a 7.62mm bullet fired from the Hotel Ukraina.

Based on this evidence, one can infer that other protesters killed there were also most likely shot by shooters based at this Maidan-controlled hotel. They were identified by their relatives and fellow Maidan protesters in a Facebook group dealing with the massacre.⁵¹ These killed protesters include Serhii Baidovsky, Ivan Bliok, Nazar Voitovych, Mykola Dziavulsky, Anatoliy Zhalovaha, Serhii Kemsy, Anatolii Korneev, Ihor Kostenko, Andrii Movchan, and Oleksandr Shcherbatiuk,

The analysis of videos and other evidence shows that at least 12 protesters were killed on Instytutaska Street between the Hotel Ukraina and Kinopalats after Berkut members and Omega

snipers retreated at 9:20am to the first barricade near the entrance to the metro Khreshchatyk on Instytutska Street and then at 9:28am to the second barricade made of Kamaz trucks. This and other videos and bullet marks on poles, trees, and the Hotel Ukraina walls and windows on several different floors at the top, middle, and lower parts confirm that the police fired live ammunition from these barricades. Reported ballistic trajectories also point to similar shots fired from the Cabinet of Ministers Club and the National Bank building, both of which were controlled by the government forces.⁵² But a rational reason for such shooting could have been not to kill the unarmed protesters but to fire warning shots at advancing protesters and target shooters firing at both the police and protesters from the Hotel Ukraina and Zhovtnevyi Palace. For example, the recording of Spilno TV live broadcast from the Hotel Ukraina shows that the police at the first and then the second barricade came under live ammunition fire, in particular automatic fire, from that general direction. (See Video Appendix 1).⁵³ There is no such evidence that SBU snipers located in the Cabinet of Ministers, the Presidential Administration, and neighboring buildings fired any shots into this area.

A BBC report shows Ihor Dmytiv being shot dead on the right side of Instytutska street at 9:22am, while other videos show Andrii Dyhdalovych being hit and killed on the same spot one minute later.⁵⁴ Reported entry wounds and an analysis of testimony by two protesters who witnessed these shooting indicate that in both cases they were shot from the Hotel Ukraina. For example, such a conclusion concerning Dyhdalovych was made by a protester in his interview to a Dutch television soon after this happened, but the Maidan leaders and media claimed that he was killed by the government snipers.⁵⁵ Similarly, videos showing the Omega sniper lying on the ground and then pointing his rifle into the direction of the Hotel Ukraina at 9:23am exactly when Dyhdalovych was shot dead in front of the barricade were misrepresented as a definite proof of

government snipers killing him and other protesters.⁵⁶ It is noteworthy that an armed protestor in a Berkut-style uniform was wounded in his arm on the same spot, but a direction of the shot is more difficult to determine in this case.⁵⁷

There is also evidence that groups of protesters were lured into the killing zones by several protesters who led the way and called others to follow them. It would be extremely irrational from the perspective of their personal safety to go there after witnessing other groups of the protesters massacred nearby. An AFP video shows that an unidentified protestor walking ahead of the first group but not being there when its three members were shot within minutes.⁵⁸ A similar prompting seen in videos with two large groups of the protesters on both sides of Instytutaska Street.⁵⁹

At least in one case, there is evidence that such luring was likely deliberate. Videos show that a protestor in black was leading one of these groups even after the group members noticed that a bullet barely missed them and hit a tree at 9:38am. The video filmed from the hotel and the bullet hole in that tree indicate that this shot came from the direction of the Hotel.⁶⁰ They were then heard shouting that the shoots came from the Hotel Ukraina.⁶¹ But the black-cladded protestor in a gas mask continued to proceed along with another protestor, and he hid beyond the wall in the bushes as if he was expecting that this group would be massacred within minutes from other directions than from the police positions in front. This protestor was one of the few in this group who survived the massacre, and he was filmed in various videos dragging wounded Roman Kachan to the hotel around 10:00am.⁶² An eyewitness in that group that was massacred there said in his interview that some suspicious people among the protesters, specifically the person in black, who tried to lure them to the place where they were massacred.

The same protestor in black and with the gas mask was seen in 10:17am while running with members of the Parasiuk-led armed group into the Hotel Ukraina.⁶³ A documentary and his own interview, identified as that person and matched some key visual elements but he claimed that went first ahead because wanted to see positions from which the fire was coming, and then stated that denied that there were any shooters at the hotel.⁶⁴

The protesters acted rationally by trying to hide beyond the wall, trees, the barricade, and use shield to obscure their visibility from the Berkut and Omega positions directly in their front, but they were shot from unexpected directions.⁶⁵ The analysis of various evidence indicates that these two groups of the protesters came under fire nearly simultaneously from the back, right, and left directions. Specifically, some of the protesters were shot behind the wall, which as the Google Earth-based map shows is located beyond any direct fire from the Berkut barricade and other buildings controlled by the Omega and SBU snipers. (See Map 1).

The evidence indicates that the massacre was organized and planned since the shooters and spotters were at the time of the shootings of these protesters already positioned at the Hotel Ukraina, Zhovtnevyi Palace, Kinopalats, Arkada building, and Muzeiny Lane and Horodestskoho buildings. Serhii Trapezun, who is seen pointing a hand on the ground after being wounded when his group came under the fire around 9:44-9:45am, stated that shots that killed and wounded most members of his group came from the sides and from the back.⁶⁶ His TV interview and directions of his wounds indicate that Borys Aseev, whose shooting was presented in the Daily Beast report as the evidence that the Alfa snipers massacred the protesters, was shot in his feet from a top direction when he along with other members of the same group was approaching the wall and tried to hide there.⁶⁷ He was seen in various videos during this shooting with a black backpack.

Roman Varenysia, who was wearing a blue helmet, was killed at 9:45am while hiding behind a tree. Holes and other ammunition impact signs appearing on his shield and that tree nearly simultaneously suggest that this was likely a shot from a hunting rifle from a Kinopalats or Muzeiny Lane direction⁶⁸ (see Photo 1). In their radio intercept, SBU snipers report hearing numerous gunshots and seeing suspected snipers or their fire coordinators at several other buildings then held by the Maidan side, such as on the roof of Kinopalats at 9:43am. The Maidan announcers reported three snipers shooting to kill from the top of Zhovtnevyi Palace, which is connected to Kinopalats, at 9:46–9:47am, and they repeated such specific warnings until at least 10:53am.⁶⁹ A bullet strikes a tree near a group of protesters from the direction of these buildings during one of the first waves of mass killing at 9:45am.⁷⁰

The same concerns other groups of the protesters who came to retrieve the wounded and killed members of the first group. An exit bullet hole in the left side of his blue helmet and his position when he was shot the video indicate that Ustym Holodniuk was killed from the direction of the Hotel Ukraina, which was on the opposite side from the Berkut and Omega-manned barricade.⁷¹ His killing was publicized in Ukrainian and Polish documentaries and various media reports and attributed to the government snipers or the Berkut. Eugen Kotliar was filmed when he was gunned down while running away at 9:55am. His position at that moment and areas of his wounds visible in this video and in photos coincide with his reported wounds in the neck, and they indicate the Hotel Ukraina as a likely origin of fire.⁷²



Photo 1. Gunshot impact marks from the direction of Zhovtnevyi Palace/Kinopalats and Muzeinyi Lane on a tree at the site of the massacre. (Source: Photo by the author)

Ihor Tkachuk’s position and his entry wound location seen in various videos and picture indicate that he was most likely shot in the head from a direction of the Bank Arkada or a neighboring building on Horodetskoho Street.⁷³ A Dutch TV video shows a moment when Yuri Kravchuk, the commander of the Khmelnytsky Company of the Maidan Self-Defense, was wounded in his leg. His position at that moment and his wound location in other videos and pictures indicate that the shot came from one of the Maidan-controlled buildings, but this was not mentioned in a New York Times story about him.⁷⁴ Volodymyr Goncharovsky in his interview

from a German hospital said that that there was shooting from the back, and he himself was wounded in the back. He was filmed lying on the ground wearing a Berkut helmet.⁷⁵

Several other protesters, were killed or mortally wounded within a dozen of minutes in the same area, but the moments when they were shot are edited out in various videos or not filmed. This indirectly indicates that they were likely shot from the similar Maidan-held positions. They include Oleh Ushnevych, Roman Huryk, Vladyslav Zubenko, Ivan Panteleev, Mykola Pankiv, Yuri Parashchuk, and Roman Tochyn.

The various evidence indicates that the Maidan side controlled the Hotel Ukraina, Zhovtnevyi Palace and Kinopalats during the massacre of the protesters, while Muzeinyi Lane, Arkada Building and and Horodetskoho Street buildings what were identified as positions of shooters or spotters were in the Maidan-controlled territory (see Map 1). The control of the buildings or territory used by shooters does not necessitates physical control over all parts of the Hotel Ukraina and other buildings. While these buildings were relatively large, the shooting positions were cocrntrated in small areas of these buildings, and the Maidan side knew about specific locations of the shooters from the live broadcasts and videos, like in the case of Zhovtnevyi Palace and Muzeinyi Lane buildings, from reports by the Maidan eyewitnesses that were announced on the Maidan stage, and from radio intercepts. The live broadcasts, videos, and radio intercepts identified shooters in specific opened windows and on the specific upper-level floors on the one wing of the Hotel Ukraina, on the roof of Zhovtnevyi Palace and Muzejnyi Lane buildings for a period of time that was far then sufficient for the Maidan Self-Defense to reach these specific areas.

There are various videos showing that the entrance, stairways, and elevators in the Hotel Ukraina during the entire massacre since about 9:00am were controlled by the Maidan side.⁷⁶

Mykola Romanyuk, a protester seen in a BBC and other videos inside of the Hotel Ukraina in the beginning of the massacre, said that his company of the Maidan Self-Defense guarded the entrance to the hotel and that there were no snipers there.⁷⁷ A BBC video shows a deputy of the Ukrainian parliament from Svoboda and the leader of its Khmelnytskyi regional organization guarding the entrance to the stairways and the elevators around the time when members of the Svoboda-led Khmelnytsky's company of the Maidan Self-Defense were massacred by shooters from that side of the hotel.⁷⁸

There is evidence that the protesters controlled specific floors at the time when shooters there were firing at both the protesters and the police. About two dozen of protesters, part of whom were armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles and hunting rifles, are seen entering the Hotel Ukraina in 10:17am during the massacre of the protesters in presence of several Svoboda deputies and many Maidan protesters and journalists. BBC, AFP, Itele, Sky News, Globe and Mail, and a Ukrainian TV correspondents recorded this group entering the hotel, but they either downplayed this, showed parts of the group, or did not report this at all.⁷⁹ For example, an unlisted and previously unreported video, which was made by a correspondent of Ukraina TV channel, shows arrival of the main body of the Parasiuk's armed group to the hotel Ukraina at 10:17am.⁸⁰ The exact time is established from a time when a wounded medic was carried out to the Hotel Ukraina in the time-stamped Zelenyi Front video of the massacre.

A video shows another group of protesters with at least one gun and axe breaking into a hotel room, immediately after a Ruptly reporter was shot at 10:12am in his bullet-proof vest on the 14th floor of this hotel.⁸¹ Both RT and Spilno TV correspondents reported that there were “snipers” on the same floor, and there are also reports, eyewitnesses and bullet trajectories on the site of the massacre concerning shooters on the roof, located next to that floor. At least two

member of the Parasiuk's group are seen in a Ruptly video when one of them is shooting from an IZh-56 hunting rifle from the 14th floor of the Hotel Ukraina, most likely between 10:20am and 10:39am.⁸² Contours of towers and other buildings in this video match those on the Instytutska Street. The approximate angle of this rifle and calculations based on the height of the building and the distances indicate that it was pointed not towards the police but towards protesters. In addition, it would be irrational to use such hunting rifles and ammunition against the police. The distance towards the Berkut barricade and Omega positions was about 200 meters and far beyond the effective distance for precise and lethal shots with such hunting rifles, in contrast to positions of the protesters. They were within several dozen meters from the hotel and within effective distance of such hunting weapons and ammunition (See Map 1).

Videos show Svoboda members of the parliament, such as Ruslan Koshulynsky, Oleh Pankevych, Yuri Syrotiuk, Iryna Stekh, Iryna Farion, Oleh Osiatynsky, Ihor Shvaika, and Anatolii Vitiv, witnessing the arrival and exit of members of the armed Parasiuk group or being at the first floor and near the hotel during the massacre, in some cases from the very start.⁸³ Most members of Svoboda faction had being provided Hotel Ukraina suits to live after the 2012 elections. But they did not publicly mentioned presence of Maidan shooters in the hotel, and the Prosecutor General from Svoboda did the same. Some of the Svoboda members were filmed in the massacre area or in the line of fire from the shooters in the Hotel Ukraina, Arkada, and Zhovtnevyi even though these would have been irrational from personal safety perspective because information about shooters in these locations was available from the wounded Maidan protesters and other witnesses and from the Maidan stage announcements.

Media reports of deputies negotiating with "snipers" on the roof after presence of the shooters was reported there from the Maidan stage at around 11:00am likely referred to some of

the Svoboda members of the parliament. It would be irrational to negotiate with “snipers” and then deny their presence, unless they were perceived as not dangerous by being from the Maidan side. But the “roof snipers” were not seen afterwards and their existence was denied within hours after the opposition members of the parliament went to the roof. An admission by a protester from the Parasiuk’s group that he went to the roof of the Hotel Ukraina but saw no snipers there is another evidence that the “shooters” on the roof were from the Maidan side.

The same concerns a man in a black protester-style dress and balaklava, who matches a description of a shooter reportedly captured at the Hotel Ukraina. He is seen in the previously unreported video when Parasiuk and at least some other members of his group leave the hotel around 11:00-11:30am with Svoboda deputies, Maidan protesters, and journalists witnessing this man, the Parasiuk group, and a protester armed with Kalashnikov.⁸⁴ The Spilno TV broadcast and initial media reports stated around 11:00am that a “sniper” was found on the 10th floor by the Maidan Self-Defense armed with Kalashnikovs. A protester saw similarly-dressed man identified by as a sniper and being carried by Maidan Self-Defense near the Hotel Ukraina.⁸⁵ A Spilno TV recording also contains information that a French TV crew from Itele filmed the capture of one of the shooters in the Hotel Ukraina during the massacre and interviewed him, but this video was not broadcast. The most rational explanation that this “sniper” was captured either to create a plausible deniability like in the case of the conservatory shooter or that he was captured by Maidan Self-Defense members who knew about the shooters there but were not initially aware about their allegiance. Videos show dozens of Maidan Self-Defense members in front of the Hotel Ukraina around that time.

Similar evidence shows that the Maidan protesters again seized Zhovtnevyi Palace after the Berkut company’s retreat and controlled the entrance, the roof, and windows on the roof

during the massacre. Three “snipers” on the roof of Zhovtnevyi Palace were filmed and identified as such during wave of killing of protesters around 10:00am.⁸⁶ One of them is recorded in the same spot on the top of this yellow building in a BBC video at 10:04am.⁸⁷ Two “snipers” there were shown by ICTV on February 20, 2014.⁸⁸ An apparent human contour is noticeable on the roof of Kinopalats in a photo taken by a French photographer from the midst of the massacre when at least several protesters were killed or seriously wounded near him around 10:10am.⁸⁹ The Maidan Self-Defense reportedly later found more than 80 bullet casings on the roof of Zhovtnevyi Palace.⁹⁰ Eyewitnesses among the Maidan protesters confirm presence of at least three snipers on Zhovtnevyi Palace roof and its upper floor.⁹¹ In addition to confirming that the Maidan side controlled this building, a Polish TV report shows a group of the Maidan Self-Defense members lying around 10:22am on the same roof facing the massacre area and the Hotel Ukraina and being near a roof window that other Maidan witnesses identified as being used by shooters.⁹² This group was shown running to Zhovtnevyi Palace at 10:04am in a BBC video.⁹³

A recording of a live Espresso TV broadcast and testimony of one of the Maidan eyewitnesses indicate that a uniformed person was escorted from this building around 10:20am by different Maidan protesters who called him a “sniper.”⁹⁴ But like in the cases with similar captured suspected “shooters” in the Hotel Ukraina and the Music Conservatory, his identity remained unknown; and no information about his capture was released after he had been escorted to the Main Post Office building, which was then the Right Sector headquarters. Such actions would be non-rational if these shooters were from any other side but the Maidan side. It would have been in self-interest of the Maidan leaders to publicize the capture of snipers as the most important evidence if they were from the government side, “titushki,” or Russia.

Many foreign journalists, including from the Globe and Mail, Die Zeit, and RT, tweeted firsthand information from their base in the Hotel Ukraina that the protesters were shooting from the hotel during the entire massacre.⁹⁵ They generally assumed that the only rational target of the Maidan shooters was the police. But, as noted, the use of hunting ammunition and hunting rifles, carried by many of the members of the Parasiuk group, against the police from the Hotel Ukraina would not have been rational because of the distance, in contrast to the effective distance of their use against the protesters. In addition, no police members were confirmed killed at that location in contrast to the Music Conservatory area.

A Polish TVP correspondent based at the Hotel Ukraina stated in his TV report on February 20, 2014 that they got photos of the Maidan protesters shooting at “people” with Kalashnikovs twenty minutes following his interview with one of the protesters, who said that they had no weapons. This reporter also later said that most of the killed protesters were shot from the Hotel Ukraina, but he did not make public these photos of the protesters shooting people with Kalashnikovs and his videos of the massacre, which showed some of the “snipers” in other locations.⁹⁶

Little known recordings of Spilno TV live Internet broadcasts from the Hotel Ukraina indicate that at least two groups of armed protesters were on the top floors of the Hotel Ukraina during the massacre and that they were shooting with AKMs and hunting rifles at the time when the protesters were killed on Instytutska.⁹⁷ The demands of the first group to Spilno TV and CNN journalists on the 11th floor to get away from the windows to allow them to take firing positions were recorded by both reporters at 10:21am based in the time-stamped of the Spilno TV recording. Several minutes before the CNN filmed from the same hotel a Maidan medic

being shot in his right leg, but did not report that this direction pointed to a shooter in one of the Maidan-controlled buildings.⁹⁸

The armed protesters on the 11th floor did not allow to film themselves, but their appearance several minutes after the Parasiuk's-led group entered the hotel and was commanded by him to go the 10th floor indicate that they might have been from his unit. But, as noted, there were other unidentified groups of armed Maidan protesters at the hotel during the massacre. No such reliable evidence of the government or any "third side" snipers in this hotel or other Maidan-controlled buildings has been found.

The salvos of automatic gunshots were fired from a close distance within a minute before and after the appearance of the first group of armed protesters in the right wing of the 11th floor of a hotel corridor where the Spilno TV was streaming from. Then such gunfire rounds followed at 10:22am, 10:25-10:27am, and 10:30am. Since then, the Spilno TV reporter and an English-speaking foreign reporter, possibly from the French TV crew that was mentioned as being there, described seeing and hearing live ammunitions shots coming from the top floors of the hotel. For instance, at 10:35am this foreign reporter said that he saw a shooter hiding in a Hotel Ukraina window and firing shots. Another person there said at 10:31am that he just saw a person with a firearm on the 11th floor of their hotel and at 10:55am that the Maidan Self-Defense armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles on 10th floor "carried away" one or two "snipers." The Spilno TV streamer reported at 10:43am that hunters were among the protesters and at 10:50am that protesters at the hotel were armed with AKMs and rifles and later that they were shooting. He said at 10:48-10:50am that there were shots from the Hotel Ukraina from a window on the same floor and from the roof of the Hotel and at 10:59am that two "snipers" were on the roof of the hotel.⁹⁹

During that time and in those locations many protesters were shot at, killed and wounded by 7.62mm AKM caliber bullets and by hunting pellets and bullets from the direction of the hotel. For instance, the first round of shots at 10:20am in the Spilno video corresponded with wounding of a protester named Vasyl Halamai. In a documentary, Halamai confirmed that he was depicted in the Zelenyi Front long video behind the first barricade seconds before and after his wounding. He later said in a TV interview that he was wounded by a bullet in his lower back, which indicates a direction of a gunshot from the back, such as the Hotel Ukraina or Zhovtnevyi Palace. His fellow protester, Mykola Tokar, said that he was next to Halamai at that very moment of shooting. In a German ARD Monitor interview, Tokar said that they came under fire from a top floor of the Hotel Ukraina.

Two protesters behind the same barricade at 10:24am pointed out “sniper” fire at the protesters from the pendulum floor of the Hotel Ukraina and three bodies lying nearby in another video filmed from amid a group of protesters under the deadly fire on Instytutska Street.¹⁰⁰ This means either the same 11th floor in the two wings of the hotel or the 13th floor in its central section. At the same time as another round of gunfire in the Spilno TV broadcast, the Zelenyi Front video shows at 10:25am a protester being shot dead when he was running away from the massacre area.¹⁰¹ This was Volodymyr Chaplynski, who was killed in a neck. There is no precise information about the direction of this bullet wound, but it would have been irrational for the police to kill an unarmed protester running away from their positions.

A video shows that Dmytro Holubnychyi, a teenage protester and some other protesters, fled from the barricade on Instytutska Street within two minutes after Eduard Hrynevych from the Volhynian company of the Maidan Self-Defense and Iosyp Shyling were killed in the head at the same barricade at 10:25am and immediately after a loud call by one of the protesters that

‘they [shooters] are behind.’¹⁰² Another video shows that another protester behind that barricade was shot around the same time in the same area in the back of his leg. Holubnychy confirmed in his media interview that he and other protesters came under live ammunition fire by the shooters from the Hotel Ukraina.¹⁰³

His position in a video by a French photographer and reported direction of his entry wounds in the neck and left shoulder indicate that Viktor Chmilenko was shot from the Maidan-controlled building at 10:28am.¹⁰⁴ Oleksandr Tsariok was shot in the same area around the same time. His position during his killing is unknown precisely but he reportedly had multiple wounds. This indicates that he might have been shot by pellets.

Several minutes after the first group of armed protesters was recorded on the 11th floor, a BBC video at about 10:26am showed a shooter firing at the BBC television crew and the Maidan protesters from an open window on the same 11th floor of the hotel.¹⁰⁵ The BBC correspondent in his news report and in his tweet identified the shooter as having a green helmet worn by the Maidan protesters.¹⁰⁶ A STB video showed within several minutes of this shooting in the BBC video a shooter hiding behind the curtains of the same window of the 11th floor of the Hotel Ukraina and firing at the Maidan protesters.¹⁰⁷ A protester around 10:30am indicated in the AFP video that there was a “shooter” on the 9th floor of the hotel. It was physically impossible to shoot at the police barricade from those windows. (See Map 1).

A first-hand account by Ilya Varlamov, his photos, a testimony by another eyewitness, and two nearby shots in the live broadcast, which was recorded from this hotel starting at 8:49am, suggest that Leonid Poliansky was killed and another protester wounded on the Maidan side of the Hotel Ukraina at 10:30-10:31am by shots from this hotel.¹⁰⁸ An interview by a member of the Volhynian Company of the Maidan Self-Defense and a time-stamped photos

indicate that Oleksandr Khrapachenko from this unit was killed and another person wounded at 11:27am near the same barricade on Instytutska Street by shots fired from the Hotel Ukraina.¹⁰⁹

Between 20 and 26 protesters were killed on the both sides of the Instytutska Street near the barricade. In all cases when such information was available about killings of the protesters, it pointed towards to shooters at the Hotel Ukraina, Zhovtnevyi Palace, Kinopalats, Arkada, and Muzeiny Lane and Horodetskoho Street buildings.

Warnings from the Maidan stage about “three snipers” or “snipers” “shooting to kill” the Maidan protesters from this hotel, specifically on Instytutska Street, were made again as the killings continued there, for example, at 10:36, 10:59, 11:07, and 11:09am in the live broadcast.¹¹⁰ Maidan leaders denied that any shooters were there and claimed that several Maidan Self-Defense and Right Sector searches at the Hotel Ukraina, specifically conducted there during the massacre and soon after it ended did not find any of the “shooters.” For, example, Mustafa Nayem, who streamed live for Hromadske TV, stated at 3:00pm that a Right Sector and Self-Defense search did not locate any snipers who were spotted on an upper floor of the Hotel Ukraina.¹¹¹

But the shootings of the protesters from the hotel did not stop completely, indicating that the shooters were from the Maidan side. Eyewitnesses in another video of the shooting around 4:50pm and the direction of the entry wound indicate that a bystander was killed by a bullet from the Hotel Ukraina in front of Zhovtnevyi Palace.¹¹² After this shooting, a speaker on the Maidan stage threatened to burn the Hotel Ukraina, as they did the Trade Union building a day earlier, because of constant reports of snipers in the hotel.¹¹³

Many eyewitnesses among the Maidan protesters reported snipers firing from the Hotel Ukraina during the massacre of the protesters, specifically, about killing eight of them.¹¹⁴ Bullet

holes in trees and electricity poles on the site of the massacre and on the walls of Zhovtnevyi Palace indicate that shots came from the direction of the hotel.¹¹⁵ There are several similar recorded testimonies of the eyewitnesses among the protesters about shooters in October Palace and other Maidan-controlled buildings.

There was also shooting on the police from the Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan controlled buildings. A Berkut policeman was killed in front of Zhovtnevyi Palace by two shots at 9:16am, minutes after the announcement about “snipers” in the hotel.¹¹⁶ There were bullet impact traces in a trees and poles within meters of this spot from a Hotel Ukraina direction. A Berkut commander stated that snipers in the Hotel Ukraina were shooting at the policemen from 7.62mm caliber guns.¹¹⁷

A video from the police side of the barricade depicts several Berkut policemen with 7.62 caliber AKMs and many armed members of the Omega special Internal Troops unit with different caliber AKS-74, including several snipers, taking cover from live ammunition fire during the height of the massacre of the protesters starting from a few minutes before 10:00am.¹¹⁸ It shows one Omega sniper targeting an open window of the Hotel Ukraina and another sniper pointing his rifle in an upward direction, likely toward Zhovtnevyi Palace around 10:40-10:45am. A Ukrainian TV journalist, who filmed this video, confirmed that they came under a fire and were looking for a sniper in the Hotel Ukraina.¹¹⁹ The video also shows two Berkut servicemen pointing their Kalashnikov rifles or shooting from the top side of Kamaz trucks, likely at the same direction or in the direction of Muzeinyi Lane buildings, where shooters could be seen in live broadcasts around the same time. All these buildings and the protesters on Instyutska Street were located downslope from this police barricade. A previously

unreported radio intercept of the Omega commander (“Pegas”) and servicemen from his unit informed at 10:37am on February 21 about gunshots coming from the Hotel Ukraina.¹²⁰

Mustafa Nayem, an initiator of the Euromaidan protests and a widely known journalist from *Ukrainska Pravda*, an openly pro-Maidan online newspaper, twitted at 11:58am a photo of snipers on the police side of this barricade located at the intersection of Instytutska and Bankova streets.¹²¹ This photo was presented by the Ukrainian media as evidence that these were snipers who massacred the protesters. However, these snipers and Berkut special company shooters generally did not hide, and they allowed the media and bystanders to film themselves during the massacre.¹²²

Various sources of evidence indicate that Berkut and Omega used, respectively, their AKMS, AKS, and sniper rifles and that they shot live ammunition at the general direction of both the protesters and suspected Maidan “snipers” since about 9:05am. These live ammunition rounds came around the time of the killing and wounding of many protesters. Videos show that at least a large proportion of the victims were shot at that time while taking cover behind a wall, trees, and a barricade, and thus being outside of a hitting zone from the direction of the police barricade and the adjacent government buildings. But a possibility that some of the protesters, specifically armed ones, including “snipers,” were wounded or killed by the police fire cannot be ruled out.

The Omega commander and an Internal Troops commander in charge of such special units stated that they received orders to target snipers at the Hotel Ukraina and other locations and had permission to shoot at armed protesters.¹²³ 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 the Hotel Ukraina.¹²⁴

Volodymyr Arieiev, an investigative journalist and a member of the parliament from the Maidan coalition party, concluded that “snipers” came to the Hotel Ukraina from the Music Conservatory side and that they blocked the Ruptly TV crew on the 14th floor of the hotel.¹²⁵ A RT report, the abovementioned video, and other videos indicate that they were armed Maidan protesters.¹²⁶ But Arieiev claimed without providing any evidence that these “snipers” were working for the Russian government.

A previously unreported intercept of radio communications by the SBU Alfa commanders, contains specific information by the head of this Security Service unit (“Suddia”) and his deputy (“Indeiets”) that “shooters” or “snipers” were moving to the Hotel Ukraina and that they were from the Maidan side.¹²⁷ This is consistent with an interview of the former SBU head, who said that one half of about 20 “snipers” with concealed AKMs in bags moved from the neighboring Music Conservatory, which was held by the Maidan, to the Hotel Ukraina, while another half moved in the direction of the Dnipro Hotel, located on the European Square near Muzeinyi Lane.¹²⁸ The most complete time-stamped version of the Alfa commanders’ radio intercept synchronized with the local time indicates that their report of shooters moving to the Hotel Ukraina was made at 9:23am.¹²⁹ It is contained among the intercepted radio exchanges of Alfa, Berkut, the Internal Troops, Omega, and other government agencies during the entire Maidan protests.¹³⁰

The Alfa commanders’ intercept demonstrates that snipers from this SBU unit were given an order to deploy to the Presidential Administration soon after a full combat readiness was reported by them at 7:24am, i.e., after the reported shooting of the police from the Conservatory building. It also contains similar orders to get arms and deploy to these and other government locations to other SBU units around the same time. Publicly available versions of these intercepts

came from several different pro-Maidan sources. One version with omitted parts was posted by a news website run by an advisor to the current Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, but it was also not acknowledged by the government.¹³¹

An unedited and time-stamped intercept of a radio communication by this SBU sniper team, led by “Miron,” demonstrates that they were tasked with and were monitoring the Hotel Ukraina, specifically its top floors, and other neighboring buildings for snipers and their spotters, who helped to direct the fire, after the massacre was already underway.¹³² These snipers detected armed people, who shot from the tops of the buildings or were lying there, and then swiftly moved away after their location was communicated via radio among the SBU snipers.¹³³ The Alfa snipers were based then the Cabinet of Ministers building (See Map 1). There are no sounds of gunshots by these SBU Alfa snipers or other indications that they fired in the audio clips, which span the most intense phase of the killings from 9:35am till 11:13am. Similarly, no evidence was produced that the protesters were killed with German sniper rifles used by this group of snipers. This is consistent with information provided by three SBU Alfa commanders during the parliamentary investigation and in their statements to Ukrainian TV networks.¹³⁴

However, an edited version of this SBU 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.¹³⁵ 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.¹³⁶ 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.

An RT correspondent reported at 10:58am that a 7.62mm AKM bullet narrowly missed him at a Hotel Ukraina window and that its trajectory pointed to the Conservatory building.¹³⁷ An Associated Press correspondent also reported being fired at in his Hotel Ukraina room overlooking the Maidan in the morning of February 20, and he found that bullet on his balcony.¹³⁸ An Australian ABC reporter's hotel room was also shot from the direction of the Maidan around that time.¹³⁹ A BBC occupied room was also fired upon.¹⁴⁰

There is similar evidence of shooters on the top of buildings on both sides of Instytutska Street in the general area that was under Maidan control. There is a brief extract from an unknown video showing a Maidan activist identifying a shooter, who was aiming his gun in the direction of Instytutska Street, on a roof of an adjacent building on Muzeinyi Lane.¹⁴¹ A recording of Spilne TV live broadcast showed at 10:23am and other times an apparent human figure lying on a roof of a Muzeinyi Lane building, but the quality of the recording does not provide enough resolution to make a more definite conclusion.¹⁴² There were various media reports about a video showing a "sniper" on a roof shooting at Berkut and then protesters from AK and wearing a Berkut-style uniform. The video was shown in the Ukrainian parliament to some of the Maidan leaders and other members of the parliament, but it has not been released publicly.¹⁴³ A bullet is seen striking a pole from the Muzeinyi Lane direction and ricocheting at 9:54am.¹⁴⁴

Suspected shooters on the green Arkada Bank building are pointed out by fleeing protesters after many shots fired at their group at 9:44am.¹⁴⁵ Reports by SBU snipers in their intercepted radio communication at 9:46am, by a female Maidan medic at 10:04am in the BBC video, and by another protester in the Radio Liberty video corroborate this.¹⁴⁶ A TVP journalist based in the 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.¹⁴⁷ A bullet impact point suggests that ABC News occupied room in the Hotel Ukraina was fired from a direction of the Arkada building.¹⁴⁸ Ruslana, in one of her announcements on the Maidan stage in the afternoon, relayed “reliable reports” from the Maidan Self-Defense members of “snipers” on the roof of Arkada.¹⁴⁹

Apparent shooters or spotters can also be identified in windows on the roofs of the Horodetskoho Street building or buildings in a video of the massacre and in the SBU snipers' intercept at about the same time at 10:11–10:12am.¹⁵⁰ Likewise, bullet [impact points](#) in trees confirm the live ammunition fire from this sidewise direction.

It is noteworthy that some crucial parts of this and other waves of the killings are missing in this long video filmed by an activist of Zelenyi Front, a Kharkiv organization.¹⁵¹ This organization is associated with one of the former opposition leaders, who became the Minister of Internal Affairs in the post-Yanukovich government. Another pro-Maidan activist is seen in different videos filming and taking pictures during the massacre from within advancing protesters, many of whom were then killed and wounded. His publicly released videos and photos also do not include many crucial parts of the massacre.¹⁵² He later served in the special police battalion Azov, which was created under formal command of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and he gained notoriety for painting a star on the top of a Moscow high-rise building. In videos of both these pro-Maidan amateur photographs, there were no signs of attempts to identify Maidan sniper positions in surrounding buildings, in spite of their close proximity, or reaction to loud warnings from the Maidan stage about snipers in these locations.

Another long video, which was only made public in December 2014, matches the position and frames of pictures taken by a Lviv journalist who was a Svoboda member and

previously served as the press-secretary in the Svoboda-controlled council of the Lviv Region.

¹⁵³ The video also was filmed openly and many important moments were edited out. The same concerns a Ukrainian journalist from the 5th TV Channel, who assisted the French TV crew and was standing and filming along with the Spilno TV streamer. His recording of Berkut special company and an Omega sniper during their brief advance to Zhovtnevyi Palace were swiftly rebroadcast by the Radio Liberty and then numerous TV channels in Ukraine and around the world and used as primary evidence that the police Berkut and government snipers massacred the unarmed protesters. Similarly, parts of this and other Spilno TV streams were rebroadcast live by Espresso TV but with its crucial audio, which pointed to armed Maidan protesters and their shooting, removed. “Shooters” did not appear to target the pro-Maidan journalists to avoid possible identification, in contrast, to targeting many professional foreign journalists, including the BBC correspondent in the same area, the Associated Press, TVP, ABC News, and Australian Broadcasting Corporation journalists, Sky News, and at least twice reporters from both ARD and RT.¹⁵⁴

Similarly, several leaders of the opposition parties (Svoboda, the Radical Party, and the Fatherland) were speaking on the Maidan stage and blaming the Yanukovich government and its snipers during the very time or shortly after numerous gunshots fired from nearby buildings on the Maidan and from the Hotel Ukraina.¹⁵⁵ For example, a synchronization of a live broadcast recording and a brief intercepted radio communication of the actual shooters show that they fired several rounds of altogether 10 shots in quick succession at 11:33–11:34am.¹⁵⁶ The loud sound of these gunshots in the RT recordings of the live broadcast (1h 08-09 min) from the Kozatsky Hotel indicates that these shots likely came from this or other nearby locations, such as the Trade

Union building.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, the same gunshots heard in the Spilno TV stream indicate that a part of this group of shooters was in the Hotel Ukraina.

A minute afterward these shots were fired by this group of shooters, Oleksander Turchynov, a former head of the Security Service of Ukraine who would become the head of the Ukrainian parliament and the acting president after the violent overthrow of the Yanukovich government, spoke on the Maidan stage while the sounds of other shots and sirens of moving ambulances can be heard in the live broadcast during his speech.¹⁵⁸ A Maidan activist stated that his friend intercepted and recorded on Maidan this radio-exchange of the group of shooters. 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.¹⁵⁹

A local leader of the Patriot of Ukraine, a paramilitary wing of the Social National Assembly, stated that he had a firsthand knowledge that the Maidan Self-Defense members stormed a suspected sniper's room and that one of the leaders of the Maidan opposition and the current government helped to whisk away this suspected shooter, who had a name common in the Caucasus region. While such a testimony cannot by itself serve as a sufficient proof, such evidence was never reported and investigated by the Ukrainian government. The manner of the communication of these shooters in the single publicly available recording is very different from those of SBU and Omega snipers and other government agencies in more than 30 gigabytes of their intercepted, recorded, and released radio exchanges during the entire Maidan protests. These intercepts, admissions by the Maidan leaders that they had such intercepts, and a statement by the Alfa commander all indicate that the shooters and their spotters had such radio intercepts and were able to avoid tracking by the SBU snipers or move to different positions.¹⁶⁰

Similarly, Olesia Zhukovska, a female medic was wounded, and another protester standing in front of her was shot on Maidan itself near the Kozatsky Hotel at 11:43am.¹⁶¹ This happened during a speech by Oleh Liashko, a leader of the Radical Party, which openly cooperated after the overthrow of Yanukovych with the neo-Nazi Social National Assembly, which was of the founders of the Right Sector. A more distant sound of a shot than the abovementioned rounds is heard at 1 hour and 18 minutes in the live broadcast recording, which starts at 10:23am.¹⁶² Eyewitnesses and the direction of the entry wound indicate that this shot was made from the Main Post Office building, which was occupied by the Right Sector.¹⁶³ This shooting case attracted big attention from the Ukrainian and Western media, but like all shootings of protesters, journalists, and the police on the Independence Square, government snipers were blamed and no real investigation was conducted.¹⁶⁴

Eyewitnesses among the protesters, the TVP correspondent, and bullet trajectories also point to shooters around the same time in the Trade Union building, the Kozatsky Hotel, the Music Conservatory buildings, and some other buildings on the Maidan itself.¹⁶⁵ At 11:43am, an unidentified intruder broke into a radio communication of the Internal Troops units, which retreated from the Maidan, and informed them that there were people aiming a rocket propelled grenade launcher into the Hotel Ukraina from the 6th floor of the Trade Union building.¹⁶⁶ SBU snipers noted people at the top of this building at 10:53 and 10:59am.¹⁶⁷

The types of guns and ammunition used and the direction and types of entry wounds among both protesters and policemen also confirm that the shooters came from the Maidan side. The head of the medical service of the Euromaidan and other medics reported that both protesters and the police were shot by similar ammunition, specifically 7.62mm caliber bullets and buckshot (pellets), and that they had similar types of wounds.¹⁶⁸ This information was

relayed by the Estonian minister of foreign affairs in his intercepted telephone call to the EU Foreign Affairs head.¹⁶⁹ Various statements by medics, videos, photos, and media reports confirm that dozens of protesters were shot precisely in necks, heads, thighs, and hearts, the most lethal places, and that many entry wounds were from the top, side, or back. This is consistent with locations of shooters on the roofs or top floors of all specified buildings. Precise and deadly gunshots and the 7.62mm Kalashnikov AKMS type assault rifles and various hunting weapons and ammunition used also indicate that shooters were positioned within several dozen meters from the places where both the police and the protesters were killed or wounded.

Photos, videos, eyewitness testimonies and other sources demonstrate that some protesters were shooting with or openly carrying hunting and sporting rifles, Kalashnikov assault rifles and their hunting versions, Makarov, and other handguns during the mass shooting of the police and the protesters.¹⁷⁰ The parliamentary commission concluded that it was very likely that the policemen on the Maidan were shot from firearms and ammunition that were seized by protesters from the police, internal troops, and SBU offices and arsenals in Western Ukraine on February 18 and 19. These weapons specifically included 1,008 Makarov handguns, 59 AKMS (folding 7.62 caliber Kalashnikov assault rifles, two SVD sniper rifles, and various other rifles and shotguns.¹⁷¹ Their present whereabouts remain unknown.

The instrumentally rational goal of the massacre the protesters in front of dozens of foreign and Ukrainian journalists and during the visit by three ministers of foreign affairs from EU countries would be to blame violence on the Yanukovich government and his security and police forces. This allowed the Maidan leaders to win a conflict with an asymmetric force by delegitimizing the Yanukovich government and its plans to use force against the Maidan.

In addition to evidence presented, it was the same special combat company commander who called from the Maidan stage in the evening of February 21 to reject a signed agreement, which was mediated by foreign ministers of France, Germany and Poland and a representative of the Russian president.¹⁷² The agreement called for investigation of the Maidan massacre with international help. Parasiuk issued a public ultimatum for President Yanukovich to resign by 10:00am of the next day. He justified his ultimatum by blaming Yanukovich for the massacre, while coffins of killed protesters were carried out in front of the stage and some of the members of the Parasiuk-led company, who were seen along with him in the Hotel Ukraina during the massacre, standing in front. He stated that his combat company based in the Music Conservatory was responsible for the turning point of the Euromaidan, and threatened an armed assault if Yanukovich would not resign.

A similar statement was later issued from the Maidan stage by Dmytro Yarosh, the leader of the Right Sector, who said that he told the same Yanukovich personally when then President requested Yarosh to meet with him on February 20 after the massacre was mostly over. The Yarosh statement contained reference to arms that the Right Sector could use. A Maidan activist said that the Right Sector had its own armed group among several Maidan groups of the armed protesters, and that they shot dozens of Berkut and Internal Troops members, in particular, from hunting rifles, from the Trade Union building and then from the conservatory on February 18-20, 2014. In contrast to its leading role in previous violent attacks, the Right Sector members were not visible during the February 20 massacre, and none of the members of this far right organization was reported among the killed protesters, in contrast to many members of Svoboda. Orest Karakevych, a Maidan protester, said that he was informed that the Right Sector members were absent on Instytutska during the massacre because they received advance warning from

their leadership.¹⁷³ Such “dog that did not bark” outcome is another evidence of the involvement of the Right Sector in this massacre.

In the evening of February 20, 2014, deputies from the “Euromaidan” parties were able to secure support of the majority of members of the parliament after many independent deputies and some Party of Regions deputies joined them as a result of the of the massacre. The parliament voted for a statement ordering the members of the police and security services units to withdraw from their positions in the downtown Kyiv. This de facto held such government units responsible for the massacre of the protesters, even though at least a dozen of members of the parliament from the Maidan parties, such as Svoboda deputies and some leaders of the Fatherland party, at least had information about shooters in the Maidan controlled locations, in particular, the Hotel Ukraina.

Parasiuk also admitted that members of his company forced an undisclosed number of members of the parliament to participate in the votes that led to removals of Yanukovych and members of his government from power and elected the former Maidan leaders in their place. Yanukovych fled from Kyiv to Eastern Ukraine in the evening of February 21 soon after this ultimatum was issued.¹⁷⁴ A number of sources, such as his own statements, testimonies of his bodyguards and his government officials, information relayed by the foreign affairs minister of Ukraine to his Polish counterpart, and reported bullet impact traces in cars of the presidential convoy, indicate that Yanukovych was a target of an assassination attempt by such concealed armed groups.¹⁷⁵

Fatherland and, after its split, the People’s Front occupied many top positions in the Maidan-led governments after the violent overthrow of Yanukovych. There were several ministers from Svoboda in the first post-Yanukovych government. While the Right Sector was

not directly represented in the Maidan governments, this far right organization and its members, such as the Social National Assembly, were able to form and lead their own police battalions and paramilitary formations, and have several of their leaders elected to the parliament in the 2014 elections. Such formations attained the ability to stage another violent overthrow of the Ukrainian government.

The failure by the government to locate and identify the shooters of the protesters and investigate the shooting of the police, like the similar failure of the Maidan Self-Defense to stop the shooters during the massacre, in spite of their locations being known at that time and in spite of calls to do so from the protesters and the government officials, also indicate that the shooters were from the Maidan side. This study shows that this was a rational choice, when lives of the protesters were sacrificed by some of their leaders and fellow protesters to overthrow the government and gain power.

Other Cases of Violence during and after the “Euromaidan”

The Maidan turned into a an action of mass protests after a violent dispersal by Berkut on the Maidan on November 30, 2013 of a few hundred protesters against the reversal by the Yanukovich government of signing of an association and free trade agreement with the European Union. This violent dispersal that resulted in wounding of many protestors was ordered and carried out by the Yanukovich government. But there is also a certain evidence, such as statement by Anatolii Hrytsenko, one of the Maidan politicians, that the opposition leaders had advance information about this dispersal, because the opposition was able to intercept radio communications of Berkut concerning this operation. In contrast, claims by the Maidan leaders and some scholars that the violent attacks on the presidential administration on December 1, 2013 and the Ukrainian parliament in the end of January 2014 were provocations by the

Yanukovych government are not supported by evidence. Specifically, the Right Sector and other far right organizations, admitted their key role in these violent attacks.

The radio intercepts of Internal Troops units and 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.¹⁷⁶ These seizures of the Maidan and its headquarters were authorized by the Yanukovych government as a part of the “Boomerang” and “Khvylia” plans.¹⁷⁷ 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.¹⁷⁸ 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.

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.¹⁷⁹ 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.

The new government and the parliamentary commission claimed without providing any evidence that Alfa burned the Trade Union building and that undercover SBU agents burned the Party of Regions headquarters. After these attacks, Berkut, the Internal Troops, and *titushki* assembled by the Yanukovych government launched a counterassault, and at least five Maidan protesters died as result of being beaten, driven over, or injured by stun grenades.¹⁸⁰ At least six Maidan protesters were killed on February 18 and 19 by gunshots, primarily from hunting weapons and pellets, like was the case with three protesters killed in the end of January, 2014. The Maidan opposition and the current government asserted without providing any evidence that these protesters were gunned down by the Berkut and snipers, while similarities with the “snipers” massacre on the Maidan and the failure to find their killers suggest that this was likely a part of the same strategy of false flag violence. The removal by Sergii Pashynsky, a member of the parliament from the Fatherland party, a rifle during the deadly clashes on February 18 might also indicate certain kind of involvement or knowledge that the protesters were using arms, even though this rifle was not linked directly to such use.¹⁸¹

The “sniper massacre” fits a pattern of the politically motivated misrepresentations of the mass killing and other cases of violence by the same Ukrainian political forces and the media involved. Such cases include the beating of Tetiana Chornovol on December 25, 2013, the abduction of Dmytro Bulatov, the Odesa massacre of pro-Russian separatists on May 2, 2014, and many cases of shelling and killing of civilians in Donbas. The Maidan government investigation concluded that the same suspects, who were arrested in December 2013, were responsible for the beating of Chornovol. The leaked investigation information and the

admission of his fellow Automaidan leaders in the Fall 2014 that they knew this from the start, provide evidence that Bulatov's abduction was staged.

While the massacre of pro-Russian separatists in Odesa was blamed by the Ukrainian government on the separatists themselves, videos and other sources of evidence, such as public admissions by the far right organizations and the failure of the government investigation to find those responsible, point to the involvement of the Right Sector, football ultras and the Maidan Self-Defense units in starting the deadly fire at the Trade Union building.¹⁸² Contrary to the government claims that nearly all major cases of killings of civilians in Donbas were done by separatists, specifically as false flag operations, the analysis of various sources, such as OSCE mission reports and videos, indicates that the absolute majority of such killings during the first stage of the civil war were attributable to the Ukrainian forces and battalions led by the far right parties. However, the separatists were responsible for the majority of the most deadly attacks during their advance in January and February 2015. While the various available evidence indicates that the Malaysian airliner in Donbas was likely shot down by separatists, such a track record also raises questions in this case.¹⁸³

Conclusion

The analysis and the evidence presented in this academic investigation put "Euromaidan" and the conflict in Ukraine into a new perspective. The seemingly irrational mass shooting and killing of the protesters and the police on February 20, 2014 appear to be rational from self-interest based perspectives of rational choice and Weberian theories of instrumentally-rational action. This includes the following: the Maidan leaders gaining power as a result of the massacre, President Yanukovich and his other top government officials fleeing on February 21, 2014 from Kyiv and then from Ukraine, and the retreat by the police. The same concerns Maidan

protesters being sent under deadly fire into positions of no important value and then being killed wave by wave from unexpected directions. Similarly, snipers killing unarmed protesters and targeting foreign journalists but not Maidan leaders, the Maidan Self-Defense and the Right Sector headquarters, the Maidan stage, and pro-Maidan journalists become rational. While such actions are rational from a rational choice or instrumentally rational theoretical perspective, the massacre not only ended many human lives but also undermined democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Ukraine.

The various evidence analyzed from such a theoretical perspective indicates that armed groups and parts of leadership of the far right organizations, such as the Right Sector and Svoboda, and oligarchic parties, such as Fatherland, were directly or indirectly involved various capacities or likely knew about actual perpetrators of this massacre of the protesters and the police. This mass killing was aimed in seizing power. This study also provides a rational explanation for the failure of the government investigation to find and prosecute those directly involved in this mass killing and for falsification of the investigation. However, specific nature and degree of the involvement of each of these political organizations and specific leaders and armed protesters remains unclear. Such a false flag massacre by its nature could have been organized and successfully carried out only by a small number of Maidan leaders and protesters. The absolute majority of the Maidan protesters, activists, members, and supporters of the “Euromaidan” mass protests and parties that led these protests, including the victims among the protestors, were not aware about the actual organizers and perpetrators of this politically motivated murder and not involved in any other way in this mass killing.

The massacre of the protesters and the police was a key part of the violent overthrow of the government in Ukraine and a major human rights crime. This violent overthrow constituted

an undemocratic change of government. It gave start to a large-scale violent conflict that turned into a civil war in Eastern Ukraine, to a Russian military intervention in support of separatists in Crimea and Donbas, and to a de-facto break-up of Ukraine. It also escalated an international conflict between the West and Russia over Ukraine. The evidence indicates that the involvement of the special police units in killings of some of the protesters cannot be ruled out.

The new government that came to power largely as a result of the massacre falsified its investigation, while the Ukrainian media helped to misrepresent this mass killing of the protesters and the police. The evidence indicates that the far right and oligarchic parties played a key role in the violent overthrow of the corrupt and oligarchic but democratically elected government in Ukraine. This academic investigation also brings new important questions that need to be addressed.

Notes

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⁴ Richard Sakwa (2015). *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands*. London: I.B.Tauris, pp. 90-92.

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⁶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BikMGU9cj7s>

⁷ <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2015/01/23/7056061/>

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6D3OM7SOQtw>

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¹⁰ http://www.moskal.in.ua/?category=news&news_id=1099

¹¹ Interpol rejects Ukrainian murder charges against ex-officials

Jan. 12, 2015 Kyiv Post, Maxim Tucker <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/kyiv-post-plus/interpol-rejects-ukrainian-murder-charges-against-ex-officials-377233.html>

¹² <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/10/us-ukraine-killings-probe-special-report-idUSKCN0HZ0UH20141010>

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¹⁴ Konrad Schuller, Wie kam es zum Blutbad auf dem Majdan? Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/europa/ukraine-die-hundertschaften-und-die-dritte-kraft-13414018.html>

¹⁵ http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/04/world/europe/ukraine-leader-was-defeated-even-before-he-was-ousted.html?_r=0

¹⁶ Указ Президента України № 890/2014. Про присвоєння звання Герой України, <http://www.president.gov.ua/documents/18477.html>. David Kipiani, a Georgian protester from

the party of ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili, initially was identified as killed by live ammunition but it was later reported that he died from a cardiac arrest and was found in another Maidan location later on February 20, 2014.

¹⁷ See, for example, Bates, Robert H., Avner Greif, Margaret Levi, Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, and Barry Weingast. (1998). *Analytic narratives*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

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²⁰ Katchanovski Ivan (2014). “Ethnic Cleansing, Genocide or Ukrainian-Polish Conflict? The Mass Murder of Poles by the OUN and the UPA in Volhynia,” 19th Annual World Convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities, Columbia University, New York, US, April 24-26, https://www.academia.edu/7629265/Ethnic_Cleansing_Genocide_or_Ukrainian-Polish_Conflict_The_Mass_Murder_of_Poles_by_the_OUN_and_the_UPA_in_Volhynia;

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https://www.academia.edu/1890123/Democracy_and_Political_Values_in_Ukraine

²² Personal observations of these broadcasts on February 20, 2014.

²³ See, for example, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45oIghO7Vsc>

²⁴ There are also some encrypted files, which likely contain Berkut radio communications.

<http://www.radioscanner.ru/forum/topic47258.html>.

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Gabriel Gatehouse The untold story of the Maidan massacre, *BBC News*, February 11, 2015,
<http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-31359021>

²⁷ http://lb.ua/news/2014/02/22/256600_vozrozhdenie_radi.html

²⁸ Personal observations of these broadcasts, February 20, 2014.

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³³ <http://www.pravda.com.ua/ukr/news/2014/02/20/7014989/>

³⁴ John Beck-Hofmann, Maidan Massacre, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ary_14vn5ZA

³⁵ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vs_4skLIqns

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<https://www.facebook.com/oleksiy.stepura?fref=ts>

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https://mega.co.nz/#!h9pWBI5A!24DmrBJQhFAQB7DVZG_Rhh40BCcUvtgm-5Z_9TMntCo

³⁸ http://www.moskal.in.ua/?category=news&news_id=1099

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2zZiZhajzw>
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⁹⁵ <https://twitter.com/pwaldieGLOBE/status/436424673698807808;>
<https://twitter.com/steffendobbert/status/436423960574451712;>
https://twitter.com/egorpiskunov_RT/status/436453114590556160

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