

How We Verify Our Reporting on the Ukraine War

By The New York Times

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The Times has deployed dozens of reporters, photographers, videographers, audio journalists, writers and others to Ukraine and the countries bordering it to deliver real-time, independent, in-depth coverage of the conflict and its reverberations across the region. Times journalists are witnessing events on the ground as they unfold, reporting from battlefields, hospitals, improvised bomb shelters and contested cities.

We trust our correspondents on the ground first and foremost. In situations where they cannot be physically present, we work to obtain reliable, first-hand information about events, interviewing witnesses throughout the region. We strive to see through the fog of propaganda and misinformation that emanates from governments on both sides of the conflict.

Our team of visual and graphics editors have analyzed hundreds of satellite images, photographs and videos of troop movements and fighting, allowing us to map the Russian invasion and confirm independently where soldiers are stationed, who holds key cities and what damage is being done to the country's bridges, apartment buildings, schools and shopping centers.

Photographing the Reality of War

Lynsey Addario, a Times photojournalist in Ukraine, shares her experiences on the ground and how she communicates with her subjects during difficult moments.

March 23, 2022

How The Times Has Mapped the War in Ukraine

Graphics journalists use annotated maps to show readers the current state of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

April 20, 2022

How We Use Social Media to Cover the War

Some of the richest sources of information come from witnesses who use social media to share videos, photos and reports of what's happening in their communities.

But can the information be trusted? To verify the authenticity of these images and to determine if they actually depict what they claim, the Visual Investigations team at The Times has been monitoring social channels around the clock since the war began, working from Kyiv, Madrid, The Netherlands, London and New York.

The team, which includes Ukrainian researchers, has vetted hundreds of videos to determine if they are real, or misrepresentations. When a hospital is bombed or residents film shelling of their communities, Times journalists authenticate where and when each video was filmed, use forensic video tools and other techniques to confirm that the video has not been manipulated or faked, interview witnesses and collaborate with their Times colleagues inside Ukraine to determine what's actually happening.

Verifying Images of the War in Ukraine

The Times's Visual Investigations team shares the rigorous process of confirming (or disputing) the authenticity of videos about the war in Ukraine.

April 1, 2022

How We Report on Casualties

The term “casualties” is used to refer to both dead and wounded. We try to be as specific as we can when describing the toll, providing specific figures for those killed and injured if they are available.

In war, both sides will routinely inflate military casualty counts for their opponents, and downplay their own to maintain morale. That’s why, in general, we avoid repeating government claims about casualties unless we are able to independently verify them. Any unverified claims will be identified as such if we choose to use them.

We look to objective casualty counts from the United Nations or other credible third-party organizations. And, when possible, we rely on local mayors, governors and police officials, who will likely have more accurate counts than top government officials, where the propaganda machine is running at full steam. Local hospitals can also provide credible accounts of how many wounded have been admitted after particularly grievous attacks, or when there is widespread fighting in urban areas.

How We Report on Military Progress

We are skeptical of repeating government talking points about cities or important infrastructure being captured, without clear evidence or independent verification. Cities encompass large areas and neighborhoods can be captured and then retaken; there can be pockets of resistance even when administrative centers are taken. It is not an uncommon practice for a government to claim that a city has been captured or troops have surrendered in a bid to hurt morale and manipulate the opposition to give up or withdraw.

In general, we try to avoid relying on a single source and we seek to include detailed information whenever possible.

If you have questions or comments about our coverage of the war in Ukraine, please contact us.

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