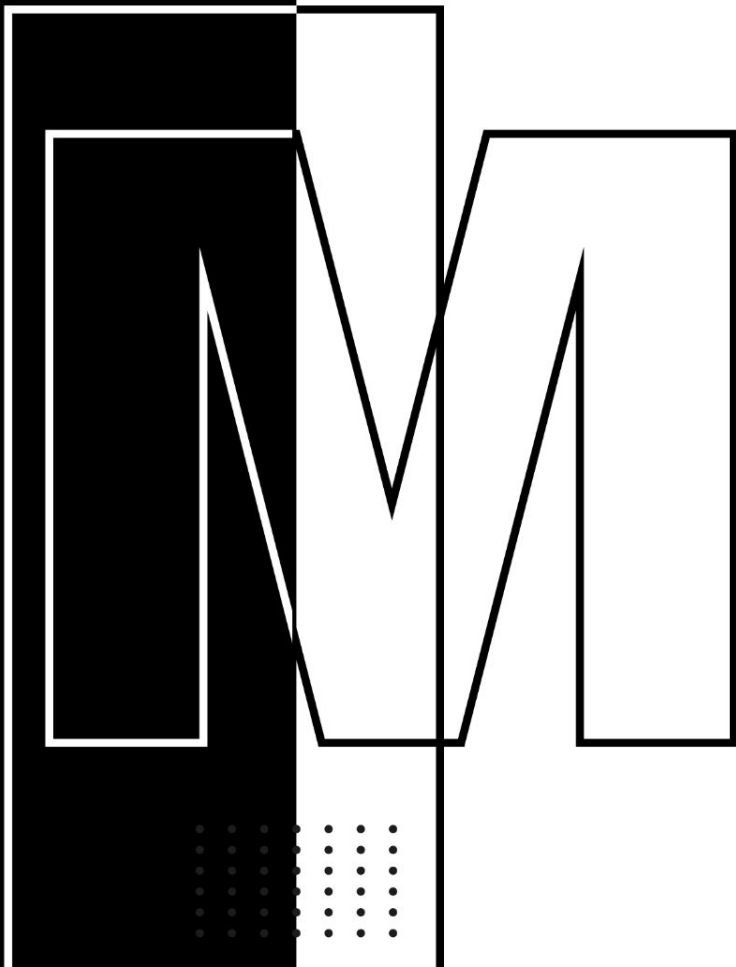


M

MALDITA.ES
PERIODISMO PARA QUE NO TE LA CUELEN



How to verify a war: Ukraine

Russia's invasion of Ukraine

- As soon as Putin announced he was attacking Ukraine, the world was flooded with disinformation
- Maldita debunked 25 hoaxes within the first 24 hours of the invasion
- Most of these hoaxes were easyish to debunk, but they became more complex as the war evolved

#UkraineFacts

- There were so many hoaxes in the first few hours of the invasion that we suspected that fellow fact-checkers in other countries were seeing the same as us
- Fact-checkers from countries who have nothing in common with Spain were verifying the same hoaxes as us: suspicious
- Maldita lead a collaborative project with these fact-checkers, which was a huge timesaver moving forward

#UkraineFacts

DATE	COUNTRY	FACT-CHECKER	DEBUNK TITLE	LINK
21/01/2022	Spain	MALDITA.ES	No, this image of César Carballo as a "geo-strategy expert" is not real: it is a meme	https://maldita.es/malditob
25/01/2022	Spain	MALDITA.ES	No, this recording warning of imminent war between Russia and NATO and the danger of nuclear attack is not from	https://maldita.es/malditob
27/01/2022	Georgia	Myth Detector	Homophobic false news circulates about recruitment. In fact, the video was not shot in Ukraine in 2022 but in 2012	https://mythdetector.ge/en/
23/02/2022	Georgia	Myth Detector	Does the archival video of a single donbas resident express the ukrainian attitude towards the west?	https://mythdetector.ge/en/
15/02/2022	Greece	Ellinika Hoaxes	Two Greeks were not killed by Ukranian soldiers because they had pro-Russian sentiments	https://www.ellinikahoaxes.com/
18/02/2022	Brazil	Agência Lupa	Photo shows prisoners in concentration camp in Austria, not victims of starvation in Ukraine	https://piaui.folha.uol.com.br/
18/02/2022	France	Myth Detector	Claim that the Ukrainian side has been bombing villages in separatist-controlled villages in Donbas on the morning	https://mythdetector.ge/en/
17/02/2022	Portugal	Polígrafo	Viral images show current conflict between Russia and Ukraine?	https://poligrafo.sapo.pt/fac
21/02/2022	Portugal	Polígrafo	Vladimir Putin announced that he gave up invading Ukraine after talking to Bolsonaro?	https://poligrafo.sapo.pt/fac

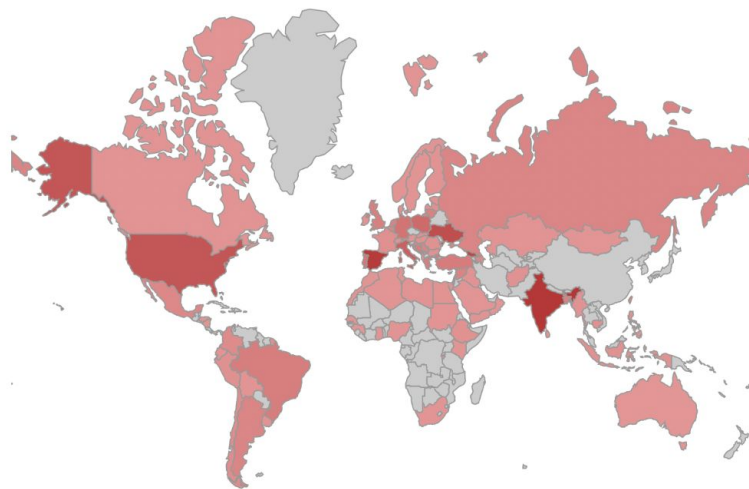
#UkraineFacts

#UkraineFacts

By the International Fact-checking Network
Signatories

Developed by Maldita.es

EN/ES



Min: 1 Max: 349

This map shows where disinformation about Ukraine's invasion has circulated and has been debunked by IFCN Signatories.

DEBUNKED DISINFORMATION : 1864 FACT-CHECKS

Scroll down to see more



Photos allegedly show shops in Prague that have posters banning Ukrainians: it is fake news. Store owners denied the claims and declared it was a photomontage.

30/5/2022



Photo shows Russian priests blessing the nuclear missile during the war: it is fake.

23/5/2022



Video allegedly shows the staging of a shooting in Ukraine: it is false, and it is from a war protest in Iceland on 9 May.

20/5/2022

#UkraineFacts

- Although most of the previous hoaxes are fairly easy to debunk, it was difficult to verify all of them as there were so many
- That's where #UkraineFacts became such a useful resource



Ukraine invasion

- As the invasion continued, disinformation became more complex and required more of our time
- OSINT skills were needed in order to debunk many of these challenging hoaxes

OSINT



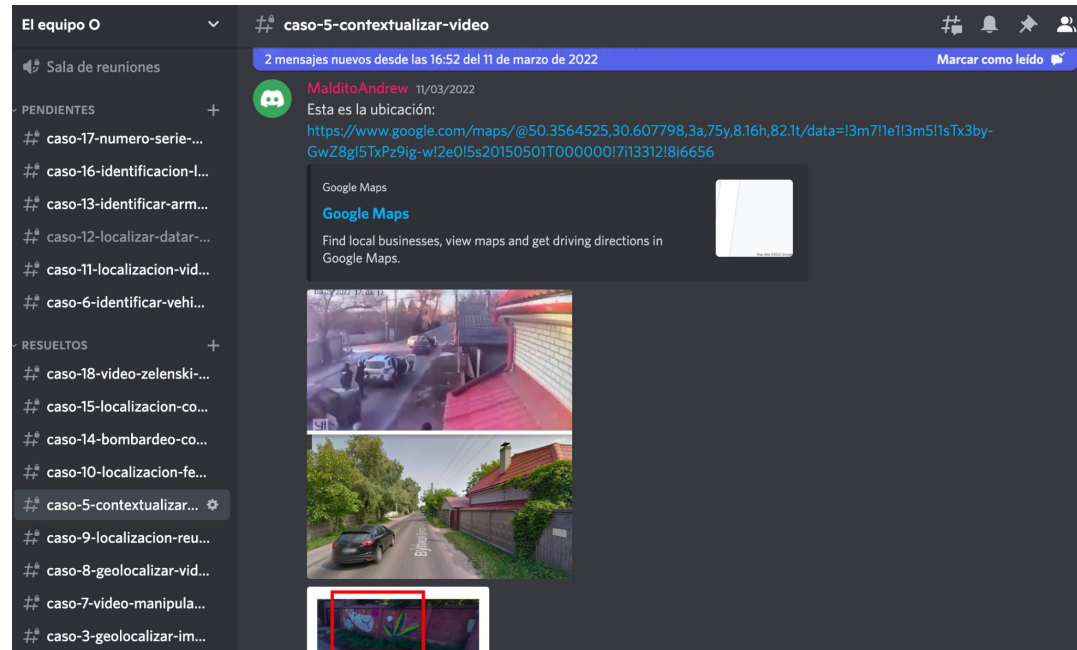
Ukraine invasion

- Although Maldita reporters do have such skills, we needed assistance from experts in different areas such as languages, weapons or image doctoring
- We asked our readers to get involved and to enroll in what we call 'Equipo O'



Ukraine invasion

- When we need help to geolocate or investigate an image we post it on a Discord channel
- A thread is opened for every case
- Users provide tips and help us gather the information we need (all that info. is cross-checked by our reporters)



CASE STUDY: Geolocation

- This video went viral as it allegedly showed Ukrainian police shooting one of their agents
- Many hours and tools were required to find out what really happened in the video, as well as when and where
- Keep your eye open for visual clues

Ukraine invasion



CASE STUDY: Geolocation

- The CCTV footage includes a date and time stamp
- According to the stamps, it was filmed on the 10th of March at 17:02

Ukraine invasion



CASE STUDY: Geolocation

- There are many other visual clues, but we needed more context to know where the incident had happened
- We then did a reverse image search

Ukraine invasion



CASE STUDY: Geolocation

- After the search we found a tweet that claimed the man who had been shot was a former intelligence officer in Kyiv
- They identify him as Dmitry Demyanenko

Ukraine invasion

Seems that the Ukrainians are killing themselves. Today, the Ukrainian police shot the former deputy head of the Main Directorate of the SBU in Kyiv and Kiev region Dmitry Demyanenko.

[#Russia](#) [#Ukraine](#)

[Traducir Tweet](#)



CASE STUDY: Geolocation

- Ukrainian outlet Pravda claims that the agent didn't stop at a checkpoint and shot another police officer
- They say it happened in Kyiv, but we need to be more specific

Ukraine invasion

УКРАЇНЬСКА ПРАВДА

У Києві на блокпосту застрелили колишнього посадовця СБУ

"УКРАЇНЬСКА ПРАВДА" — П'ЯТНИЦЯ, 11 БЕРЕЗНЯ 2022, 00:03



© 532457



CASE STUDY: Geolocation

- Other Ukrainian outlets did provide a more specific location: towards the end of Sadovaya 120 Street
- We have to verify if that's really the case

Ukraine invasion

Un automóvil con un ex Sbrushnik de alto rango fue asesinado a tiros en Osokorki

11.03.2022, 12:37 | Otro



Ayer, 10 de marzo, en el distrito de Darnytskyi de Kyiv, Demyanenko Dmytro Serhiiovych, exdirector adjunto de la Dirección General de la SBU en Kyiv y Kyiv Oblast, fue encontrado muerto en un auto en la calle. Sadovaya, 120. Él no se detuvo en el puesto de control y recibió un disparo.

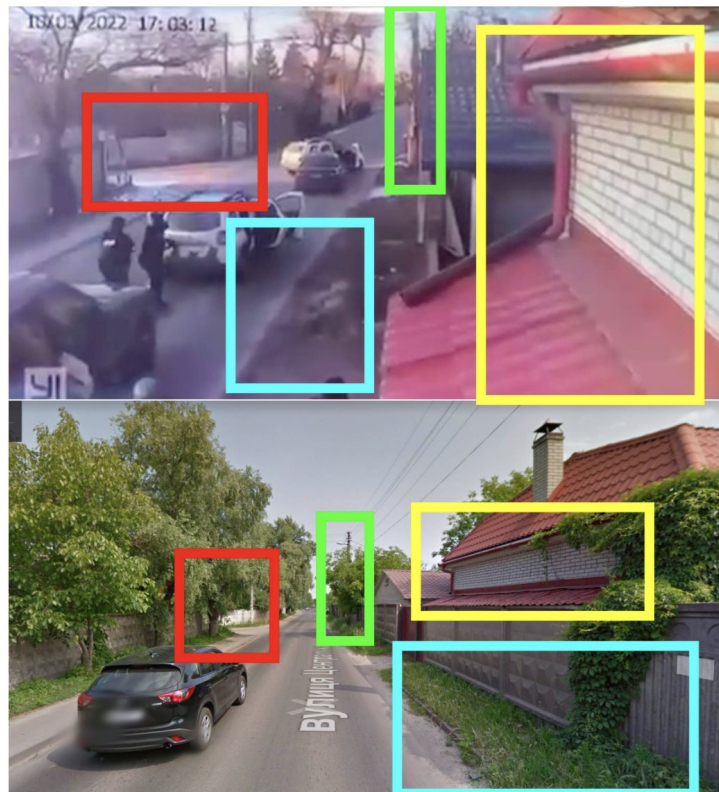
KV se enteró de esto por un mensaje en el canal de Telegram del periodista Volodymyr Boyko .

Se informa que el incidente ocurrió en la calle. Sadovaya, 120 en el área de dachas Osokorki.

CASE STUDY: Geolocation

- After checking out the address on Google Street View we can safely say that the video was filmed at that address
- The house, the grass, the electricity post and the corner are all the same

Ukraine invasion



CASE STUDY: Geolocation

Ukraine invasion

- Now that we know where it was filmed, we've got to verify if it happened on the 10th of March, like the date stamp said
- One good visual clue is the direction of the sun: it reaches the main road from Sadova 120 street



Ukraine invasion

SunCalc

SunCalc

The perfect tool to analyze the position
of the Sun

SunCalc

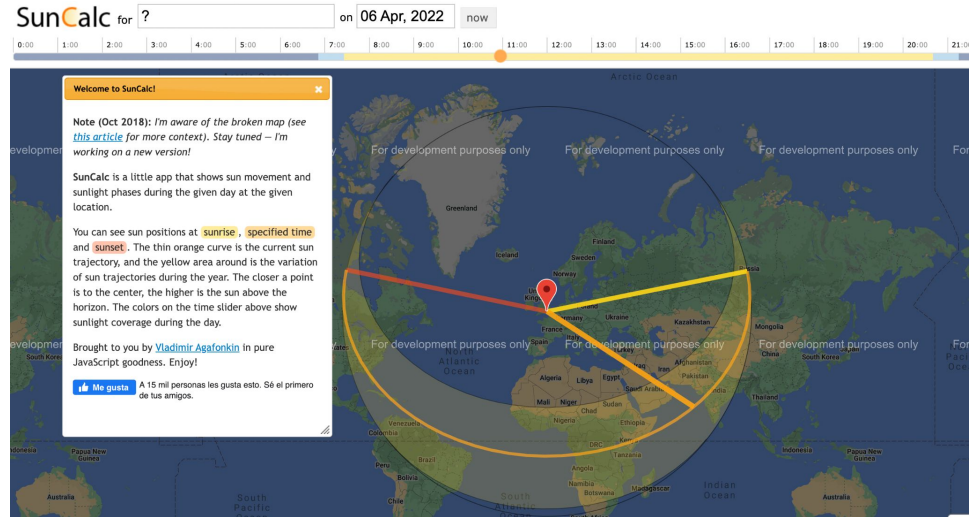
Ukraine Invasion

- It lets us check the position of the Sun at a particular place and time
- Useful to verify a video like this

Disclaimer

- Be careful with time zones (always use the local time)

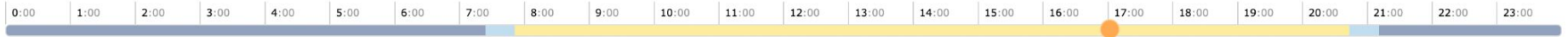
SunCalc



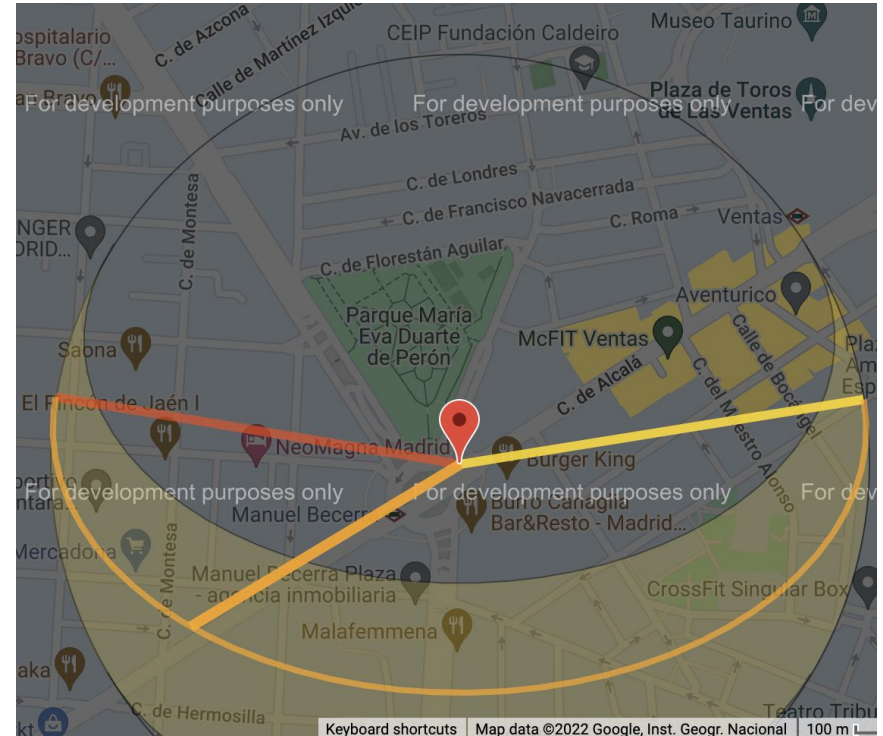


Ukraine Invasion

In order to monitor the position of the Sun at each time, you have to move the time bar



You can see sun positions at **sunrise**, **specified time** and **sunset**. The thin orange curve is the current sun trajectory, and the yellow area around is the variation of sun trajectories during the year. The closer a point is to the center, the higher is the sun above the horizon. The colors on the time slider above show sunlight coverage during the day.



CASE STUDY: Geolocation

- If we search for the sun's position in that same place and at that same time (17:03 on 10/03), we can confirm that it was indeed filmed there and then

Ukraine invasion





Ukraine Invasion

We now know that the incident occurred at Sadova 120 street at 17:03, on the 10th of March

However, we don't know what happened and who the officer was

Case Study: geolocation

Ukraine Invasion

- Any visual clues in the car?



Case Study: geolocation

Ukraine Invasion

- Any visual clues in the car?
- There is a police siren



Case Study: geolocation

Ukraine Invasion

- Any visual clues in the car?
- There is a police siren
- The number plate is blue



Ukraine Invasion

- What does the blue number plate mean?



2004 Police plate

Ukraine Invasion

- Was Dmitry Demyanenko a SBU officer?
- In another picture of the incident we see that there was a cap with an acronym in the car



Ukraine Invasion

- The acronym stands for SBU



Ukraine Invasion

- We did an advanced search in Ukrainian and found that some local outlets said he was an advisor to the Health Ministry
- They also identify him as an advisor to the Mayor of Kyiv
- We found an official document of the Kyiv Council that confirmed the latter

РОЗПОРЯДЖЕННЯ

30.11.2020

№ 774

Про припинення
повноважень радника

Відповідно до Положення про радників на громадських засадах у виконавчому органі Київської міської ради (Київській міській державній адміністрації), затвердженого розпорядженням виконавчого органу Київської міської ради (Київської міської державної адміністрації) від 10 березня 2017 року № 277 (в редакції розпорядження виконавчого органу Київської міської ради (Київської міської державної адміністрації) від 10 січня 2019 року № 31):

У зв'язку з тим, що **ДЕМ'ЯНЕНКА** Дмитро Сергійович від виконання обов'язків радника Київського міського голови з питань запобігання вчинення працівниками виконавчого органу Київської міської ради (Київської міської державної адміністрації) правопорушень і злочинів у сфері державної безпеки на громадських засадах.

Голова



Віталій КЛИЧКО

Ukraine Invasion

- His name doesn't appear in other official documents (compatible with a secret agent)
- Ukrainian media claim he is a non-official advisor to the Health Ministry as he is a SBU officer
- Press articles link him to corruption cases in 2014 and 2015

Dmitry Demyanenko volvió al puesto de asesor no oficial del ministro a través de la SBU . No encontrará esta información en el sitio web del Ministerio de Salud, pero se obtiene de una fuente muy confiable.

"Espectáculo de máscaras" en el Centro de Expertos del Ministerio de Salud organizado por la SBU (actualizado)

La SEC fue registrada y los documentos incautados

[Facebook](#) [Gorjeo](#) [LB.ua en Google Noticias](#)

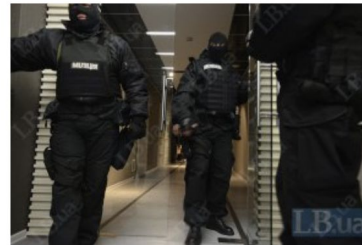


foto de archivo
Foto: Max Levin

[El Ministerio de Salud de Ucrania](#) niega la incautación del Centro Estatal de Expertos por parte del asaltante. El comunicado pertinente fue publicado [en el sitio web del departamento](#) .

Según el informe, la empresa fue registrada por la oficina del fiscal y el departamento anticorrupción de la SBU.

CASE STUDY: Geolocation

- Although the video wasn't false, we were able to provide valuable context to what was a very viral content at the time
- Being able to confirm the authenticity of a viral video is just as important as debunking one that is not real
- OSINT is essential in both tasks

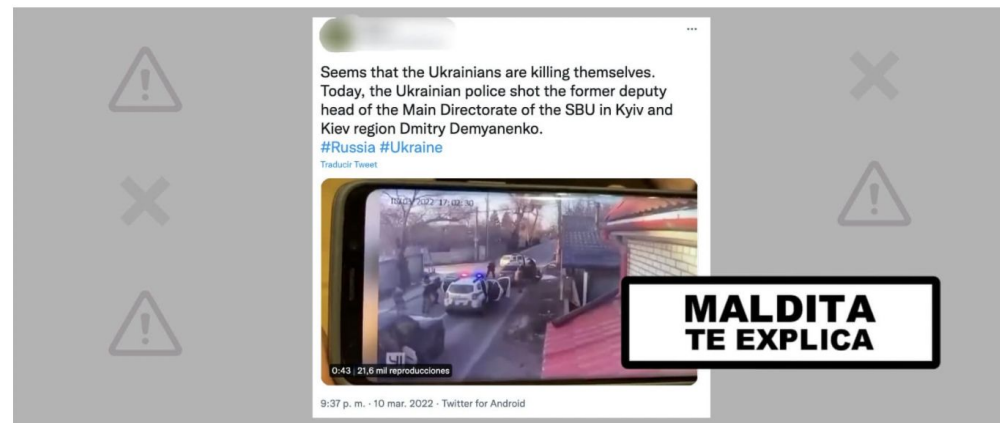
Ukraine invasion

La historia del tiroteo entre un supuesto agente del Servicio de Seguridad de Ucrania (SBU) y la policía ucraniana

Publicado

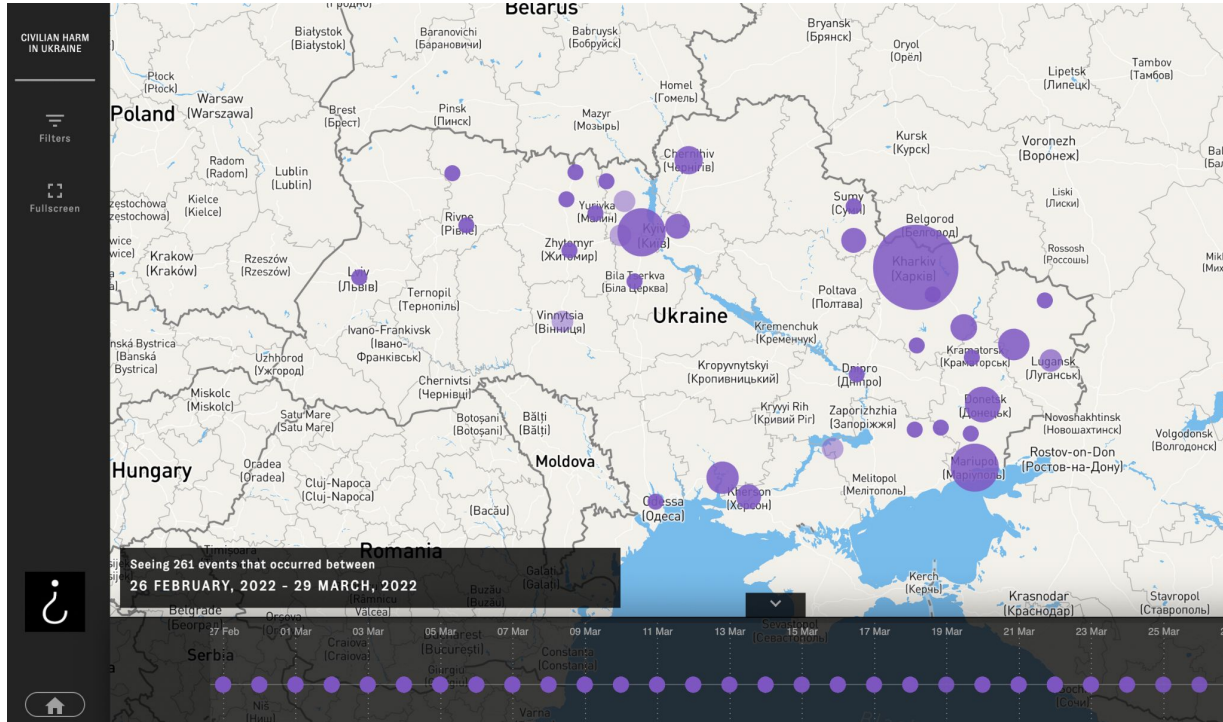
miércoles, 23 marzo 2022

Comparte



bellingcat

Ukraine invasion: good practices



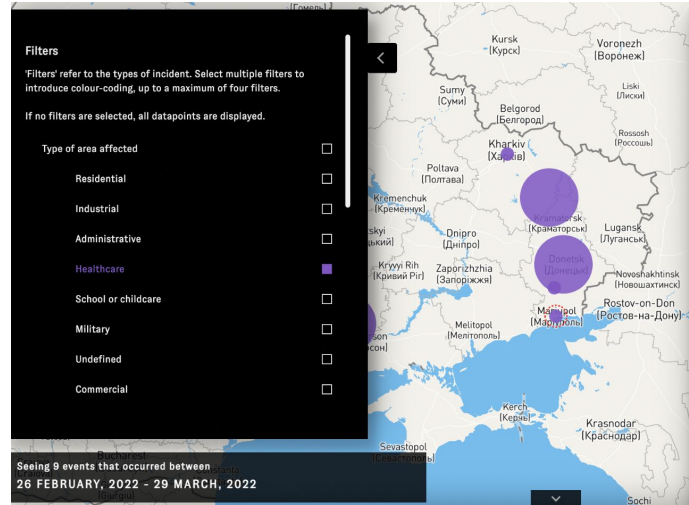
ukraine.bellingcat.com

- Interactive map that registers major incidents and attacks in Ukraine


Ukraine invasion: good practices

bellingcat

- You can filter by different types of buildings
- Schools, hospitals, residential areas etc.



The screenshot shows the Bellingcat ATO map interface. On the left, a dark sidebar contains a 'Filters' menu with the following options: Residential, Industrial, Administrative, Healthcare (selected with a purple square), School or childcare, Military, Undefined, and Commercial. Below the filters, it states 'Seeing 9 events that occurred between 26 FEBRUARY, 2022 - 29 MARCH, 2022'. The main map displays Ukraine with several purple circular data points of varying sizes, indicating the locations and relative magnitude of events. Labeled cities include Kursk, Voronezh, Sumy, Belgorod, Liski, Kharkiv, Poltava, Dnipro, Zaporizhzhia, Melitopol, Rostov-on-Don, Mariupol, and others.

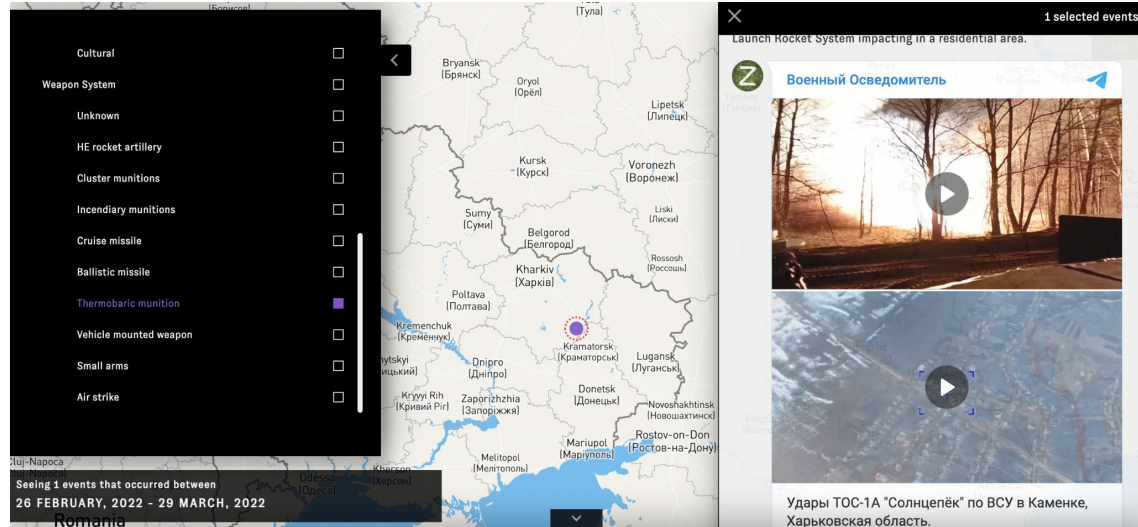


The screenshot shows a Twitter post from @SputnikATO. The text reads: 'injuries and fatalities reported. At least one large crater visible.' Below the text is a video player showing a destroyed building, likely a hospital, with a play button overlay. The video is titled 'Watch on Twitter'. The post is dated '3:49 PM · Mar 9, 2022'.

Ukraine invasion: good practices

bellingcat

- You can filter by type of weapon
- Thermobaric bombs



Ukraine Invasion

The New York Times

- Russia claims that the killing of civilians in Bucha (Ukraine) happened after their troops had left the city
- A visual investigation of satellite images by The New York Times shows that the bodies had been there for weeks

This video includes
of graphic violence

Lessons

- We need to collaborate with fellow fact-checkers if we want to stand a chance against disinformation
- Fact-checkers are not superheroes (yet), so it's important to build bridges with experts and your community
- When we embrace these actions, our work has a larger impact and is more effective

