



"Court in Kiev has confirmed: Maidan snipers fired from the Hotel Ukraina"

Ten years ago, a sniper massacre of police officers and Maidan activists created a highly explosive atmosphere on the Maidan in Kiev and triggered the coup against the Ukrainian government that followed two days later. In an interview with Multipolar, political scientist Ivan Katchanovski from the University of Ottawa explains the course of events, the available evidence, the questionable role of the German broadcaster ARD and the findings of a recent Kiev court ruling on the mass murder. The judges found that right-wing extremist Maidan fighters fired from the Hotel Ukraina, and other places, and are responsible for the deaths of at least ten people.

STEFAN KORINTH, 23. Februar 2024, 0 Kommentare

Note: This interview is also available [in German](#).

Multipolar: Mr. Katchanovski, these February days mark the anniversary of the massacre on the Maidan on 20 February 2014, the violent, pro-Western change of power in Kiev two days later and the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. To what extent does a political line lead from the events of February 2014 to the war eight years later?

Katchanovski: As I wrote in my recently published open-access [article](#) in a peer-reviewed journal, the Maidan massacre led to the overthrow of the pro-Russian government of Viktor Yanukovich and gave the start of a civil war in Donbas, Russia's military intervention in Crimea and Donbas, the Russian annexation of Crimea, and an interstate conflict between the West and Russia and between Ukraine and Russia that Russia drastically escalated by launching its illegal invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Not only Putin in his interview to Tucker Carlson but also Ursula von der Leyen, the EU Commission President, stated that the Maidan massacre played a key role in the origins of the Russia-Ukraine war,

Multipolar: Please briefly summarize how the mass murder in Kiev on 20 February unfolded. Who were the victims? Who were the perpetrators? What reliable figures and information are available? What are the findings of your

research?

Katchanovski: The massacre started with snipers from the far-right-linked Maidan group breaking a ceasefire agreement and killings 3 and wounding of 39 Berkut policemen and Internal Troops servicemen on the Maidan in the morning of February 20. Both my studies and the verdict of the Maidan massacre trial show that as result of this deadly attack, the unarmed Berkut police and Internal troops members rapidly retreated from the Maidan and the Maidan activists chased them, and one policeman was killed and two wounded by a Maidan activist. An armed special Berkut company briefly advanced to Maidan to secure a retreat of the Internal Troops. During the same time, the Maidan activists were massacred.



Maidan fighter with rifle on the morning of February 20, 2014 in the Kiev Conservatory | Bild: Evgeniy Maloletka / Screenshot [BBC Newsnight](#)

The trial [verdict](#) stated that:

“On February 20, 2014, 113 law enforcement officers were injured of various degrees of severity (beatings, concussions, fractures, poisoning, burns), 4 of whom died from gunshot wounds, and a total of 63 law enforcement officers received gunshot wounds. 233 activists were also injured of various degrees of severity, 49 of whom perished, 48 of them as a result of gunshot wounds, and a total of 172 activists received gunshot wounds.”

My recently published peer-reviewed journal article, entitled “The “snipers’ massacre” on the Maidan in Ukraine,” summarizes the findings of my studies as follows:

“Synchronized videos, testimonies by several hundred witnesses, confessions by 14 self-admitted members of Maidan sniper groups, and bullet hole locations show that both the police and protesters were massacred by Maidan snipers located in Maidan-controlled buildings and areas. Content analysis of synchronized videos revealed that the specific time and direction of shooting by special Berkut police company, who were charged with the massacre, did not coincide with the killing of specific protesters. Testimonies by the absolute majority of wounded protesters and some 100 witnesses and forensic examinations by ballistic and medical experts for the

Maidan massacre trial and investigation in Ukraine corroborate this. The article shows that the false-flag massacre was rationally organized and carried out with the involvement of oligarchic and far-right elements of the Maidan opposition to overthrow the incumbent government in Ukraine.”

The overwhelming evidence that shows this beyond any reasonable doubt is presented in this and two other open access peer-reviewed journal articles, entitled “The Maidan Massacre Trial and Investigation Revelations: Implications for the Ukraine-Russia War and Relations” and “The far right, the Euromaidan, and the Maidan massacre in Ukraine,” their [video appendixes](#), and in my two books that would be published this year by major Western academic presses.

The bloodbath in the city center led to the withdrawal of the police

Multipolar: *What impact did the massacre have on the unconstitutional removal of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich two days later?*

Katchanovski: The Maidan opposition, the Western governments, and the Western and Ukrainian media immediately blamed Yanukovich, the government snipers, and the Berkut for the massacre of the Maidan protesters. The massacre led the parliament vote on February 20 to withdraw government forces from downtown Kyiv and subsequently to the vote to dismiss then President Yanukovich and his government. The vote to dismiss him violated the Ukrainian Constitution and lacked the votes in spite of the vote results manipulation by using cards of absent deputies to vote and despite the far-right-linked group of the Maidan snipers forcing many deputies to vote.

Multipolar: *A court ruling was recently handed down in Kiev regarding the massacre of February 20, 2014. Please explain: What was the charge?*

Katchanovski: The Prosecutor General Office of Ukraine (GPU) charged 5 members of the special Berkut police company with killing of 48 protesters and attempted killing of 80 wounded protesters on 20 February 2014 and with doing this by means of a terrorist attack. These were the principal charges.

Multipolar: *What specifically did the court investigate?*

Katchanovski: The court examined only the charges against 5 members of the special Berkut police company for the massacre of the Maidan activists. It did not investigate and examine the massacre of the police and did not investigate and examine the massacre by the Maidan snipers.

Multipolar: *What were the key points of the verdict?*

Katchanovski: The verdict confirmed that many Maidan activists and [BBC](#) and [ARD TV](#) journalists were shot not by members of Ukraine’s Berkut special police force or other law enforcement personnel but by snipers in the far-right Svoboda controlled Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations. It specifically stated that the Hotel Ukraina was controlled by Maidan activists and that an armed, the far-right-linked Maidan group was in the hotel and shot from it. The verdict made “a categorical conclusion that on the morning of February 20, 2014, persons with weapons, from which the shots were fired, were in the premises of the Hotel Ukraina.”



Judgment announced by the Kiev District Court on October 18, 2023 | Image: Screenshot [ZN.UA](https://zn.ua)

The trial decision specified that there is a lack of evidence of the involvement of the Berkut police and other “law enforcement officers” in the killing of 9 and wounding of 23 Maidan activists and that their shooting by “unknown persons” “cannot be excluded.” The verdict found that at least six specific protesters were killed and many others wounded from the “activists-controlled” Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations. It concluded that the Euromaidan was at the time of this massacre not a peaceful protest but “a rebellion” that involved the massacre of the Berkut police and the attack by Maidan activists.

No firing order by Yanukovich, no Russian involvement

The verdict also confirmed my studies’ findings that there were no massacre orders by Yanukovich or his ministers and that there was no Russian involvement in the massacre. It specifically stated that “the “Russian trace” was not confirmed after examining the relevant documents, in particular, all cases of crossing the border zone by FSB officers into Ukraine, their movement around Kyiv and the region, the time and place of their stay, as well as the dates and ways they left the territory of Ukraine,” that “this group of persons was constantly monitored” and “accordingly, they did not have any participation” in the massacre.

Two Berkut officers were acquitted of murder charges. Three Berkut policemen, who were exchanged on Zelensky’s orders to Donbas separatists, were convicted in absentia for the murders of 36 out of 49 protesters and wounding of 52 out of 172 Maidan activists. This conviction was based on a single, fabricated forensic examination and collective responsibility. On the same basis, a Berkut commander was also convicted of the manslaughter of four protesters and the wounding of another eight, for supposedly having ordered his officers to fire indiscriminately during the evacuation of Internal Troops by the Berkut company, and its subsequent retreat after one Berkut officer was killed and another wounded.

“All the evidence shows: Berkut could not have shot the protesters”

This single forensic examination of bullets, undertaken five years after the massacre, reversed the results of some 40 earlier forensic bullet examinations, including a computer-based examination which showed that bullets taken

from the bodies of killed Maidan protesters did not match the Berkut Kalashnikov assault rifles. The fabricated forensic bullet examination also contradicts synchronized videos which clearly show that Berkut officers had not been shooting at the specific times when almost all of the Maidan activists were killed.

It also contradicts on-site investigations by government ballistics experts, pointing to bullet trajectories originating from Maidan-controlled areas; as well as the results of forensic medical examinations which determined bullet trajectories based on the victims' wounds from the top, back, and side directions; and the testimonies of the absolute majority of the wounded Maidan protesters, and of several hundred prosecution and defense witnesses and other witnesses, concerning snipers in the Hotel Ukraina and other Maidan-controlled locations. All this evidence demonstrates clearly that the Berkut policemen could not physically have shot these protesters, while in a small minority of other cases there is lack of evidence or contradictory evidence.

Verdict is official admission of facts that the government continues to deny

The verdict by the Ukrainian court along with the Ukraine's Prosecutor General Office investigation findings means the de facto official admissions even by the justice system, which lacks independence, that at least 10 out of 49 killed and 115 out of 172 wounded Maidan activists were shot on February 20, 2014, not by Berkut or other law enforcement agencies but by Maidan snipers from the Maidan-controlled locations. Even the Ukrainian government investigation admitted that one dead protester and half of wounded Maidan activists were not shot from Berkut-controlled sectors, and therefore did not charge anyone for those crimes, while publicly denying that there were any snipers in the Maidan-controlled locations.

The strange role of the broadcaster ARD

***Multipolar:** For the leading German media, the massacre on the Maidan was always only a marginal topic - even though Maidan fighters even occupied a room of the German TV station "ZDF" in the Hotel Ukraina on February 20, 2014 and fired from the window in the direction of the death zone on Institutaska Street. When the German media did discuss the massacre, with one exception ("Monitor"), the thesis was regularly spread that Yanukovych and Berkut were the perpetrators, as if Your investigations and findings on the crime did not exist. What is the situation in the leading English-language media? Has the view of the massacre changed there over the past ten years?*

Katchanovski: A long video by the German ARD TV was introduced first as an anonymous video at the trial by the Maidan victims' lawyers, and only a few years ago the court stated that this was the ARD video. A Ukrainian journalist, writing on social media, said that he had filmed this video for ARD but that the ARD refused to release this video to the Maidan massacre trial in Ukraine, and that the video shown at the trial had been cut and with sound missing.

The video content and his statements indicate that the video was filmed from the same Hotel Ukraina room rented by German television channel ZDF, and in which snipers from the far-right-linked Maidan company were filmed shooting at the Maidan protesters. Since this video simultaneously captured the killing and wounding of the large numbers of the protesters and the position of the Berkut police, had the missing audio of the gunshots been available, it could have demonstrated that the specific times of the shooting of specific protesters coincided with loud sound of gunshots from this Maidan-controlled hotel and not with more distant sound of Berkut gunshots from their barricade.

The verdict stated that two rooms in the Hotel Ukraina were shot at from the Music Conservatory and the neighboring Main Post Office and that this was the territory occupied by Maidan activists. But it omitted that these rooms were [youtube.com/watch](https://www.youtube.com/watch) by German ARD TV journalists and that the Main Post Office was then the headquarters of the Right Sector.

"Western media spreading a false narrative about the massacre"

With a few notable exceptions, there is still blackout in the leading English-language media of my academic studies, revelations about the Maidan snipers by the Maidan massacre trial and investigation in Ukraine, and the verdict confirmations of the Maidan snipers. The New York Times and other leading Western media propagated the fake narrative about the Maidan massacre.

Two BBC reports which showed Maidan snipers in the Hotel Ukraina shooting at the BBC TV crew and Maidan protesters were notable exceptions. But BBC like all other major Western media did not report the Ukrainian government investigation admission that this room was occupied by one of the leaders of the far-right Svoboda party and that the Maidan massacre trial verdict stated that the BBC video of this shooting represented "documented data from the activist-controlled building of the Ukraina Hotel in Kyiv about the targeted use by the activists of objects that, by their external features, are clearly similar to firearms, weapons of the type of hunting weapons."

This deliberate blackout of my the Maidan massacre trial revelations, the verdict, and my academic studies is done in spite of the nearly 1,000,000-word Maidan massacre trial verdict and automatic English translation of the relevant excerpts are publicly available, in spite of over 1,000,000 views and downloads of my academic studies of the Maidan massacre and video appendixes with videos of Maidan snipers, testimonies of the absolute majority of wounded activists and over 150 witnesses concerning such snipers, and in spite of my viral tweets about this.

Moreover, in her opinion piece in a partisan neoconservative site Bulwark, Cathy Young misrepresented the verdict, falsely claimed that it found the Berkut police responsible for killings 40 out of 48 protesters, and denied and openly whitewashed existence of Maidan snipers and the far-right involvement in the Maidan massacre as a "conspiracy theory." She branded Maidan snipers in the Hotel Ukraina "a conspiracy theory," falsely claimed that the verdict does not state that Maidan protesters were shot from this hotel and other Maidan-controlled locations, and that the verdict did not disprove involvement of Russian snipers.

She falsely claimed that the Hotel Ukraina was not controlled by the Maidan activists and propagated an actual conspiracy theory that the police in the hotel could have shot the protesters despite clear and overwhelming evidence to the contrary in the verdict, the trial and investigation, and in my academic studies.

Multipolar: *Vladimir Putin recently said in an interview with Tucker Carlson that the CIA was responsible for the coup in Kiev in 2014. What evidence and proof do you see for this thesis?*

Katchanovski: My studies did not find any publicly available evidence of the CIA involvement in the Maidan massacre or the violent overthrow of the Ukrainian government, and Putin did not present any such evidence. He falsely claimed that this was "a fascist coup" and that a "neo-Nazi regime" was installed in Ukraine.

However, there is various evidence that this government overthrow represented the US policy of regime change. Two leaders of the far-right Svoboda party stated in their separate interviews that a Western government

representative told them and other Maidan leaders a few weeks before the massacre that Western governments would turn on the Yanukovich government after casualties among protesters would reach 100. The protesters killed were called Heavenly Hundred immediately after the massacre. Protesters and people who were not even on the Maidan and died from illnesses or other causes were included to bring the number of victims to 100.

The US and other Western governments almost immediately after the Maidan massacre blamed the Yanukovich government and his forces for this mass killing and recognized the new Maidan government. Biden in his memoir described making a call to Yanukovich “when his snipers were assassinating Ukrainian citizens by the dozens” to tell him to “call off his gunmen and walk away” and that “the disgraced president fled Ukraine the next day.” Yanukovich signed a deal with the Maidan opposition leaders and representatives of France, Germany, and Poland on 21 February. But then US President Barack Obama stated in his CNN interview that “we had brokered a deal to transition power in Ukraine.

Multipolar: *You have been living and working in Canada for more than 20 years. There is a large Ukrainian exile community there. In September 2023, the Canadian parliament cheered the Ukrainian SS veteran Yaroslav Hunko, who had been invited by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the then Speaker of Parliament Anthony Rota. Rota praised Hunko as a "Canadian-Ukrainian hero" who fought against "the Russians" in the Second World War. Shortly afterwards, he resigned over the scandal and described the invitation and tribute to the former SS man as a "mistake". How do you explain the occurrence of such a "mistake"?*

Katchanovski: My research-based viral tweets identifying this World War Two veteran as a veteran of the SS Galicia division and my interviews to leading Canadian media about this had major role in this story becoming public. I do not see any evidence that the Canadian parliament speaker, the prime minister of Canada, and other Canadian officials knew that they were inviting and giving standing ovation to the Ukrainian veteran of the SS Galicia Division. But the propaganda during the Russia-Ukraine war and whitewashing of neo-Nazis and Nazi collaborators in Ukraine contributed to this epic debacle.

"Selensky is a political opportunist"

Multipolar: *Ukrainian President Zelensky was also present that day in the Canadian parliament and applauded Hunko. How can it be explained that a Ukrainian with Jewish roots honors a former SS man?*

Katchanovski: There is no evidence that Zelensky knew that he was giving standing ovation to the Ukrainian veteran of the SS Galicia Division. But the introduction of this veteran by the speaker of the Canadian parliament as fighting “Russians” during World War Two was sufficient enough to anyone from Ukraine, including Zelensky, to realize that this war veteran could only be a Nazi collaborator.

Zelensky still did not publicly condemn or comment about this debacle even after Putin presented it as evidence to support his false claims that Ukraine is a Nazi or neo-Nazi state and to justify the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine. Zelensky is obviously not Nazi or neo-Nazi but he is a political opportunist and tries to placate and integrate the far-right, including open neo-Nazis, who regard the SS Galicia and other Nazi collaborators as Ukrainian heroes and have power to overthrow Zelensky.



About the interviewee: *Ivan Katchanovski, born in 1967, originates from western Ukraine and has lived in North America for more than 30 years. The political scientist received his doctorate in 2002 from George Mason University in Fairfax (Virginia) near Washington and later held research and teaching positions in Toronto and Harvard, among other places. He teaches at the School of Political Studies at the University of Ottawa. Katchanovski has specialized in the topics of violent conflicts and right-wing extremism in Ukraine, among others. He is the author of four books – including: "Cleft Countries - Regional Political Divisions and Cultures in Post-Soviet Ukraine and Moldova" and 19 articles in academic journals. For ten years, he has been collecting and analyzing all publicly available information on the Maidan massacre. Two of his books on this topic are due to be published in 2024.*

Further article on the topic:

- **Zelensky without kitsch: From TV president to neoliberal autocrat** (Olga Baysha, 12.9.2023)