Shelling of the school in the village of Bekhtery in the Kherson region using the HIMARS MLRS on January 20, 2025

PUBLIC INVESTIGATION

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CONTENT

ABBREVIATIONS

UAF – Ukrainian Armed Forces

DPR – Donetsk People's Republic

LPR – Luhansk People's Republic

RABr – Rocket Artillery Brigade

MLRS – Multiple Launch Rocket System

JCCC – Joint Centre for Control and Coordination

GMLRS – guided multiple launch rocket system

MLRS – multiple launch rocket system

LoC – Line of Contact

ICRC – International Committee of the Red Cross

RF IC – Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation

UCAV – unmanned combat air vehicle

CSM – cluster submunition

PREAMBLE

On February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation launched a special military operation in the territory of Ukraine, stating that its goal was to protect the population of Donbass, which, according to Russian President Vladimir Putin, had been subjected to genocide by the Kyiv regime for eight years[1]. This step became the culmination of a years-long confrontation, the roots of which lie in the events of 2014, when the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics (DPR and LNR) broke away and were not recognized by the Ukrainian authorities.

By the end of 2023, the front line mostly ran through the territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, and the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions[2]. However, in February 2024, the situation changed dramatically: control over the strategically important town of Avdeyevka passed to Russian troops, allowing the Russian Federation to take the initiative into its own hands. Throughout 2024, the Armed Forces of Ukraine (UAF) suffered significant losses, retreating from one settlement after another[3]. The only exception was the UAF's Kursk operation, which, however, failed to change the overall dynamics of events.[4]

The political situation in the world also underwent significant changes. The election of Donald Trump as President of the United States on November 5, 2024[5] became a turning point for international diplomacy. Trump's promise to end the war in Ukraine[6] drew sharp criticism from Ukrainian authorities and their supporters[7], who increased pressure to derail the impending peace process. This led to an escalation in tensions and a rise in the number of artillery attacks on civilian infrastructure in territories controlled by Russia.

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[1] Message of the President of the Russian Federation (published on 24.02.2022) Official website of the President of the Russian Federation URL: http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843/videos (accessed on 06.07.2022)

[2] Maps of hostilities on December 31 (published on 01.01.2024) Readovka Media. URL: https://readovka.news/news/176013 (accessed on 14.03.2025)

[3] Chronology of the Special Military Operation. Internet Encyclopedia – Runiversalis. URL: https://руни.рф/Хронология_специальной_военной_операции (accessed on 14.03.2025)

[4] Kursk offensive (2024–present) // «Wikipedia» The Free Encyclopedia URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kursk_offensive_(2024–present) (accessed on14.03.2025)

[5] 2024 President Results: Trump wins (published on 05.11.2024) NBC NEWS. URL: https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2024-elections/president-results (accessed on14.03.2025)

[6] How Trump Promised to Resolve the Military Conflict Between Russia and Ukraine (published on 06.11.2024) RBC Media. URL: https://www.rbc.ru/politics/06/11/2024/672b39d09a7947ad7f9dd4ab (accessed on 14.03.2025)

[7] Zelenskyy responded to Trump's idea to "quickly resolve" the conflict in Ukraine (published on 07.11.2024) RBC Media. URL: https://www.rbc.ru/politics/07/11/2024/672d06ec9a7947695a060757 (accessed on 14.03.2025)

Particularly alarming were the events of January 2025, when the Armed Forces of Ukraine intensified the use of HIMARS Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS) to attack civilian population.

Thus, on the morning of January 10, 2025, the "Moloko" supermarket located on Shakhtyorskaya Square in the Kyivskiy district of Donetsk was subjected to a shelling using six M31 GLMRS rockets[8], which struck a crowded public area, resulting in injuries to four civilians: a woman born in 1963, another woman born in 1940, a male employee of the "Moloko" supermarket born in 2002, and a male utility worker born in 1968.[9]

On January 20, 2025, at approximately 8:00 a.m. Moscow time, the village of Bekhtery in the Kherson region was attacked, during this attack the territory of the rural school was shelled by two rockets from a multiple rocket launcher system (MLRS) equipped with cluster warheads. On the day of the attack, classes were scheduled to be held in the school building, and some teachers and children were already present at the school. This fact makes this incident particularly serious. This attack demonstrates a deliberate disregard for international humanitarian law, which prohibits targeted attacks on civilian population and objects without military significance[10].

As a result of the shelling of the school in the village of Bekhtery, 27 civilians were injured[11], including four children[12] aged between 7 and 17, school staff, security personnel, and other passers-by. One of these 27 civilians, Andrey Rudenko, born in 1962, succumbed to abdominal injuries and passed away in the hospital on January 22, 2025.[13]

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[8] Shelling of the Kievskiy District of Donetsk using the HIMARS MLRS on January 10, 2025. "Verum" Human Rights Project. URL: https://proekt-verum.org/obstrel-kievskogo-rajona-doneczka-s-primeneniem-rszo-himars-10-yanvarya-2025-goda/ (accessed on

[9] Consequences of the armed attack in the Kievskiy district of Donetsk at 08:45 on 10.01.2025 (published on 10.01.2025) Facts of Ukraine's war crimes Telegram Channel. URL: https://t.me/DNR_SCKK/20733?single (accessed on 14.03.2025)

[10] Norm 1. The Principle of Distinction between Civilians and Combatants. Official Website of the International Committee of the Red Cross. URL: https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ru/customary-ihl/v1/rule1 (accessed on 14.03.2025)

[11] As of today, two individuals injured in the brutal shelling of Bekhtery on January 20 have been transferred to medical facilities in Crimea, where they are receiving highly qualified medical assistance (accessed on 21.10.2025) Vladimir Saldo Telegram Channel. URL: https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/5666 (accessed on 14.03.2025)

[12] The condition of the children injured in the shelling by the UAF in Bekhtery was reported by the deputy chief physician for medical affairs (published on 21.10.2025) «Tavria. News of the Kherson Region» Telegram Channel.. URL: https://t.me/tavria_kherson/41880 (accessed on 14.03.2025)

[13] A person injured in the shelling by the UAF in the village of Bekhtery died in the hospital (published on 22.01.2025) Bloknot Regional Media. URL: https://bloknot-herson.ru/news/postradavshiy-pri-obstrele-vsu-v-sele-bekhtery-sko-1817899 (accessed on 14.03.2025)

This investigation is aimed at establishing all the circumstances of the incident happened in the village of Bekhtery, including identifying those responsible and analyzing the consequences of this act of aggression. We urge the international community to pay attention to these tragic events and take measures to protect human lives, as well as to prevent further human rights violations in the course of the conflict.

INCIDENT LOCATION

Physical Traces of Detonation

Having examined the site of the incident in the village of Bekhtery, the Kherson region, having talked to witnesses of the shelling, and having collected materials from open sources, we were able to establish the zone of destruction by cluster submunitions (CSM), which formed an ellipse measuring approximately 100 x 200 m, stretched along an axis directed from north to south.

There is a video available online, filmed by a UCAV, which shows the CSM impact zone in the case of using 227-mm rockets[14]. The video shows an object of known size — a road. According to state standards, a two-lane road outside urban areas can range from 6 to 9 meters in width, with the most common type being 7.5 m wide[15] (two lanes of 3.75 meters each). Considering the dimensions of the military truck (2.5 m wide),[16] driving along this road in the video (see Fig. 1), we can conclude that this road most likely belongs to the most common type. Knowing the dimensions of the road, we can measure the diameter of the hitting area in the same projection as the road (see Fig. 2). This diameter was approximately 100 m. Thus, we come to the conclusion that the area affected by the 227-mm rockets with cluster warheads is an ellipse with a diameter of 100-150 m.

In addition, witnesses indicated the use of two rocket projectiles with a difference of approximately 10-15 minutes. Thus, the director of the Bekhtery school in a conversation with us stated that the explosions of the CSM from the second rocket occurred further south than from the first.

Considering this information, we divided the hitting area into two elliptical sectors superimposed on each other.

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[14] Cluster rocket in action | GMLRS M30 Dpicm (published on 25.06.2024) Alpha 17 TERRAFORMER YouTube Channel. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zMCr4Eoq5T8 (accessed on 14.03.2025)

[15] Lane width according to GOST. PDD MASTER Internet resource. URL: https://pddmaster.ru/interest/razmer-polosi.html (accessed on 14.03.2025)

[16] General view of the Ural truck. Official website of the Ural Group of Companies. URL: https://gc-ural.ru/info/ustrojstvo-avtomobilej-ural/obshhij-vid-avtomobilja-ural/ (accessed on 14.03.2025)

The CSM hitting areas were studied in this way and plotted on satellite images from the Google Maps service (see Fig. 3).

Moreover, proceeding from the witnesses' testimony[17] [18] [19] [20] we were able to establish that two shells with a cluster warhead were used during this shelling. The first shell exploded at approximately 7:45 a.m. Moscow time, the second – at approximately 8:00 a.m. Moscow time.

The entire zone of destruction by the CSMs was dotted with numerous small craters from explosions (see **Fig.** 7, **Fig.** 8) which looked like round depressions down to 3 cm deep and 10-15 cm in diameter with a deep cylindrical hole 1-2 cm in diameter in the center and shrapnel grooves along the entire perimeter at a distance of 30-50 cm from the center (see. **Fig.** 10, **Fig.** 11, **Fig.** 12). The cylindrical hole in the center is most likely the result of the cumulative action of the CSB. Motor vehicles, glazing and walls of buildings, fence elements and trees were damaged by shrapnel at a height of up to 1.5 m. (see **Fig.** 4, **Fig.** 5, **Fig.** 6).

Projectile debris

A hole up to 1 m in diameter and 60 cm deep with traces of digging was found on the school grounds in the southern part of the hitting area (see **Fig.** 15). According to witnesses, a metal object was later recovered by the sappers and identified as a control and guidance unit for a rocket (see. **Fig.** 14).

Witnesses also testified that a yellow metal cylindrical object fell near the fence to the west of the school building and north of the gate (see. **Fig.** 13). This

[17] He risked his life for the children of Kherson (published on 13.02.2025) VERUM - War crimes investigations Telegram Channel. URL: https://t.me/verum_in_english/144 (accessed on 22.03.2025)

[18] There are already more than 20 20 fatal and non-fatal casualties after the UAF shelling in Bekhtery (published on 20.01.2025) NEWS FRONT VK Community. URL: https://vk.com/video-70204174_456302650 (accessed on 22.03.2025)

[19] "There were no military facilities nearby", an eyewitness talks about the UAF shelling in Bekhtery (published on 13.02.2025) «Tavria. News of the Kherson Region» Telegram Channel.. URL: https://t.me/tavria_kherson/41809 (accessed on 14.03.2025) 22.03.2025)

[20] "We went outside and then there was a second explosion!" Wounded director of Bekhtery school talks about the UAF shelling (published on 21.01.2025) Komsomolskaya Pravda Media. URL: https://www.herson.kp.ru/daily/27654/5039064/ (accessed on 22.03.2025)

object was photographed[21] and videotaped[22] and published in open sources. The resulting images allowed us to identify the metal cylindrical object as a rocket motor for a rocket projectile.

According to GOST 530-2012, the brick width is 250 mm[23] (see **Fig.** 16). Considering this information, we were able to determine the caliber of the projectile used, which was approximately 23 cm (see. **Fig.** 17).

In addition, CSMs were found in the hitting area, in the form of cylinders with a white stripe and a white nylon tape acting as a stabilizer (see. **Fig.** 18). Such white tapes were also found in significant quantities throughout the hitting area (see. **Fig.** 20).

The images of CSM fragments found in the hitting area published in open sources (see. **Fig.** 19) tell us that at least part of the body has notches inside to form fragments of a given size.

The shape and design features of the found CSMs allow for unmistakable identification as submunitions of the DPICM (Dual-Purpose-Improved-Conventional-Munition) family - an improved conventional dual-purpose munition (see **Fig.** 21). The white stripe on the CSM body indicates that they were used in munitions delivered by a rocket carrier.[24]

The yellow-green color of the paint job on the casing of the discovered rocket motor matches the color of the 227-mm rockets for the American MLRS (M270) and HIMARS (M142) previously used by the UAF. Thus, for example, after the shelling of the town of Krasny Luch on July 24, 2022, fragments and unexploded munitions were found that were unequivocally identified as GMLRS rocket projectiles[25]. These objects made it possible to obtain a fairly complete idea of the

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[21] Today at 8:00 a.m., the Kyiv degenerates launched a cluster munition attack on the village of Bekhtery in the Golopristansky municipal district (published on 20.01.2025) Vladimir Saldo Telegram Channel. URL: https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/5638 (accessed on 22.03.2025)

[22] RIA News footage from the scene of the UAF shelling of a school in the village of Bekhtery, the Kherson region, where, according to the latest data, 2 people were killed and 23 more were injured (accessed on 20.01.2024) RIA News Telegram Channel. URL: https://t.me/rian_ru/277503 (accessed on 22.03.2025)

[23] CERAMIC BRICK AND STONE. General specifications. INTERSTATE COUNCIL FOR STANDARDIZATION, METROLOGY AND CERTIFICATION. URL: https://tdksm.ru/upload/uf/4f7/RU_MKT_DOC_TEC_GOST_530_2012.pdf (accessed on 22.03.2025)

[24] M77 Submunition. COLLECTIVE AWARENESS TO UXO URL: https://cat-uxo.com/explosive-hazards/submunitions/m77-submunition (accessed on 22.03.2025)

[25] The LPR Representation in the JCCC reported that at the site of the shelling of Krasny Luch (https://t.me/LPR_JCCC/6802), three unexploded M31 GMLRS rockets from the American M142 HIMARS MLRS were

design features and color of the paint used on the rocket motor of the ammunition of this family (see. **Fig.** 23).

discovered, along with their warheads and fragments of the rocket bodies (published on 25.07.2022) The LNR Representative Office in JCCC Telegram Channel. URL: https://t.me/LPR_JCCC/6815 (accessed on 04.03.2025)

WEAPON TYPE

Considering all of the above, it can be stated that **two 227-mm rockets with cluster warheads fired from the (M270) MLRS or HIMARS (M142) MLRS were used** for the artillery shelling we are considering.

Munitions of M26MLRS and M30 GMLRS families

The original US MLRS launcher was the M270, also known as the SPLL (Self-Propelled Launcher/Loader). The M270 is a tracked vehicle whose main components are the FCS (Fire Control System) and two launchers, each of which can carry six MFOM missiles or one ATACMS missile. Around 1995, an improved M270A1 SPLL was developed and operational testing was conducted in 1999. The M270A1 has an improved fire control system (IFCS) with more modern electronics and an improved mechanical launching system (ILMS), which allows for faster loading and aiming of the missile launchers. Existing M270 launchers were upgraded to the M270A1 standard.[26]

The M142 HIMARS (High Mobility Artillery Rocket System) is another launcher for the MLRS missiles, it is a wheeled vehicle with a single launcher (for six missiles or one ATACMS). The XM142 HIMARS Advanced Technology Demonstration Program began in 1996, and the EMD (Engineering and Manufacturing Development) phase, which began in January 2000, was successfully completed in September 2002. Lockheed Martin was awarded the first HIMARS LRIP (Low Velocity Initial Production) contract in April 2003, and the first operational HIMARS unit was fielded in 2005. HIMARS uses the same IFCS and ILMS components as the M270A1 (see **Fig.** 22).

The M26 unguided missile was the first rocket projectile for these MLRSs. The M26 is spin-stabilized with 4 fins, has a firing range of 32 km and is armed with

[26] U.S. Made Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) M270 and M270A1 Highly Accuracy. ForcesMilitary URL: https://forcesmilitary.blogspot.com/2010/12/us-made-multiple-launch-rocket-system.html (accessed on 04.03.2025)

644 M77 DPICM cluster submunitions. The M77 submunitions are sprayed over the target in the air, stabilized by nylon tape during free fall, and detonated on impact.

The Extended Range MLRS (ER-MLRS) missile is a modification of the M26 with a longer motor and only 518 CSMs (see. **Fig.** 22). This allows for a firing range increase of up to 45 km. The M26A1 was to be the first ER-MLRS missile, which uses an improved M85 DPICM CSMs. The original M77 has a relatively high defect rate (around 5%), and the M85 is an improved version with a self-destruct device that significantly reduces this rate (less than 1%). However, development of the XM85 was slower than expected, and therefore, the first ER-MLRS missiles (the first production contract was awarded in July 1996) were equipped with the M77 CSMs. The ER-MLRS with the M77 CSM is designated the **M26A2**. By 1999, the M85 CSM was ready for production, and the last 1,200 of the approximately 4,300 ER-MLRS missiles for the US Army were produced as the M26A1[27].

In 1994, the US Army initiated the GMLRS (Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System) ATD (Advanced Technology Demonstration) program to develop a guided derivative of the M26 MLRS. **M30 GLMRS** rocket (see. **Fig.** 24) uses an inertial measurement unit (IMU) and GPS guidance system, and has four small additional control fins in the nose part. To take full advantage of the greatly improved accuracy of this weapon at longer ranges, only M85 DPICM 404 CSMs are used at **70 km firing range**. The minimum effective firing range of the GMLRS is about 10 km (6 mi). The first fully guided test launch of the M30 took place in May 1998.

The GMLRS program entered the four-year SDD (Systems Development and Demonstration) phase in late 1998, and final qualification testing was successfully completed in December 2002. In March 2003, the M30 GMLRS missile was approved for low-volume production, and in December 2004, operational testing was completed.

[27] Lockheed Martin (Vought) MLRS Rockets (M26/M30/M31). Directory of U.S. Military Rockets and Missiles URL: https://www.designation-systems.net/dusrm/app4/mlrs.html (accessed on 04.03.2025)

It is worth noting that Ukraine was supplied with a wide range of 227-mm rocket projectiles. Among them were both unguided rockets of the M26 family[28], and their guided versions of the M30 family[29].

[28] Ukraine required to transfer M26 cluster munitions. Should Russia be afraid? (published on 20.08.2023) GAZETA.RU MEDIA. URL: https://www.gazeta.ru/science/2023/08/20/17447654.shtml?ysclid=m8jywsqoog104798489 (accessed on 04.03.2025)

[29] For the first time Ukraine uses US-supplied M30 GMLRS cluster munitions to strike Russian Forces (published on 05.06.2024) GLOBAL DEFENSE NEWS URL: https://armyrecognition.com/focus-analysis-conflicts/army/conflicts-in-the-world/russia-ukraine-war-2022/for-the-first-time-ukraine-uses-us-supplied-m30-gmlrs-cluster-munitions-to-strike-russian-force (accessed on 04.03.2025)

DETERMINATION OF THE SHELLING SECTOR

It is worth noting that the hitting area extends along Lenina (Shkolnaya) Street in the village of Bekhtery. In addition, the guidance and control unit and the rocket motor of the rocket projectile were found in the southern part of the hitting area.

Usually, rocket motors and other remaining elements of cluster munitions continue their flight along the direction from which the shelling was carried out and land a little further than the CSMs[30] (see **Fig.** 26).

This information gives us grounds to assert that at least the second **rocket projectile** was from the **M30 family** and at the final part of its trajectory flew along Lenina Street, namely **from north to south.**

In this regard, it is important to highlight and consider the following facts:

1) "HIMARS" MLRS is only in service with one side of the conflict, namely Ukraine;

2) The effective firing range does not exceed 70 km.

3) At least the second missile was from the M30 GMLRS family, the first could have been either an M26A2 or an M30.

Regarding all of the above factors, and having data on the LoC on the date of the event[31], we can plot the probable shelling sector, as well as the probable shelling direction on the map of military operations (along the Lenina Street) (see **Fig.** 27).

It is worth noting that Ukrainian MLRSs from the HIMARS family have been repeatedly spotted in the area of the settlements Blagodatnoye[32], Chernobayevka[33] and Kherson airport[34].

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[30] Uvod. ARTILJERIJSKA MUNICIJA URL: http://vti.mod.gov.rs/fs/154/154.htm (accessed on 04.03.2025)

[31] Map of the Special Military Operation in Ukraine (published on 10.01.2025) LOSTARMOUR Internet resource. "Losses of military equipment in local conflicts of the 21st century" URL: https://lostarmour.info/map#map (accessed on 14.03.2025)

[32] Destruction of HIMARS MLRS launchers by OTRC strike in the Kherson region (published on 08.07.2024) LOSTARMOR URL: https://t.me/lost_armour/3071 (accessed on 14.03.2025)

[33] Russian Armed Forces destroy HIMARS MLRS in Chernobayevka near Kherson (published on 06.01.2023) The 1st Russian. URL: https://herson.tsargrad.tv/news/vs-rossii-unichtozhili-rszo-himars-v-chernobaevke-pod-hersonom_698650 (accessed on 14.03.2025)

[34] The HIMARS launcher was destroyed as a result of an artillery strike on the military equipment parking lot, which was located in Kherson in the area of the beer factory, on three bayonets (published on 06.02.2023) Kherson Vestnik Telegram channel. URL: https://t.me/HersonVestnik/13694 (accessed on 14.03.2025)

Thus, the **most likely area from which the school in the village of Bekhtery, the Kherson region, was shelled on January 10, 2025 is located in the area of the settlements Blagodatnoye, Chernobayevka and Kherson airport.**

MILITARY PRESENCE

It is known that the units of only one military corps, which is armed with MLRS of the HIMARS family are deployed in the Kherson direction. This unit is the 107th RABr of the UAF[35], which subordinates directly to the command of the ground forces of Ukraine.[36]

107-th RoABr of the UAF

The Kremenchuk Telegraph website informed that the 107th rocket artillery regiment, based in Kremenchuk, was formed during the World War II (see Fig. 28).

After the collapse of the USSR, Ukraine inherited this military unit. In 2005, the 107th missile brigade was transformed into the 107th rocket artillery regiment, which was armed with two types of multiple launch rocket systems: 220-mm Uragan MLRS and 300-mm Smerch MLRS. The regiment was granted the Kremenchug honorific in 2008.

In March 2014, the personnel of this military unit took part in the Spring Downpour tactical training exercise. After the completion of these exercises, one division of the 107th RAR carried out combat missions in the Kherson Region on the border with Crimea, and with the beginning of the active phase of the so-called "anti-terrorist operation" (ATO) in the Donbass, the second division was redeployed to the south-east of Ukraine to execute new combat missions[37].

Since January 1, 2019, the regiment has been reorganized into a brigade in accordance with the organizational directive of the General Staff of the UAF[38].

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[35] 107th rocket artillery brigade of Kremenchutsk. "Wikipedia" Free Encyclopedia. URL: https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/107-ма_реактивна_артилерійська_бригада_(Україна)#cite_note-21 (accessed on: 14.03.2025)

[36] Names and numbers of military units of the armed formations of Ukraine (published on 28.09.2023) LOSTARMOR URL: https://lostarmour.info/articles/struktura-vfu (accessed on 14.03.2025)

[37] "Bombs were falling from the sky onto the children's beach - families were dying," a displaced person who came under fire [published on 19.07.2015] YouTube Video hosting. URL: https://youtu.be/bjsS1Bn7r4c (accessed on 19.12.2021)

[38] The 107th Rocket Regiment reorganized into a brigade (published on 26.03.2019) Ukrainian Military Pages URL: https://www.ukrmilitary.com/2019/03/107-polk-stav-brigadoju.html (accessed on 14.06.2022)

Since the beginning of 2022, the 107th RABr of the UAF has continued to carry out combat missions in a familiar theater of military operations, namely in the Kherson and Zaporizhia regions.

Despite the secrecy, there is information that at the beginning of 2023, the 107th RABr received MLRS of the HIMARS family[39].

This fact allows us to assert with a high degree of probability that the units of the 107-th RABr could be deployed in the shelling sector we are considering. This brigade had been there for a long time, they knew the area well, and found the targets. The command of the Ukrainian Armed Forces did not need to change it to another unit.

As for the persons who could have given the order to fire at civilians using large-caliber ammunition, brigade commander, Colonel Kelembet, is primarily responsible for this.

According to the Ukrainian version of Wikipedia, as of 2014, Colonel Alexander Mikhailovych Kelembet was the commander of the 1st division of the 107th rocket artillery regiment[40]. Later, he was appointed brigade commander, which is also confirmed by the Kremenchug Telegraph website (see Fig. 29)[41].

By the way, the RF IC accuses the commander of the 107th RABr of shelling the town of Skadovsk on November 9, 2023, using HIMARS multiple launch rocket systems. The IC information statement states: “It was established that on November 9, 2023, Kelembet was at the position of the brigade entrusted to him near the city of Kherson»[42].

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[39] Meet the Beast: Ukraine’s Elite M270 Rocket Brigade (published on 24.01.2023) Kyiv POST URL: https://www.kyivpost.com/post/11446 (accessed on 14.06.2022)

[40] “Gifts” from Poroshenko fired by Smerch MLRS, which Ukrainian media call “self-bombardment”. YouTube Video hosting.URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=75&v=DwsWRPmYnsU (accessed on 19.12.2021)

[41] Dot the Ü. Lostarmour website. URL: https://lostarmour.info/articles/tochki-nad-u/ (accessed on 19.12.2021)

[42] A criminal case sent to court against a Ukrainian commander whose criminal actions led to the death of Russian IC investigators (published on 02.10.2024) Sledcom Telegram channel. URL: https://t.me/sledcom_press/16234 (accessed on 19.12.2021)

CONCLUSIONS

It follows from the above that on January 20, 2025, at about 07:45 a.m. and 8.00 (MSK) the area nearby the school in the village of Bekhtery, Kherson Region, came under artillery fire from a HIMARS multiple launch rocket system. Two rocket projectiles were fired. The shelling was carried out using rocket-propelled munitions with a 227-mm cluster warhead of the M30 GMLRS or M26 MLRS family.

The units of the 107th Rocket Artillery Brigade under the command of Colonel Alexander Kelembet could be in the disposition of the shelling sector. The latter is responsible for the actions of his subordinates.

Moreover, the highest military-political leadership of Ukraine is responsible for crimes committed during this armed conflict. Namely: President and Supreme Commander-in-Chief Volodymyr Zelensky and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine Oleksandr Syrskiy.

LEGAL QUALIFICATIONS

Indiscriminate shelling of a densely populated residential area inthe town of Makeyevka, in which civilians were killed and injured, is a crime for which responsibility is provided by the norms of national legislation of Ukraine and by the norms of international law.

In compliance with **Art. 438 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine**, for "... use of methods of the warfare prohibited by international instruments, or any other violations of rules of the warfare recognized by international instruments consented to be binding by the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine, and also giving an order to commit any such actions", shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of eight to twelve years, and if the same acts accompanied with an intended murder, shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of ten to fifteen years, or life imprisonment.

In compliance with **Art. 13 of Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions** of 12 August 1949, concerning the protection of victims of armed conflicts of a non-international character, dated 8 June 1977: "The civilian population as such, as well as individual civilians, shall not be the object of attack. Acts or threats of violence the primary purpose of which is to spread terror among the civilian population are prohibited".

In compliance with **Rule 71 of Customary International Humanitarian Law (Volume 1, ICRC 2006)**: "States must never make civilians the object of attack and must consequently never use weapons that are incapable of distinguishing between civilian and military targets".

"The use of weapons which are by nature indiscriminate is prohibited".

In compliance with **Art. 3 common to all Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949,** extending its effect to non-international armed conflicts, "persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed 'hors de combat' by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any

adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria".

To this end, violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds and mutilation, are prohibited inter alia with respect to the above-mentioned persons.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1

Fig. 1 - A military truck driving down a road in a video showing an artillery attack using 227mm cluster munition rockets.

Ширина полосы движения, м	Категория дороги	Описание
4,5	V	Дорога с одной полосой движения. Такие дороги могут использоваться для подъезда к отдаленным деревням с небольшим количеством жителей.
3,75	IA, IБ, IB, II (с 2 полосами)	IA, IБ, IB - широкие дороги (с 4 полосами и более), имеющие разделительную полосу. Это самые скоростные дороги в России. II (с 2 полосами) - двухполосная дорога без разделительной полосы. Это самый распространенный тип дорог вне населенных пунктов.
3,5	II (с 4 полосами), III	II (с 4 полосами) - четырехполосная дорога с разделительной полосой или без нее. III - двухполосная дорога, на которой нет железнодорожных переездов и пересечений с трамвайной линией (только путепроводы).
3	IV	Двухполосная дорога, которая может пересекать трамвайные или железнодорожные пути.

Fig. 2 - Analysis of the zone affected by a 227 mm rocket with a cluster warhead.

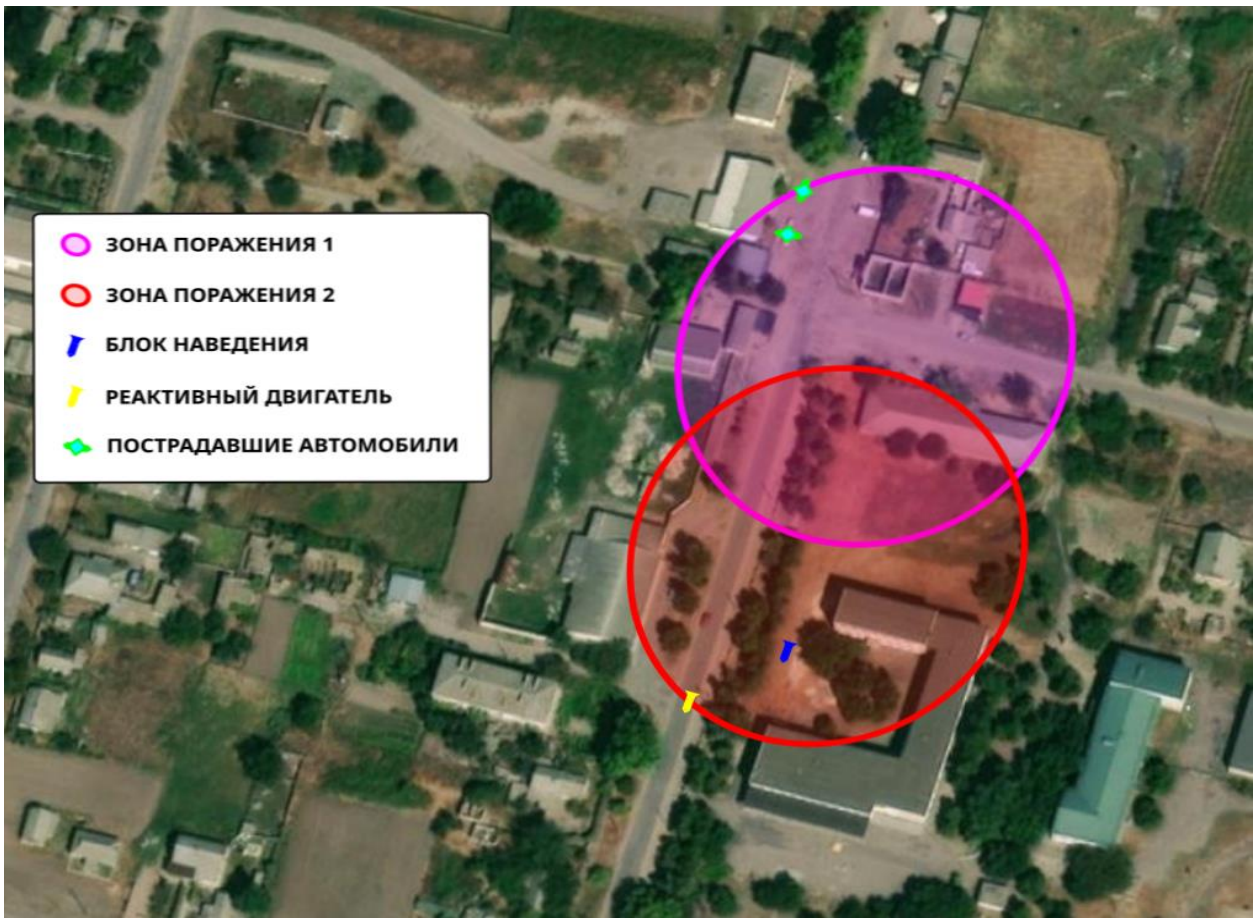

Fig. 3 - Scheme of the shelling site that occurred on January 20, 2025, at 07:45.

Fig. 4 - Civilian motor vehicles damaged during the shelling of the village of Bekhtery.

Fig. 5 - Glazing of the general merchandise store in the village of Bekhtery damaged by CSM fragments.

Fig. 6 - School glazing in the village of Bekhtery damaged by CSM fragments.

Annex 3

Fig. 7 - Craters from the CSM detonation in the territory of the school in the village of Bekhtery, taken from different angles.

Fig. 8 - Holes from the CSM detonation on the roof of a one-story building north of the school building in the village of Bekhtery.

Fig. 9 - An object of known dimensions - men's footwear of size 44.

Fig. 10 - CSM explosion craters with an object of known dimensions in the frame: top left - in the courtyard of the Bekhtery school; top right - near the general merchandise store; bottom - on the bell cast surface near the wall of the Bekhtery school building.

Fig. 11 - Examples of craters from CSM detonation on the ground surface.

Fig. 12 - Examples of craters from KSB detonation on the solid surfaces.

Annex 8

Fig. 13 - The body of a rocket motor of a missile, found on the road west of the school in the village of Bekhtery.

Annex 9

Fig. 14 - Guidance and control unit of a rocket projectile: top — sunk as a result of falling into the ground in the territory of a school in the village of Bekhtery; bottom — extracted by sappers.

Fig. 15 - A pit left after the removal of the guidance and control unit of a rocket projectile in the territory of a school in the village of Bekhtery.

Fig. 16 - Standard brick dimensions according to GOST 530-2012.

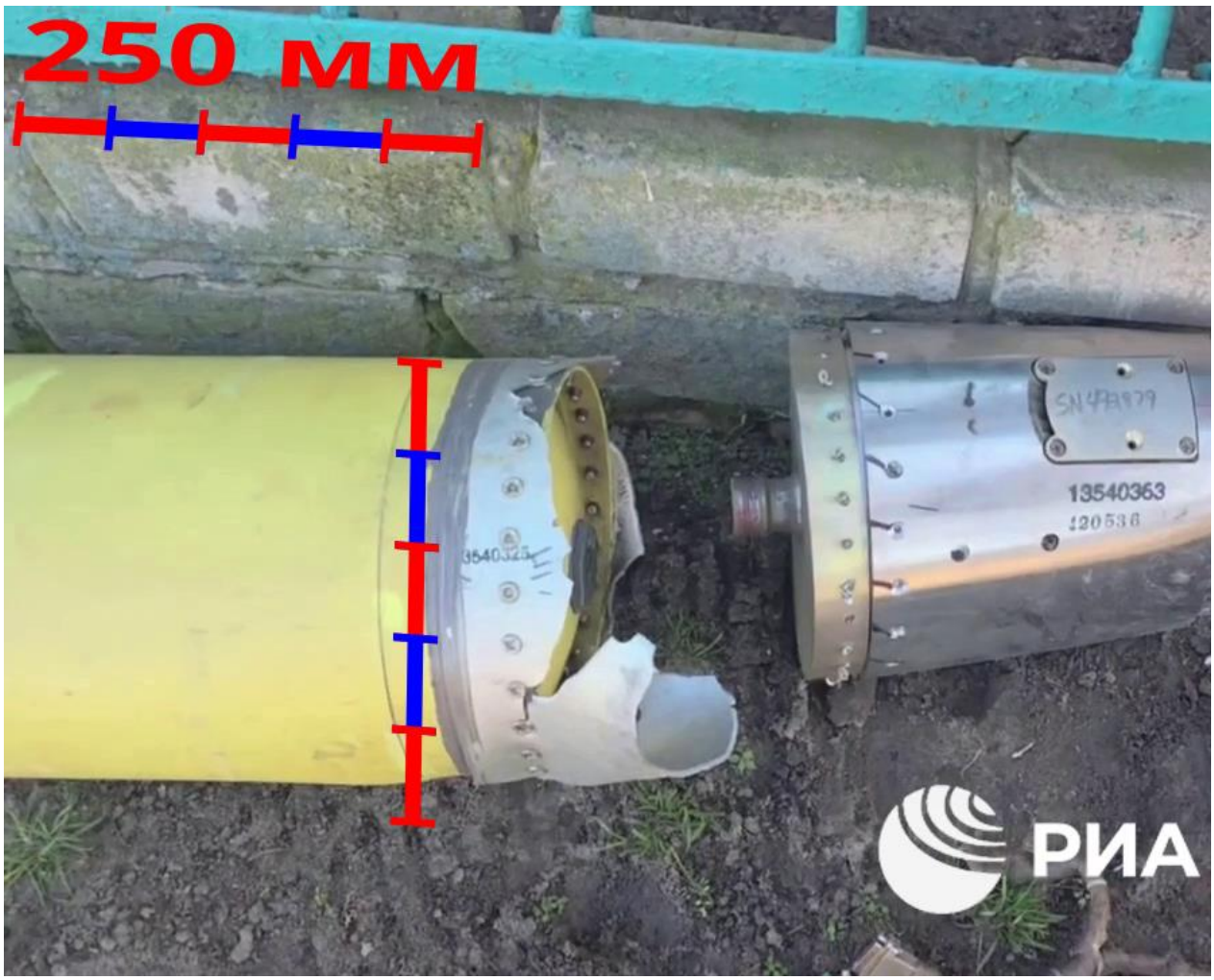

Fig. 17 - Determining the projectile caliber based on the brick dimensions.

Fig. 18 - Unexploded CSMs found in and around the school grounds.

Fig. 19 - CSM fragments found in the territory and in the vicinity of the school.

Fig. 20 - The remains of the projectile that we found during the inspection: on the right - CSM stabilizer belts; in the center - the CSM casing debris; on the right - the rocket casing debris.

Fig. 21 - M77 CSM from the DPICM family.

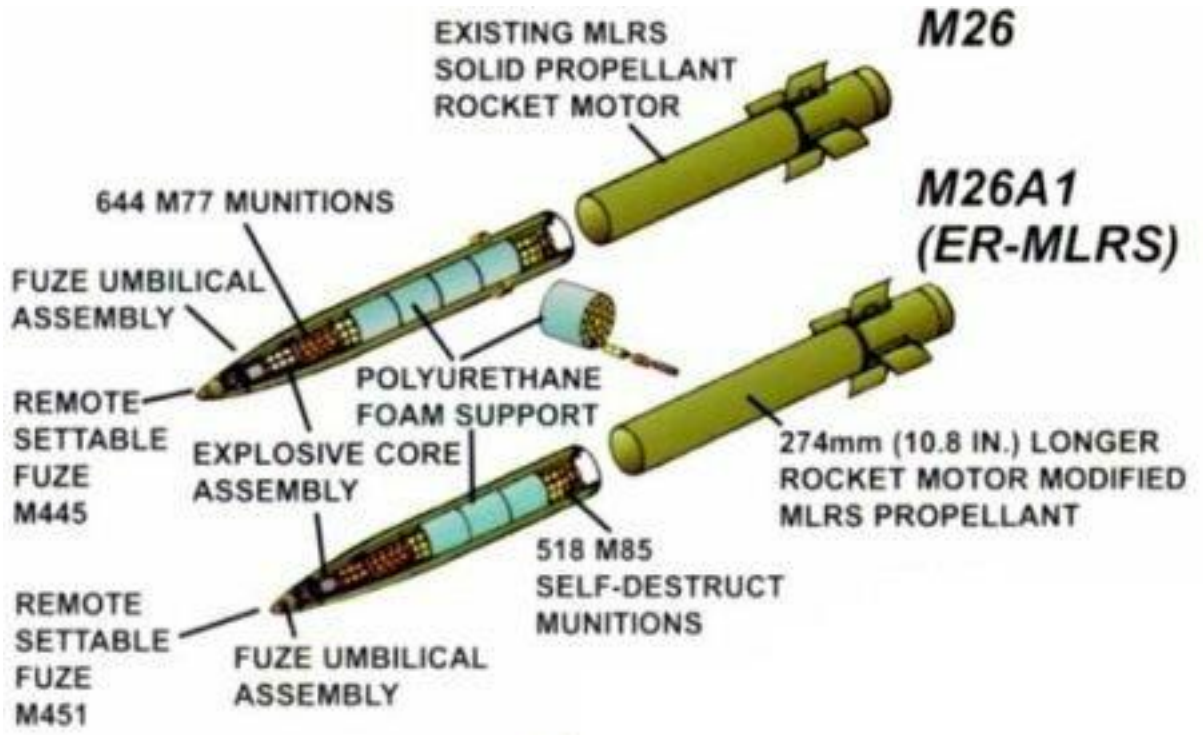

Fig. 22 - M26 MLRS rocket projectiles.

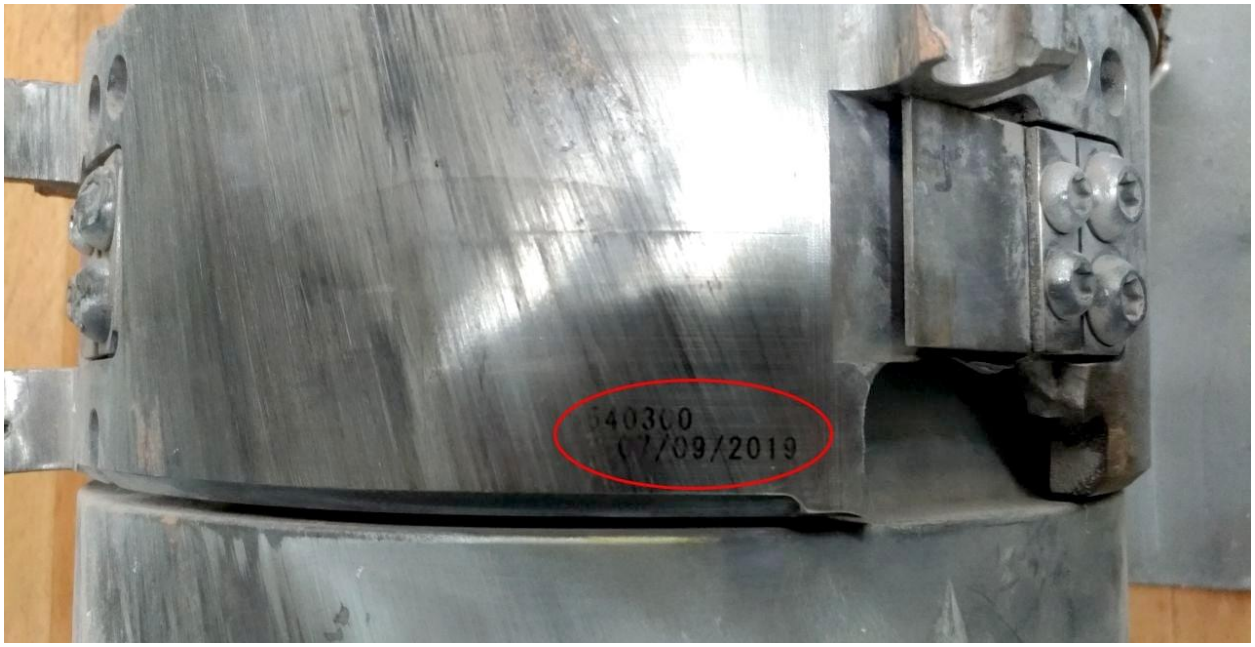

Fig. 23 - Shell fragments found by employees of the LPR representative office in the JCCC after the shelling of Krasniy Luch on July 24, 2022.

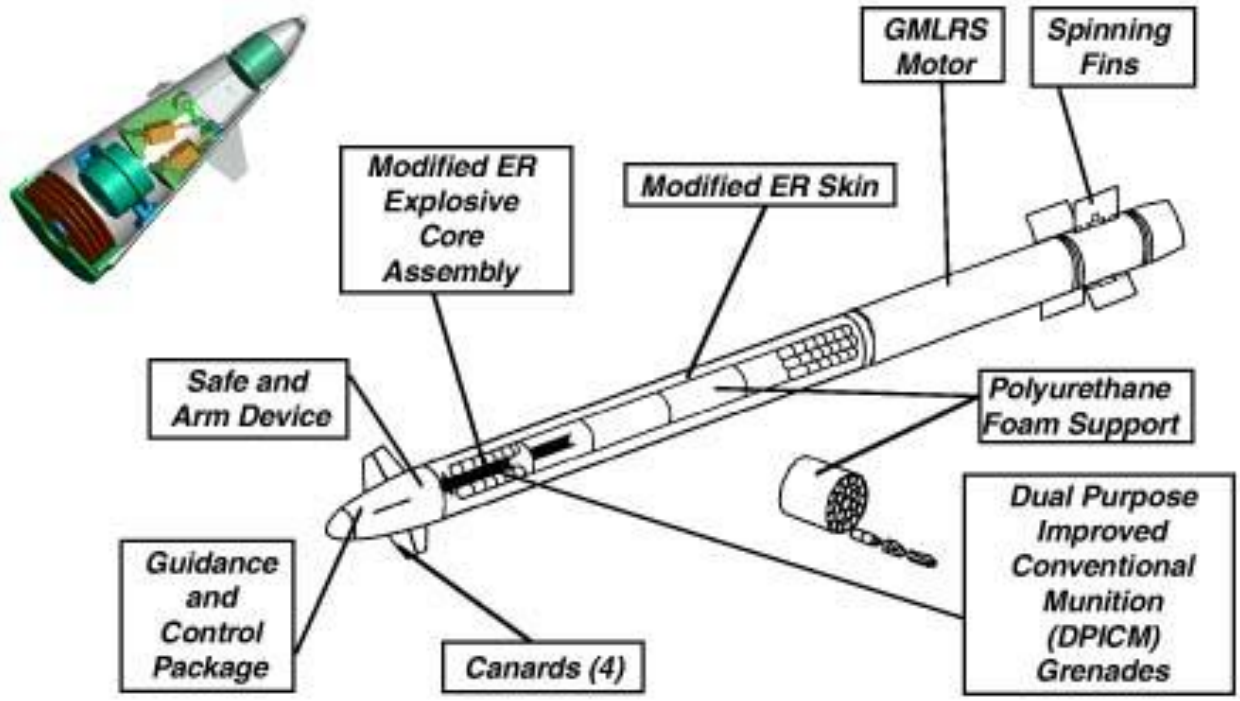

Fig. 24 - M30 GMLRS missile design.

Name:	**M270 MLRS**	**M142 HIMARS**
Origin:	USA	USA
Produced:	1980–2003	2004
Unit cost:	2.3 million $	5.1 million $

Fig. 25 - Launching platforms: on the left - MLRS (M270) and on the right - HIMARS (M142).

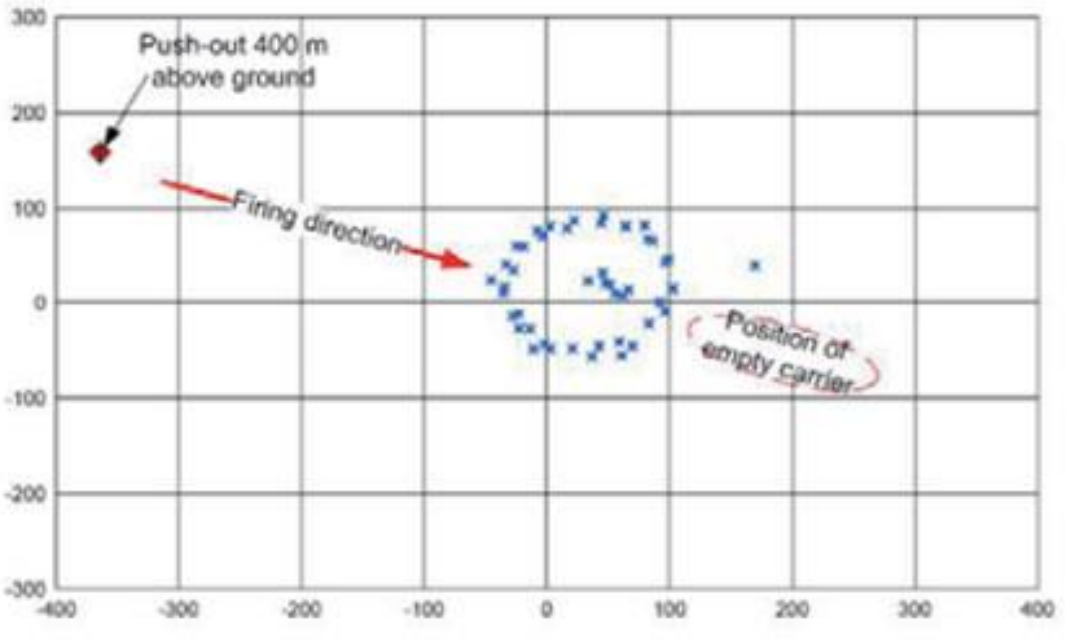

Fig. 26 - The hitting area and the location of the cluster munition body impact.

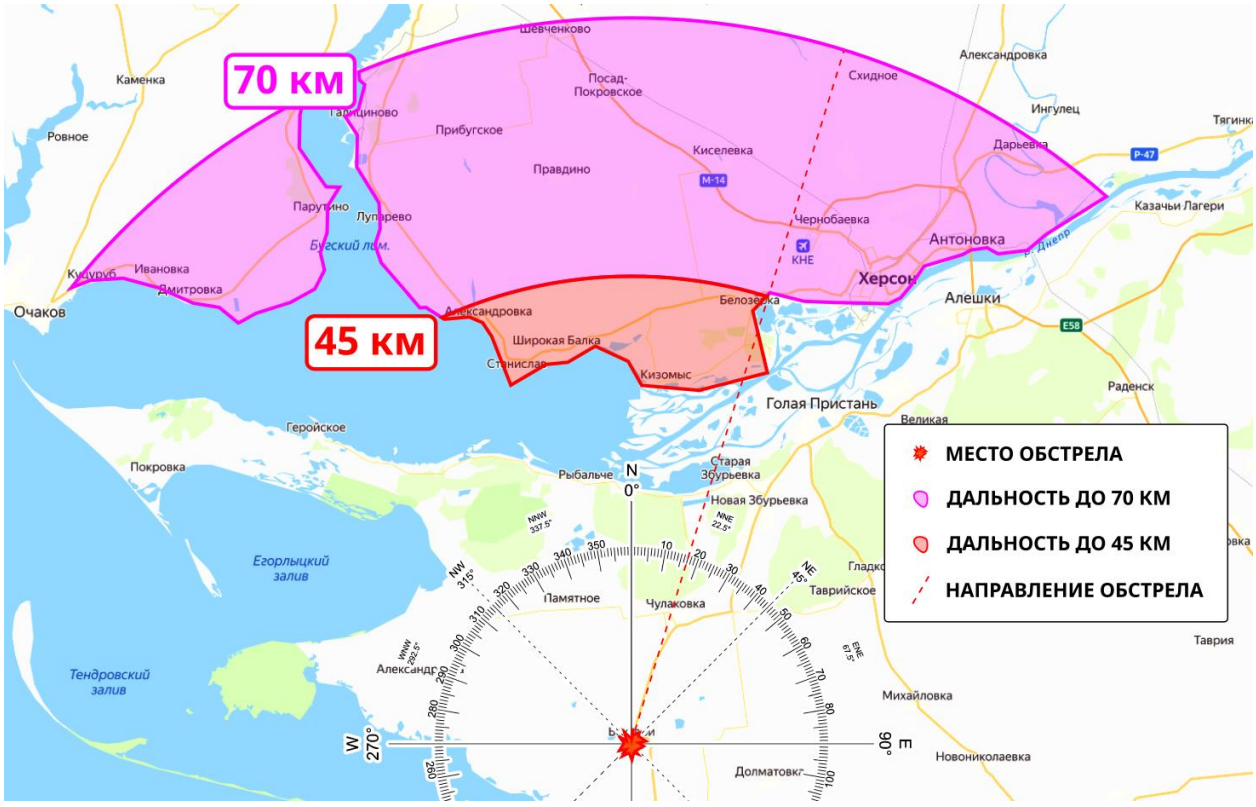

Fig. 27 - The sector from which the shelling of the school in the village of Bekhtery was conducted.

Fig. 28 – A sleeve patch of the 107th Rocket Artillery Regiment (Ukraine)[43].

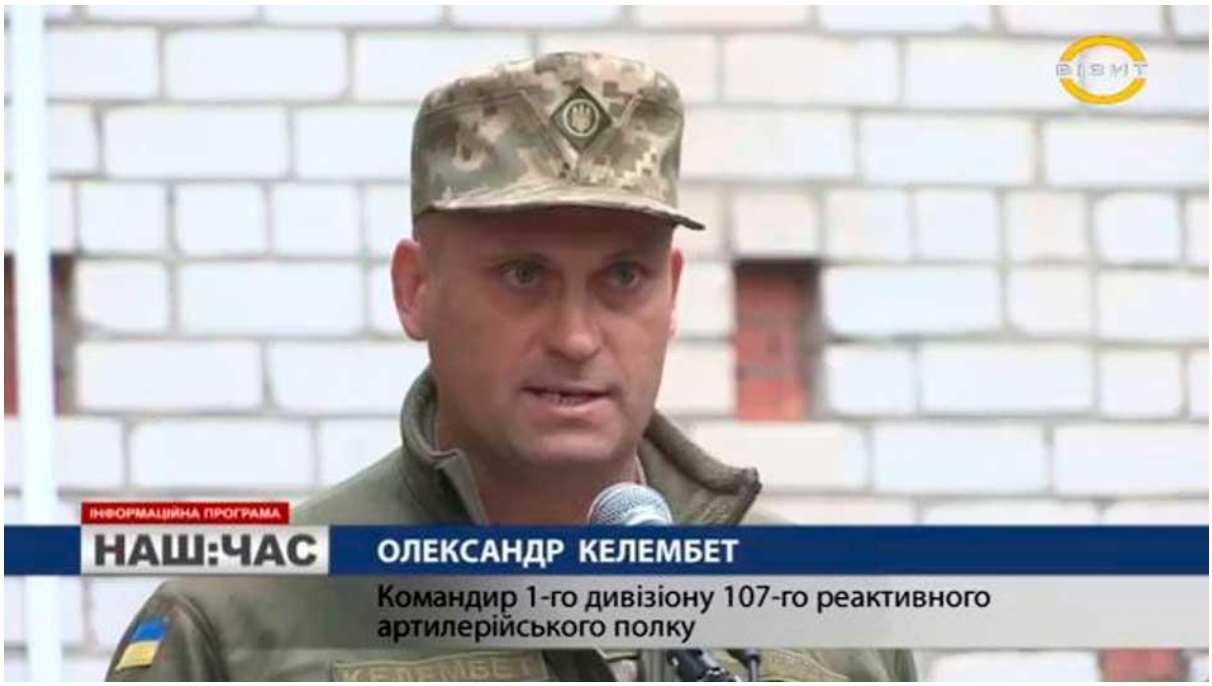

Fig. 29 – A film frame from the "Our Time" News Program of 10.20.2016.[44]

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