

## Behavior of journalists in crisis situations

### Analysis: Journalists in crisis regions of Ukraine

#### Case study I: photographer G.B. / near Mykolaiv

Here is an example from a summary by RSF (Reporters without Borders) of the Russian army's current treatment of colleagues clearly marked as journalists: Suspected members of a Russian special commando shot at Swiss photographer G. B. on Sunday (03/06) shortly after he passed through a Ukrainian checkpoint on a road leading toward the city of Mykolaiv. The shots missed his head by only a few centimeters. B. was reporting on the Russian advance in the region located in the south of the country. Despite several "press" markings on his car and his bulletproof vest with the same inscription, the experienced war reporter was subsequently harassed by the soldiers. They stole 3,000 euros and his equipment. "They were less than 50 meters away," B., who was injured in the face and arm by glass shards from his windshield, told RSF. "They were clearly shooting with the aim of killing. If I hadn't ducked, I would have been hit. I've been shot at in other war zones, but I've never experienced anything like this. Anyone traveling in the country with no experience in war reporting is in mortal danger."

#### Analysis military (to help journalists minimize threats)

##### G. B. /Mykolaiv Region

B. left an Ukraine checkpoint into a "white zone". He was driving a gray Land Rover-type SUV, with the air intake raised. **Behind** the windshield was a 40-cm press shield on the driver's side and a reflective press shield of the same size behind the passenger's sun visor. It is not known if the latter was folded down at the time of the attack. Also on the passenger side was a laminated A4 sheet with an approximately 10cm Swiss cross. The press mark on the gray protective vest was about 10cm in size and could not be seen from outside the vehicle. The attack was carried out by two very well-aimed shots from 12 o'clock on the front window of the vehicle, with the aim to kill the driver and the passenger (not present). That a non-existent passenger was shot at shows that the attackers had no view of the interior of the vehicle (sky/light reflection from the flat, upward angled window). *I could not find any information about the robbery and how it occurred.* Probable shooting distance is not over 200 m due to the precision of the hits. Therefore, I assume that B. surprised the attackers and his presence put them in distress. The precise and minimalist fire assault and also the subsequent non-killing of B. suggest that they were very well-trained forces who did not want to be detected but feared detection. The taking away of his equipment serves to keep the surprised forces secret.

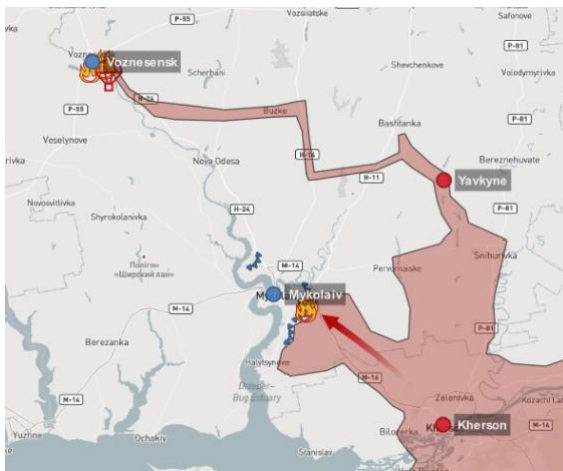
##### Conclusion

1. B. tried to move "neutrally" within a combat area without (probably) knowing the tactical situation of both sides. As a result, he ran into Russian reconnaissance forces and was engaged.
2. The vehicle was not directly recognizable as a press vehicle. The type and color correspond to a military vehicle. The markings behind the windshield were not recognizable due to probable light reflection.

3. The behavior after the shooting must have been exemplary (i.e. correct), because otherwise B. would be dead now.

### Take Home Message

1. Everyone who is not embedded in the area of operation must know the tactical situation! Best possibility at the moment: [MilitaryLand - Database of military units, military news and maps](#). In the excerpt from March 6, it can be clearly seen that B. drove from UKR territory into a white box already surrounded by RUS forces.



2. Press marking on person and vehicle must be readable from 200m. It is recommended to apply the lettering PRESS in the national language in the same size. A light-dark contrast is (over)vital (residual light amplifier, IR illumination). The letters TV are not to be used due to the RUS vehicle markings. Colored markings of any kind (also flags) are occupied in this war (yellow+blue and red+white).

