

Concept Note

WEBINAR "ELECTRONIC EVIDENCE OF WAR CRIMES"

The role of journalists, media and social media

25 November 2022, 10:30-12:30

The year 2022 has been having the European continent witness horrors one did not think possible after the WWII.

The atrocities of war right in the heart of Europe are back to haunt history again.

Humanity still needs to learn that peace is not to be taken for granted and that continuous work is needed in order to preserve it.

At the same time, in a Rule of law driven, and democratic society, impunity cannot be tolerated. Crime has been committed and the whole world has been able to testify it.

Investigators appointed by the United Nations have confirmed that Russian armed forces have committed war crimes in Ukraine, including documented cases of civilian executions, torture and sexual violence. But the investigators are not the only ones testifying and have a duty in bringing proofs to justice.

There are more actors in a unique position to track atrocities in Ukraine, and these are the journalists and the media. The ongoing crimes are documented as never was it possible before due to the social media.

But what are the differences between covering war crimes as a journalist and presenting that information to a legal investigation? How do Courts work with journalists?

What are the challenges of investigative journalists? What about other media actors?

Digital technologies and social media have their role to play as well. Nevertheless, collecting information for an article or a video posted on Facebook is not necessarily an evidence of war crimes that can be used in international courts.

Furthermore, how can such evidence be stored and used, when most of the social media algorithms moderating online content will block or eliminate violent content?

Another event in the series organised by the Group of Friends on the Safety of Journalists and Media Freedom with the support of the Council of Europe will explore these and other topical issues on war crime evidence in Ukraine and the important role of those who have a duty in collecting it.