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Russian Forces Accused of Burning Fallen Soldiers' Bodies in Kherson Landfill

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A man drinks his coffee with a Russian billboard reading "Russians and Ukrainians are one people, one whole" in the background as locals return to daily life in liberated Kherson. **Bulent Kilic / AFP**

Russian troops allegedly dumped and burned the bodies of fallen fellow soldiers at a landfill site on the outskirts of the recently liberated southern Ukrainian city of Kherson, The Guardian reported Monday.

Workers and local residents told the publication they had witnessed black bags being unloaded from Russian open trucks and set on fire over the summer, describing smells of burning flesh at the site.

Kherson resident Iryna said "every time our army shelled the Russians there, they moved the remains to the landfill and burned them."

Workers at the landfill said the Russian troops had chosen an isolated part of the site for

unloading waste and set up checkpoints at the entrance.

The Guardian said this area was inaccessible for security reasons but described seeing Russian flags, uniforms and helmets at the landfill when its reporters visited the site five days after Ukrainian forces recaptured the city.

“The Russians drove a Kamaz full of rubbish and corpses all together and unloaded,” an unnamed waste collector was quoted as saying.

It was not immediately possible to independently verify the claims of soldiers’ bodies being burned at the site.

Ukrainian officials declined to comment on whether they were investigating the claims.

An unnamed Kherson official told The Guardian that Ukrainian officials are more interested in finding the bodies of Ukrainians buried in mass graves than Russian soldiers’ burial sites.

Ukrainian security services claim that the bodies of Russian soldiers are disposed of and logged as “missing in action” to cover up Russia’s losses in the war.

An intercepted phone call from a Russian soldier in May described similar scenes of his comrades’ bodies being dumped at “a dump the height of a man” outside the separatist region of Donetsk in eastern Ukraine.

The Russian military places its losses at under 6,000, a fraction of the nearly 100,000 that independent media and senior U.S. military officials say have died, disappeared or been seriously injured in the invasion of Ukraine.

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