



Museum of  
Civilian Voices  
by Rinat Akhmetov Foundation

# GUIDE

**to working with the online archive**  
of the Museum of Civilian Voices  
of the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation

This Guide gives an overview of the functionality the portal and online archive of the Museum of Civilian Voices of the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation offer to its visitors, as well as an overview of its possible use for research, awareness-raising purposes and learning activities.



## 1. Information about the Museum of Civilian Voices of the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation

The **Museum of Civilian Voices** is the initiative of the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation that aims to create the world's largest collection of testimonies from civilians about the war during the active phase of the armed conflict in the Ukrainian Donbass. The Museum was established in 2020 through the efforts of the Foundation's team, and was inaugurated on 23 June 2021. Today the Museum is the largest collection of stories from Donbass civilians in Ukraine.

## 2. Information about the online archive of the Museum of Civilian Voices of the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation

The collection of the online Museum of Civilian Voices is an archive, a repository comprised of more than 2,000 testimonies about the war in eastern Ukraine. By the end of 2025, the Museum plans to collect 100,000 stories about experiences of living through the armed conflict.

The archive is organized as a publicly accessible socio-cultural and anthropological scientific database. It is a unique online resource that provides access to structured information content about first-hand experiences of living amidst the armed conflict, experiences of resettlement and the war trauma. The archive consists of testimonies or stories from civilians in the format of audio and video interviews, written essays, some material artifacts and items, artistic applique works and handicrafts, children's drawings, which all express subjective experiences of living through the armed confrontation in Donbass.

The exhibits and items from the collection illustrate the unsurpassed depth and breadth of the harsh and severe social framework of life in the circumstances of the war. Materials in the collection are presented in three languages: Ukrainian, Russian, and English, with translation and subtitles.



The items contained in the Museum's archive can be searched and filtered by different categories. With the help of these search and filtering features you can find some particular interviews, make thematic searches and search by keywords.

The online archive will be useful for historians, culturologists, anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists and philosophers, experts in psychological and neurobehavioural sciences, as well as for representatives of media, journalists, interested citizens of Ukraine and international audiences.

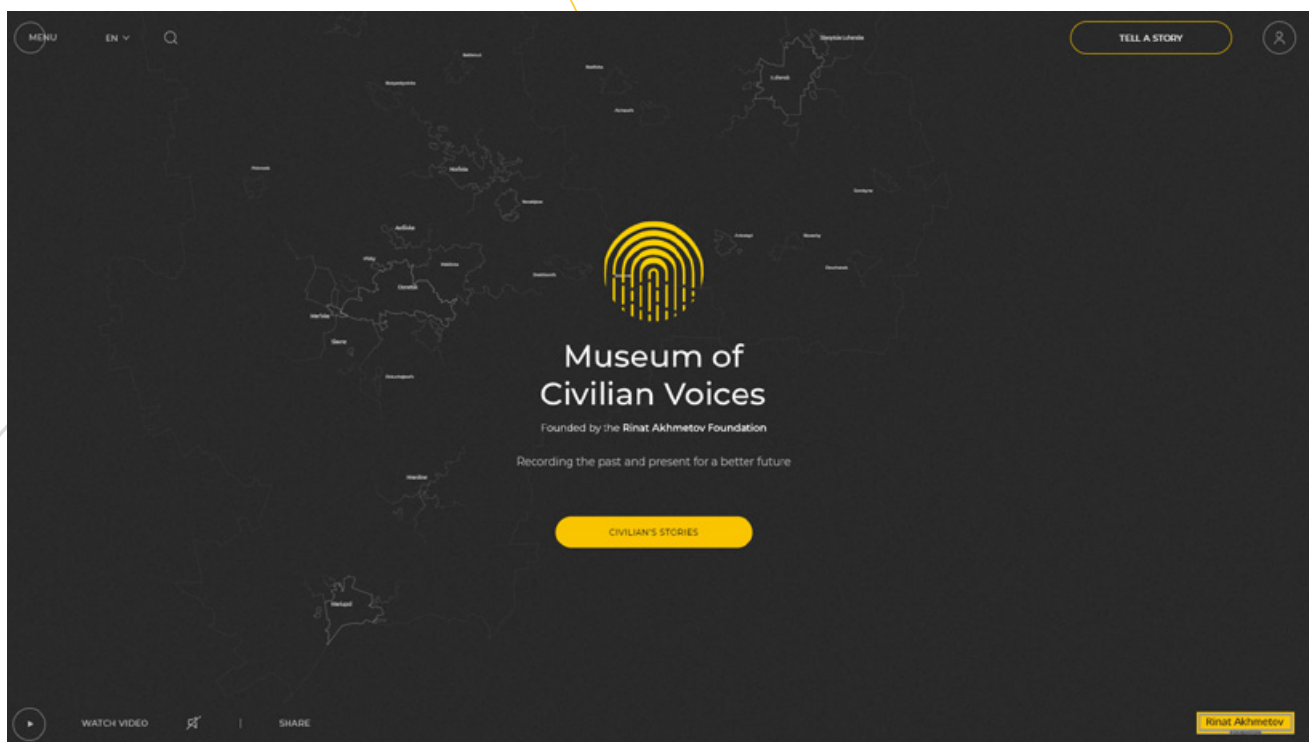
Today the portal has the following host of functions for research, awareness-raising purposes, and learning activities:

1. Navigation through an interactive map of Donbass and filtering of archive materials by a populated locality (village, settlement, town etc.) with the help of the map.
2. General search on the portal by keywords.
3. Advanced search option:
  - 3.1. by a category of the source of story/artifact
  - 3.2. by a populated locality (village, settlement, town etc.)
  - 3.3. by year of events described in a story
  - 3.4. by type of content
  - 3.5. by tag.
4. Working with archive items:
  - 4.1. working with profiles of the Museum's heroes/characters
  - 4.2. special features of working with the Museum's artifacts.
5. Personal account of a researcher.
6. Methodological limitations of the Museum's online archive.



## 1. Navigation through an interactive map of Donbass and filtering of archive materials by a populated locality (village, settlement, town etc.) with the help of the map

An interactive map of the region is available to the portal visitors after watching/skipping the introductory video on the website <https://civilvoicesmuseum.org>. The map shows populated localities (villages, settlements, towns etc.) the characters of the stories come from or live in, or the events of the stories are associated with.



By clicking on one of the selected (highlighted in yellow) settlements, you will be redirected to the page of the Museum's archive with all the available materials related to the chosen settlement. You can use additional filters (year of events described in a story, type of content, etc.) to select the required material associated with this locality (for example, only the story associated with this locality for 2014 or only an audio record).



## 2. General search on the portal by keywords

One of the basic tools for finding materials in the archive of the online Museum of Civilian Voices is the general search option on the portal.

The search bar is located at the top of the portal's page. With the help of the general search bar, you can make a general search through the archive of the Museum.



It should be noted that after entering any word or name of a settlement, the search engine offers you all the materials available in the archive that contain this word or name. For a more refined search through the archive's materials, you need to use the advanced search option, which is described below.



After typing a search word in the general search bar, to the right of the archive item's name you can find the name of the category to which such item belongs. For example, having entered the word "Sotnyk" in the general search bar, you will see a list of archive items and to the right of all the items there will be the category to which they belong: *Story* and *Character's profile*. That is, through this search, you can find stories where the word/name "Sotnyk" occurs, as well as can go to the profiles of characters with this family name.

Please kindly note that the general search tool does not allow you to filter all the archive materials of the online Museum, but just to see the list of archive items that contain the entered keyword. To get a complete list of archive items by a keyword or other search parameter, you need to use advanced search tools.



### 3. Advanced search option

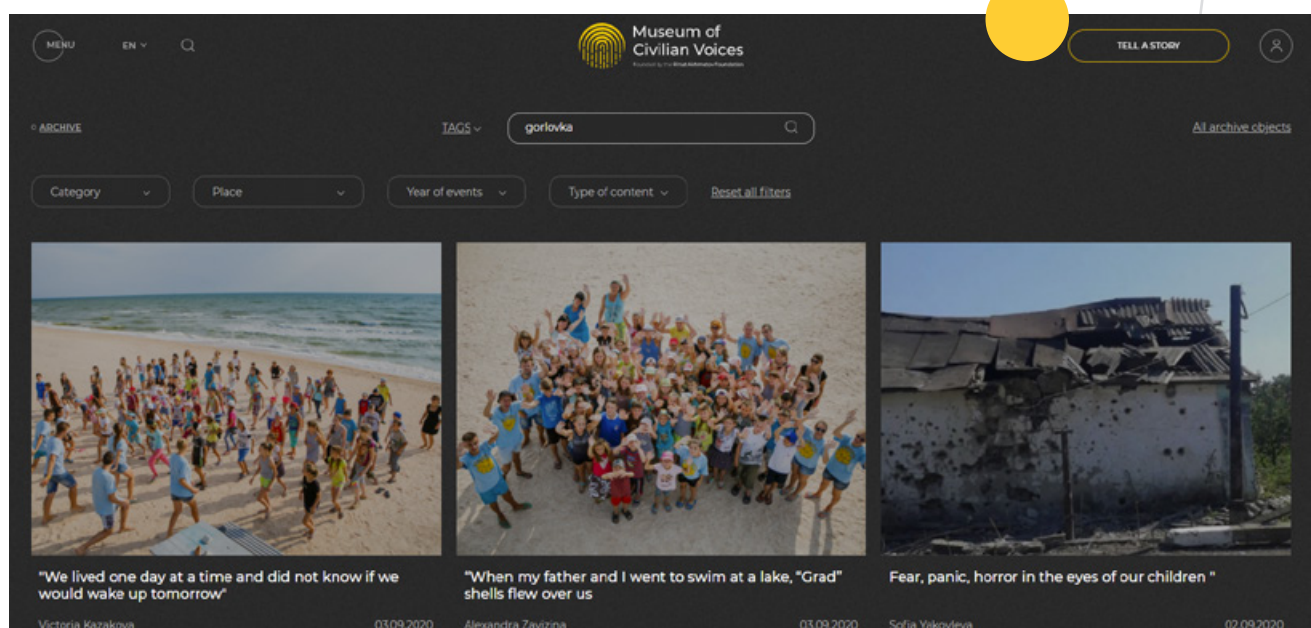
Lower, in the centre of its archive page, the online Museum of Civilian Voices (<https://civilvoicesmuseum.org/archive>) has an advanced search bar. The advanced search engine has five main options for detailed searching of the information you want to find:

- 1) filtering and searching by source category
- 2) filtering and searching by the name of a settlement/populated locality
- 3) filtering and searching by year of an event related to a story or artifact
- 4) filtering and searching by type of content
- 5) filtering and searching by tags.

The archive has a counter of all archive items and filtered archive items to the right of the filters' list.

By default, the advanced search option operates with archive materials and materials of related source categories (essays, children's drawings, etc.).

Advanced search can be performed by keywords, proper nouns, abbreviations, expressions and short phrases. The search engine can also be used to search for specific words in Ukrainian, English, and Russian. The counter mentioned earlier will help researchers easier navigate through the information in the archive according to their search requests.



All stories also contain brief additional information, such as the name of a story's author, a photograph, the name of the settlement/locality related to the story, the years of events that are described, and the date of the material's publication in the archive.

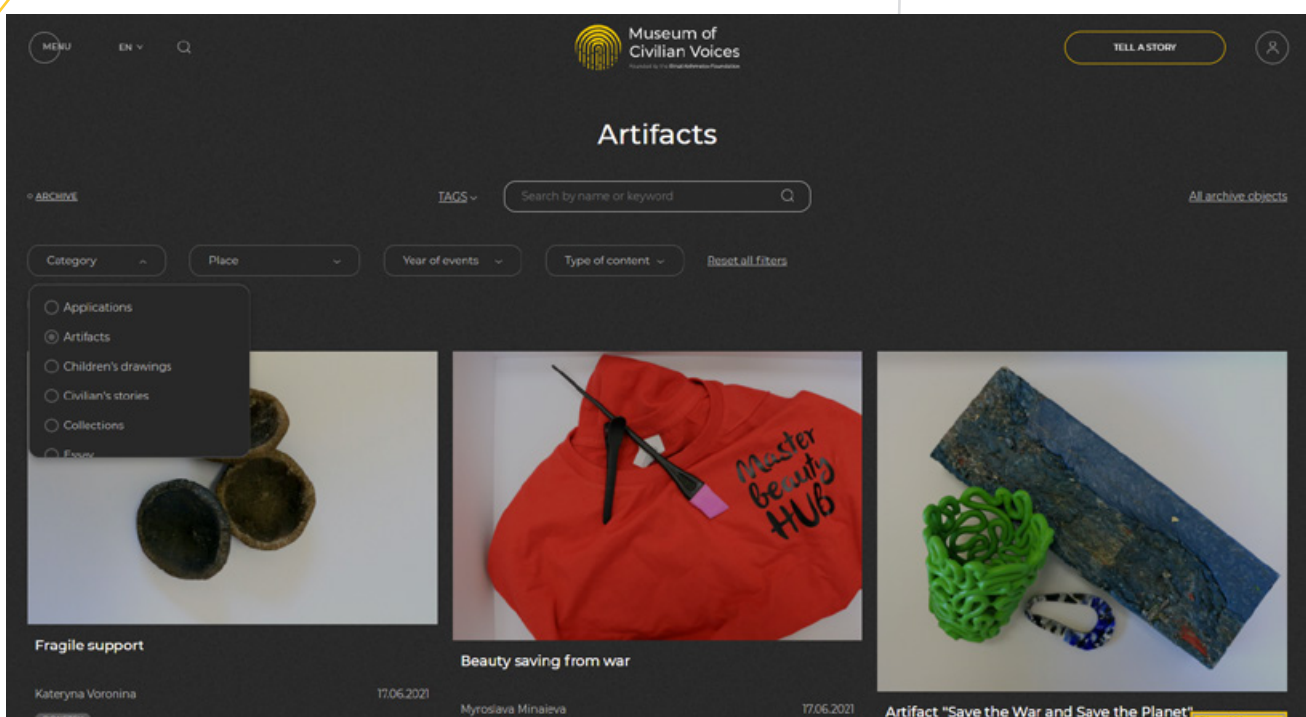
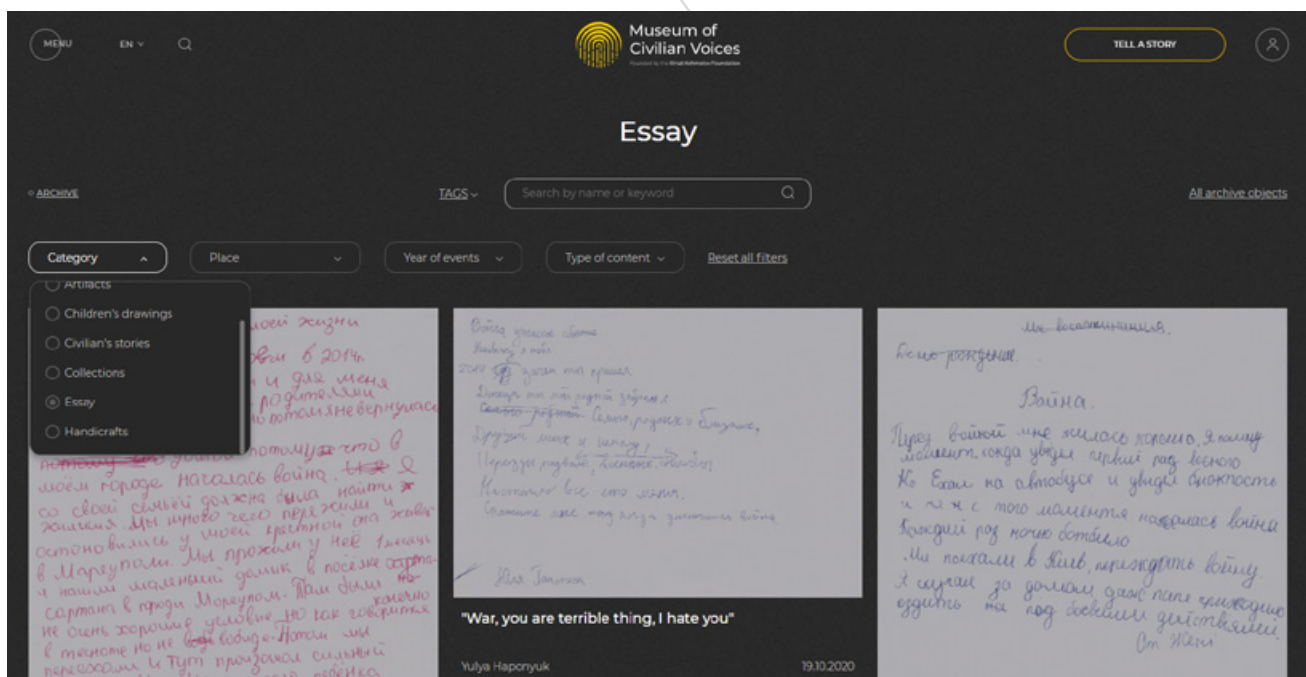




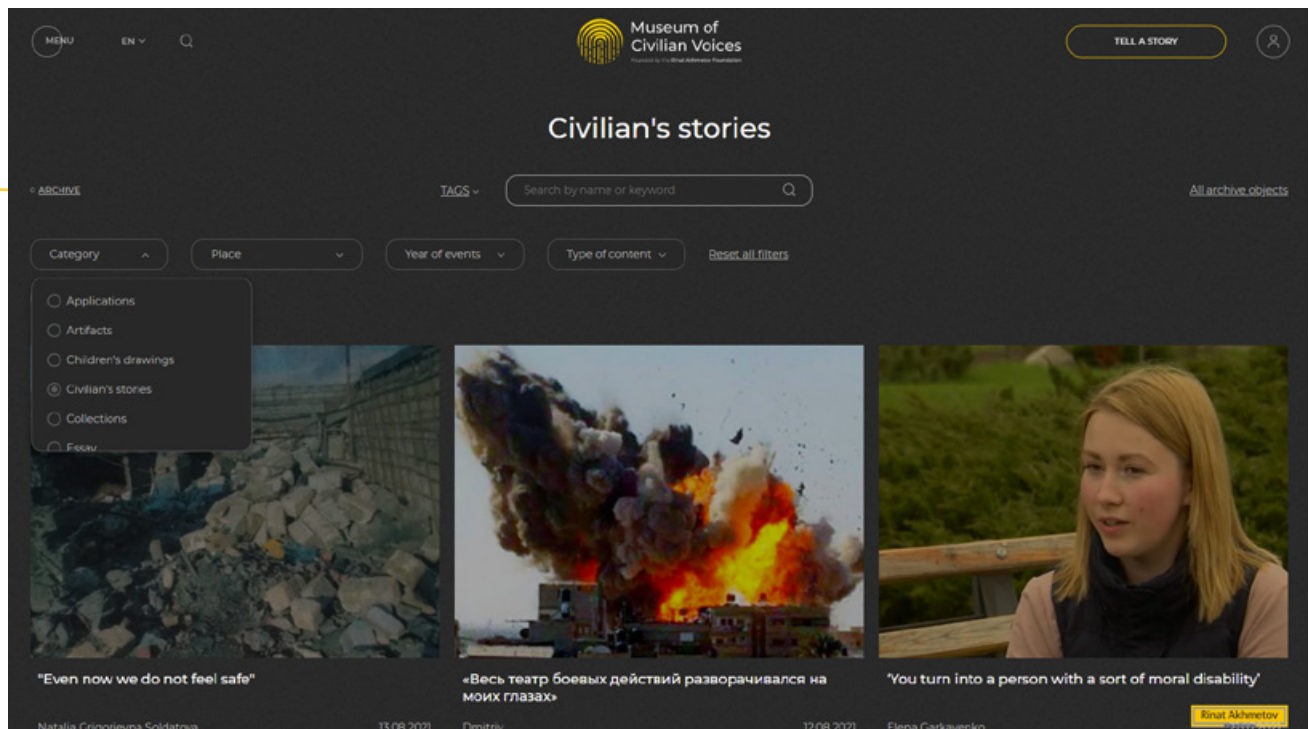
### 3.1 By a category of the source of story/artifact

To sort the archive materials by types of sources, you need to click on the *Category* button and select one of the options from the drop-down list: artifacts, handicrafts, applique works, essays, civilians' stories, children's drawings, collections.

You can only select one category to filter. To obtain more detailed search results, you can use additional filters: by settlement/locality, year of an event, type of content, and tags.





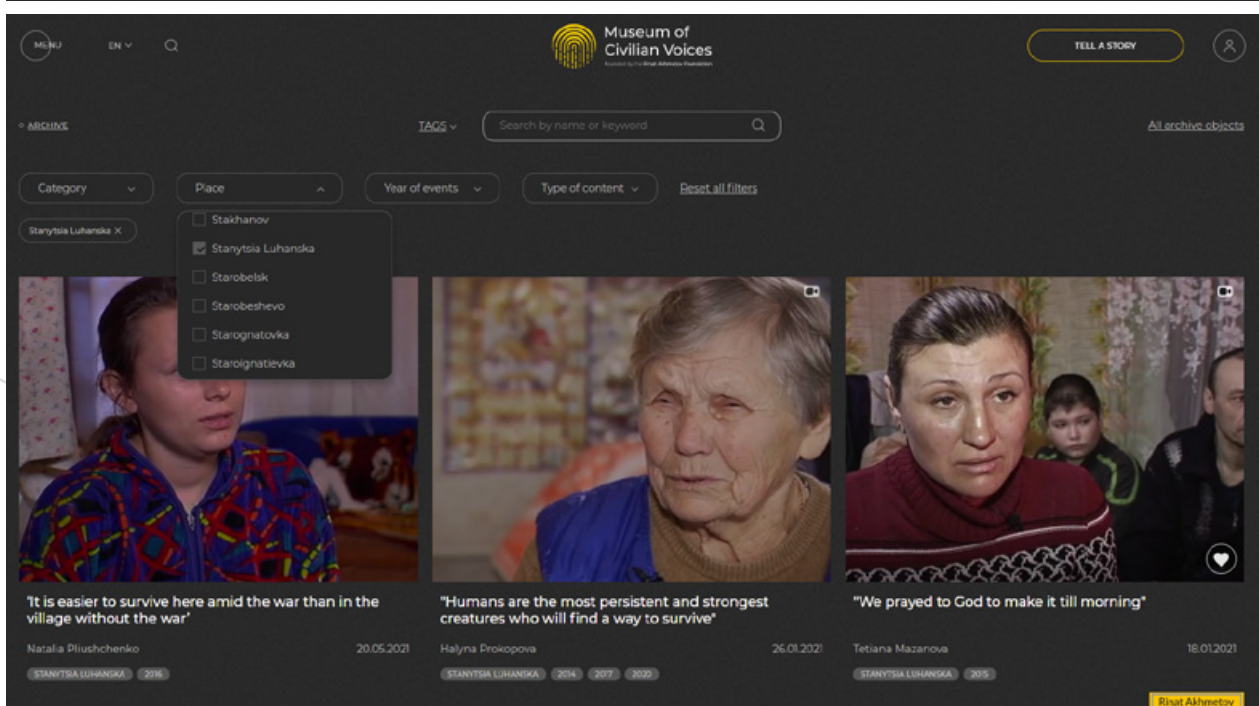
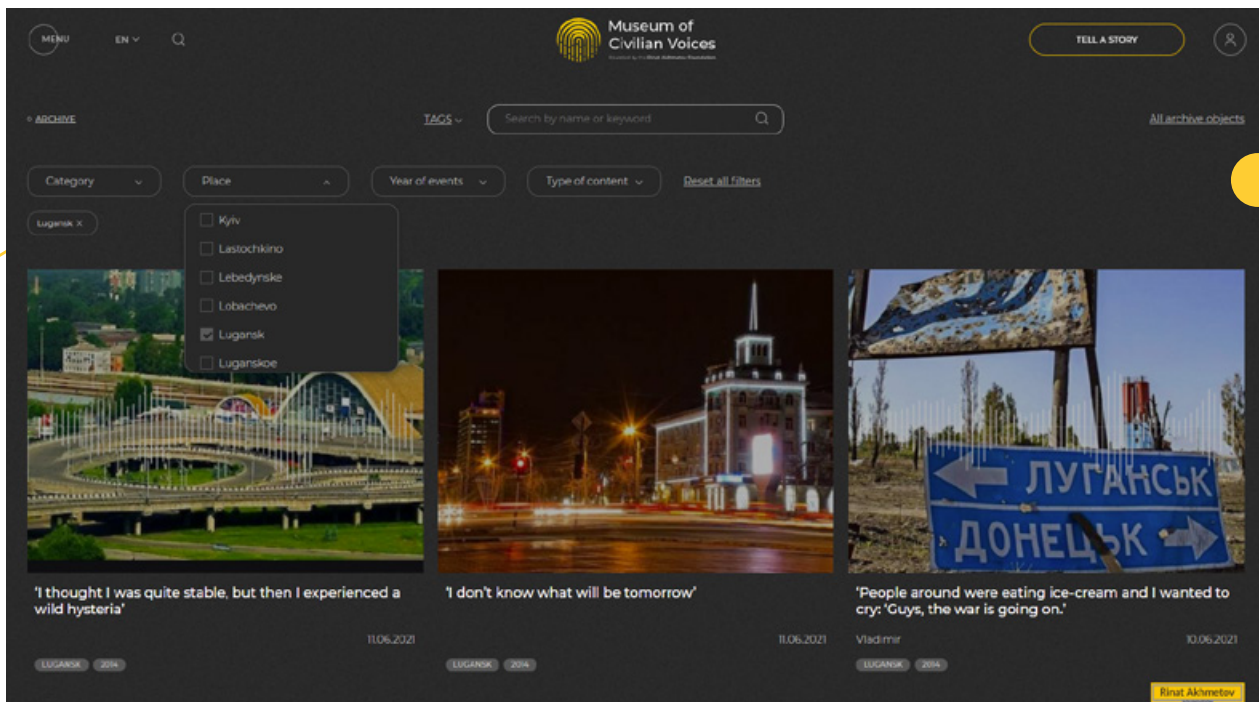


After choosing the category filter, the number of archive items in that category will be displayed to the right of the search bar. This counter helps to better understand the volume of available materials that could potentially be used.



## 3.2 By a populated locality (village, settlement, town etc.)

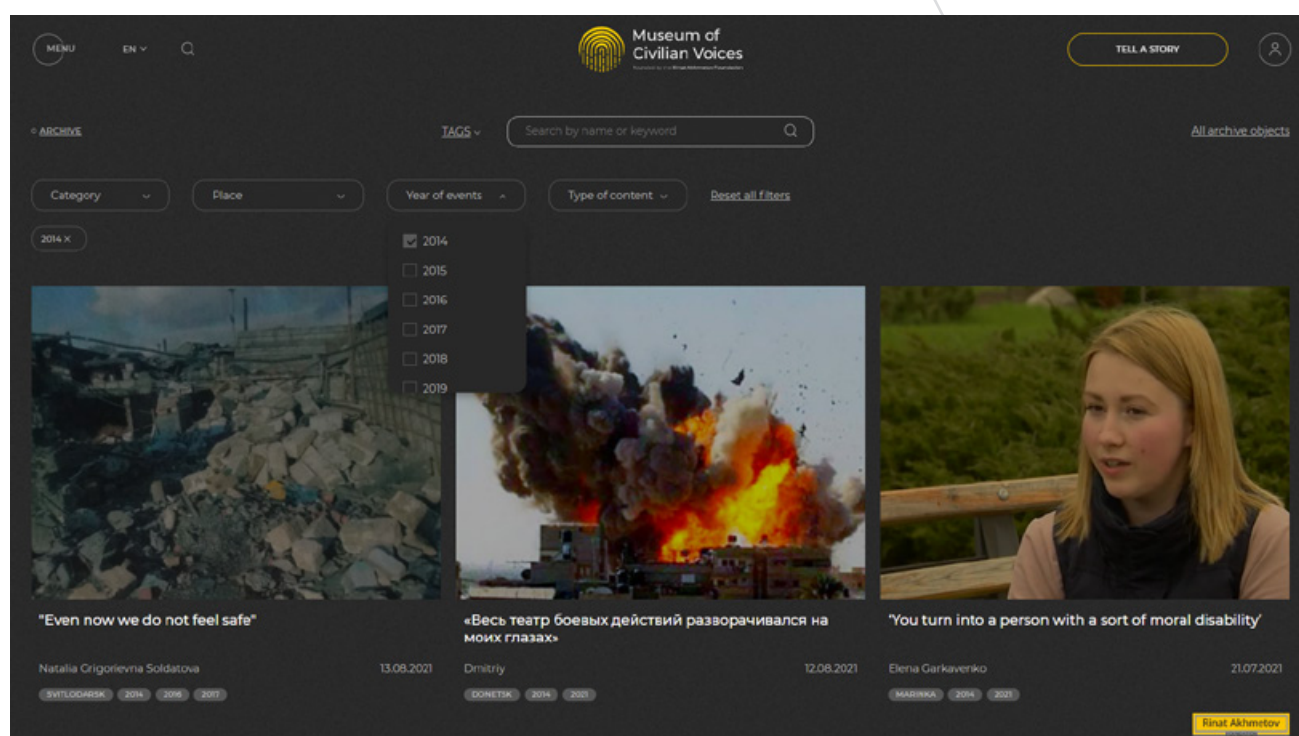
An important search tool for research, awareness-raising and learning purposes is a geographical search by settlement/locality. Using the filter, you can select those settlements (villages, settlements, towns etc.) you currently need. The possibility of multiple choice of settlements creates additional convenience for researches in applying the filter and for specific search. You can also use other available filters together with the locality/settlement filter. To return to the archive homepage, click *Reset all filters button*.





### 3.3 By year of events described in a story

The armed conflict in Donbass has been continuing since 2014, and during this time, many civilians have become witnesses and involuntary participants in hostilities. To make it easier for archive users to find information about some events of the armed conflict that happened at different times, a filter by year of events has been created. You can choose one or more years (starting from 2014) from the drop-down list and retrieve testimonies/stories only for this period. You can also apply other available filters and tags for a more detailed search. The counter to the right of the search bar displays the number of archive items available upon your search query.

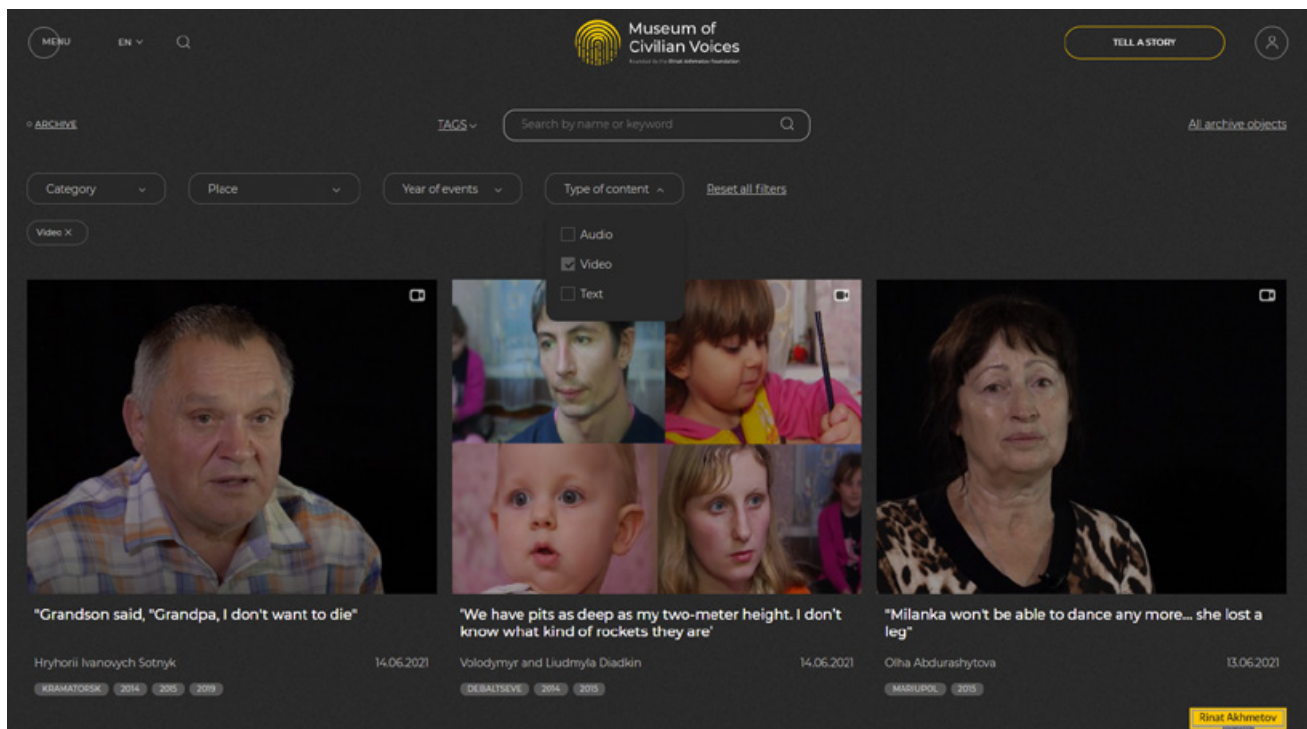






### 3.4 By type of content

The search engine for out-of-category archive items (civilians' stories, essays, children's drawings, etc.) also offers a possibility to refine a search query by type of content. When searching for information by a keyword or when making general search, you need to select one or more types of content: audio, video, or text. When performing a search, you can combine this filter with others.

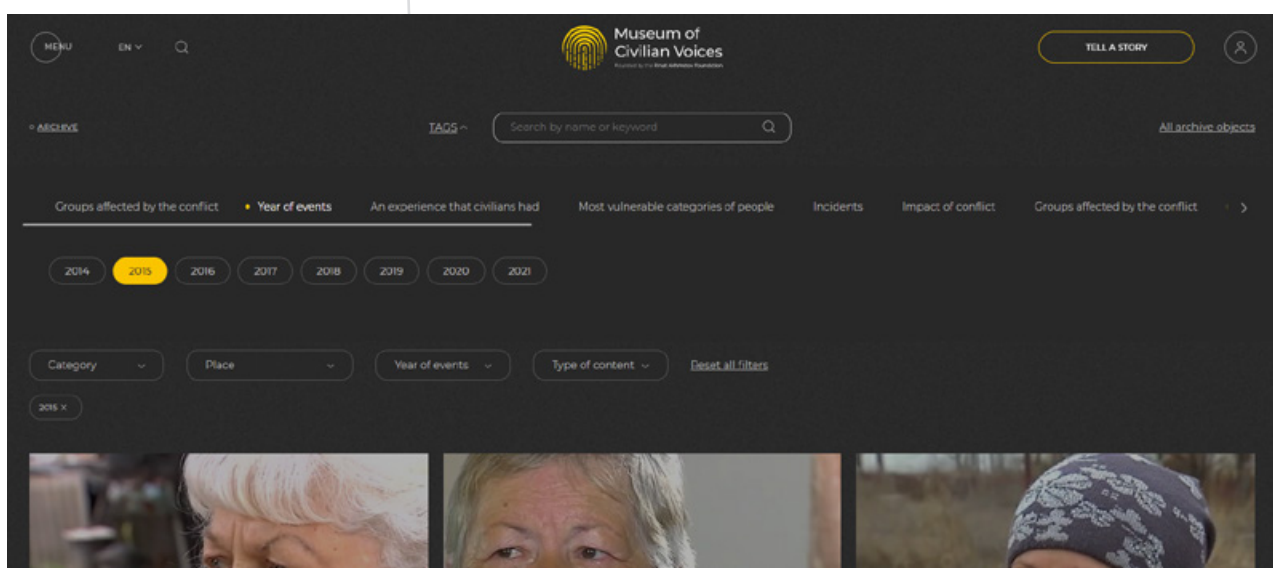




## 3.5 By tags

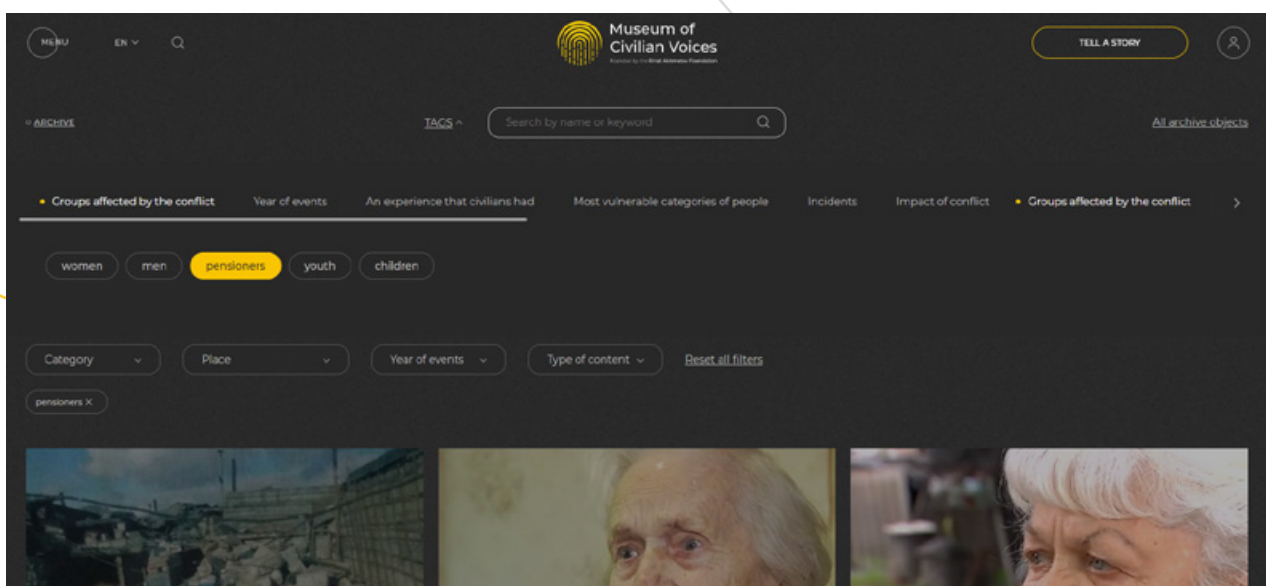
The tool for the most detailed search query in the archive of the online Museum of Civilian Voices is a search by tags. Before publication in the archive, each of its items is carefully processed by the Museum's experts. After that, a set of tags (keywords) is produced, which most fully describe the content and context of each story or artifact in the Museum.

To use the search by tag option, you need to expand the TAGS panel to the left of the main search bar. This will bring up a drop-down list of tags divided into groups that can be scrolled horizontally.



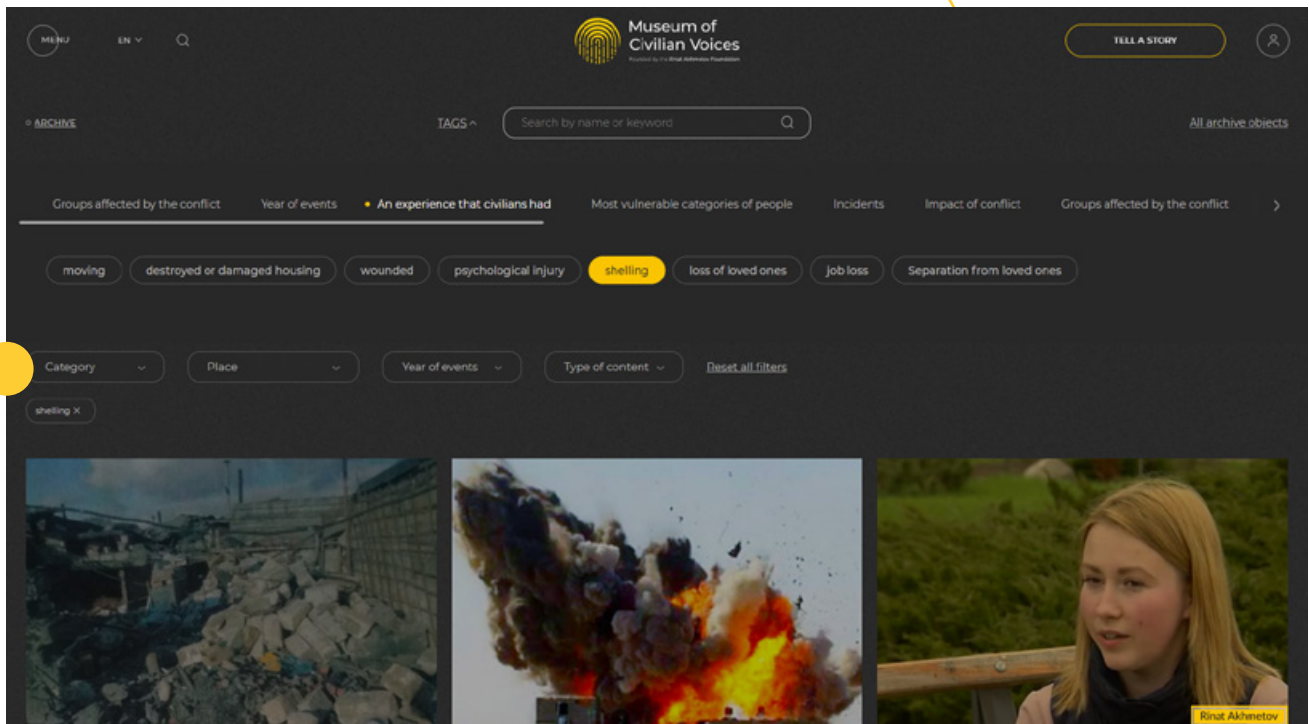
At the time of producing this Guide, there are six groups of tags in the archive:

1. Groups affected by the conflict
2. Year of events
3. An experience that civilians had
4. Most vulnerable categories of people
5. Incidents
6. Impact of conflict.

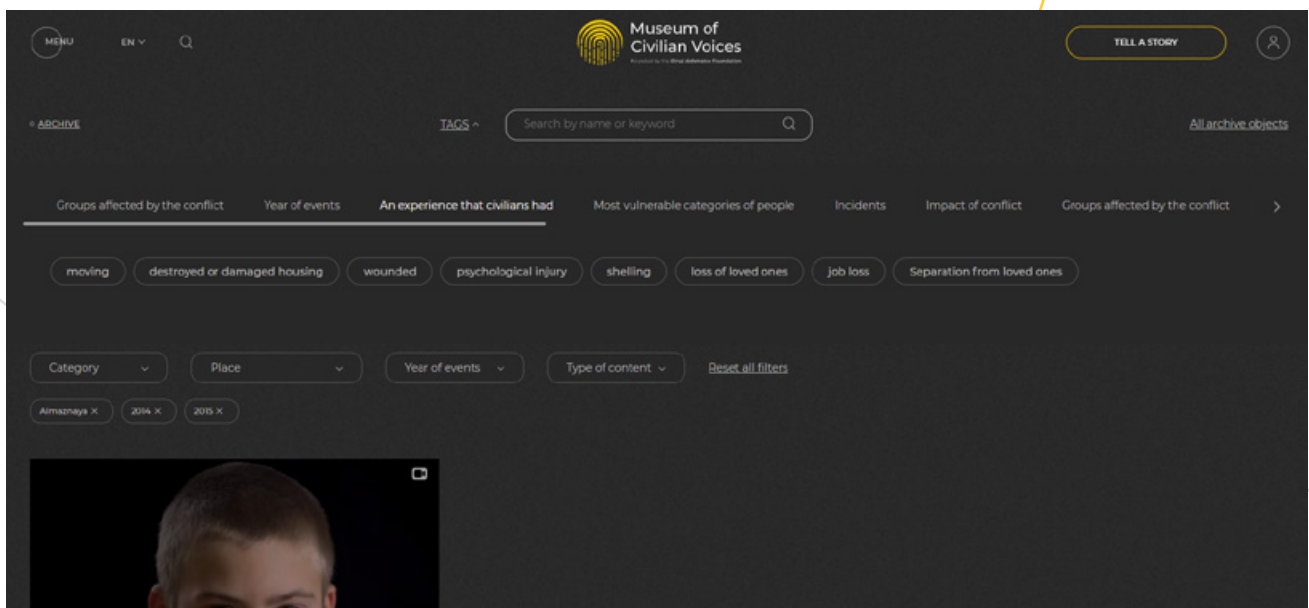




It is also possible to combine different tags from different categories. To know exactly which categories the necessary tag is selected from, the search system highlights each category from which the tag was selected with a yellow dot to the left of the category's name, and the selected tags are also highlighted in yellow.



In addition, the selected tags are displayed on a certain line above the stories with an icon in the form of a cross, which, if clicked, removes this tag. There is also a Reset all filters button.







## 4. Working with archive items

When working directly with the source of information, you will see that each item of the Museum's archive has its own separate page with detailed information.

When working with the archive items, first, you need to note that at the bottom of each item's page in the preview format, there are several mandatory elements: title, image, names of characters, date of publication on the Museum's portal, and a set of tags. Hovering the cursor over an archive item, you can also see a white heart-shaped icon in the lower right corner. When you click it, you add this item to the list of selected materials in your online account of a researcher on the portal.



In the preview mode, each archive item of the Museum indicates the type of its content. If the main content type of an item is an audio recording, a sound wave symbol will be displayed in the preview mode.



'I learned to live without money'

Victor

10.06.2021

DONETSK

2014

An archive item that is based on a video material has a video camera icon in the upper right corner.



'We have pits as deep as my two-meter height. I don't know what kind of rockets they are'

Volodymyr and Liudmyla Diadkin

14.06.2021

DEBALTSEVE

2014

2015



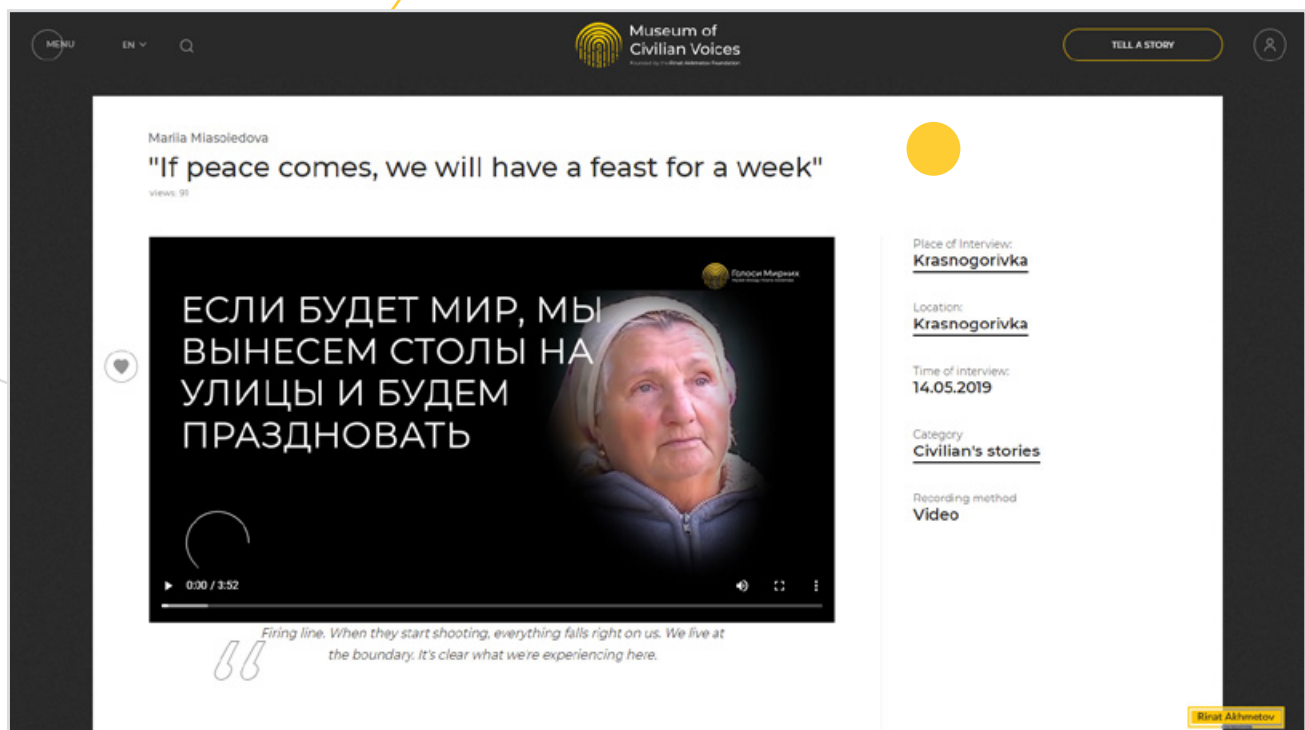
Limited access archive items, which can be accessed through the personal account of a researcher, are marked by a lock icon.

Clicking on the title, a user is redirected to a separate page of the item.

Every page with a text, video recording, or audio recorded testimony has several compulsory elements:

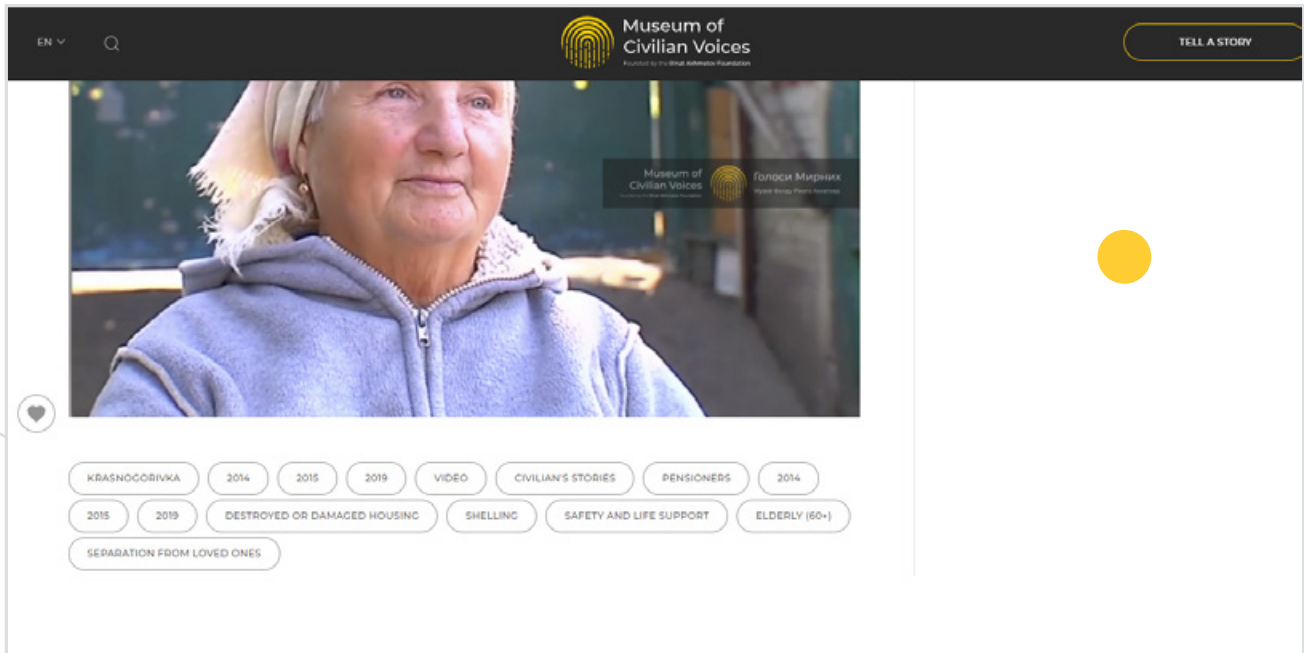
- place of interview
- location of the described events
- time of interview
- category (to which the item belongs)
- recording method.

It is helpful that the elements *Place of interview*, *Location* (of the described events) and *Category* (to which this archive item belongs) have a filter function. That is any underlined information on the information panel of an item has filter properties. After you click on any of these elements, you will be redirected to the page with the materials selected according to this filter.

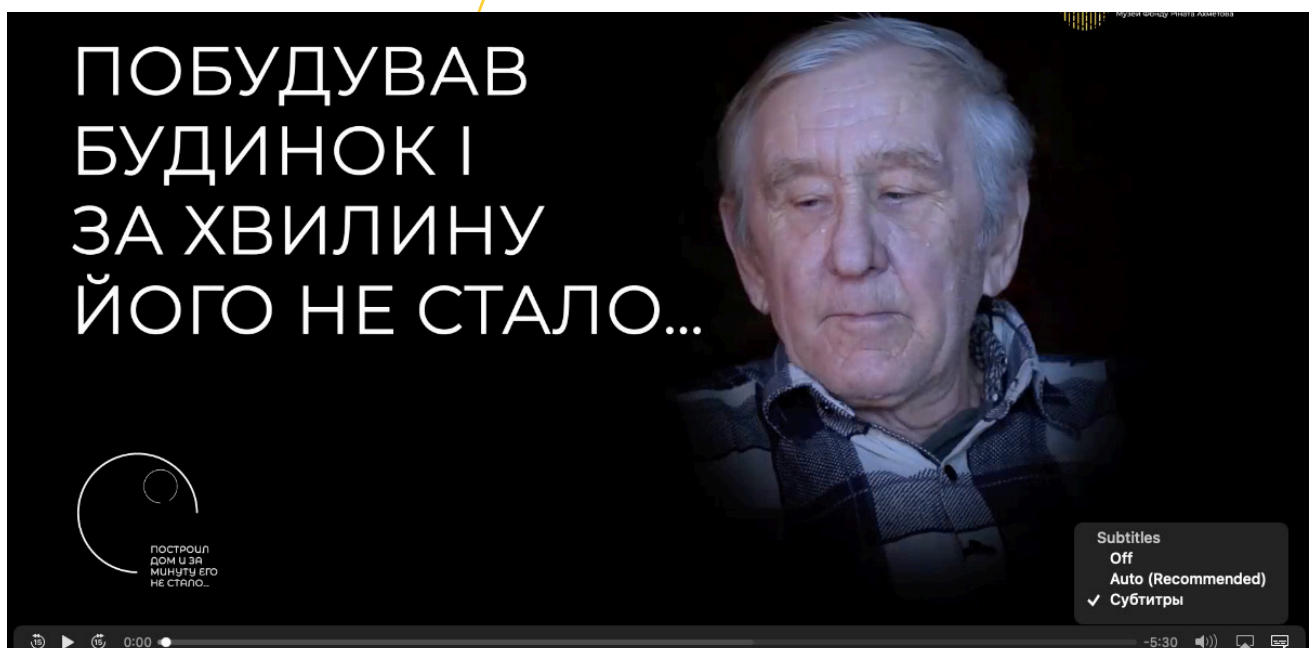




At the bottom of the page of each archive item, you will always find the tags this testimony/story was marked with. The tags provided under each archive item can also be used as filters to redirect you to the page with the archive items according to the selected tag. In addition, during the entire stay on a page, a heart-shaped icon will be displayed on the left. If you click on that icon, you can add the necessary material to the list of selected items in your online account of a researcher on the portal.



Every video-recorded story is always provided with transcription and subtitles, which can be turned off by clicking the corresponding icon in the lower right corner of the video player.







In their turn, audio stories have a full transcript in Ukrainian, English, and Russian languages.

Location:  
**Donetsk**

Time of interview:  
**13.04.2021**

Category:  
**Civilian's stories**

Recording method:  
**Audio**

**"For me, the war means..."**

It is a mind-turning experience, it has completely changed my perspective about everything. I can't even describe it.

**When did the war in Donbass begin for you?**

I remember that first day when a fighter aircraft flew over our office. I was then looking out of the window and

Essays and children's drawings have the same filing/structuring system with the possibility to use descriptive elements as filters. Essays stored in the archive of the online Museum of Civilian Voices are fully transcribed and are available in different languages. Children's drawings have detailed information about their format, how they were made and what with. Both drawings and essays are necessarily provided with tags and the possibility to save an archive item to the list of selected items in your researcher's account.

EN

Q

Museum of  
Civilian Voices  
by Rinat Akhmetov Foundation

TELL A STORY

Daria Donskaya

**"It's the first war in my life"**

views: 70

Place of Interview:  
**Svyatogorsk**


Location:  
**Sartana**

Category:  
**Essay**



EN

Q




Museum of  
Civilian Voices  
Founded by the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation

TELL A STORY

Yuliia Kovalchuk

"Peace. Without War! We Do Not Want War"

views: 37



Place of Interview:  
**Luganskoe**


Location:  
**Luganskoe**

Time of interview:  
**23.05.2017**

Category  
**Children's drawings**

EN

Q



Museum of  
Civilian Voices  
Founded by the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation

TELL A STORY

It happened in the summer of 2014. I was still a child, and for me it was a horror.

My parents and I went to the sea, but then we could not return home, because the war broke out in our city.

My family and I had to find a place to live. We had experienced a lot and lived with my godmother. She lives in Mariupol.

We stayed with her for a month and found a small house in the village of Sartana, in the suburb of Mariupol. There were, of course, not very good conditions, but as they say, in cramped quarters, but not offended.

So, we moved - and then there was a heavy shelling. My mother saved a child who was in trouble. Thank God we survived this and now everything is well.

#SARTANA

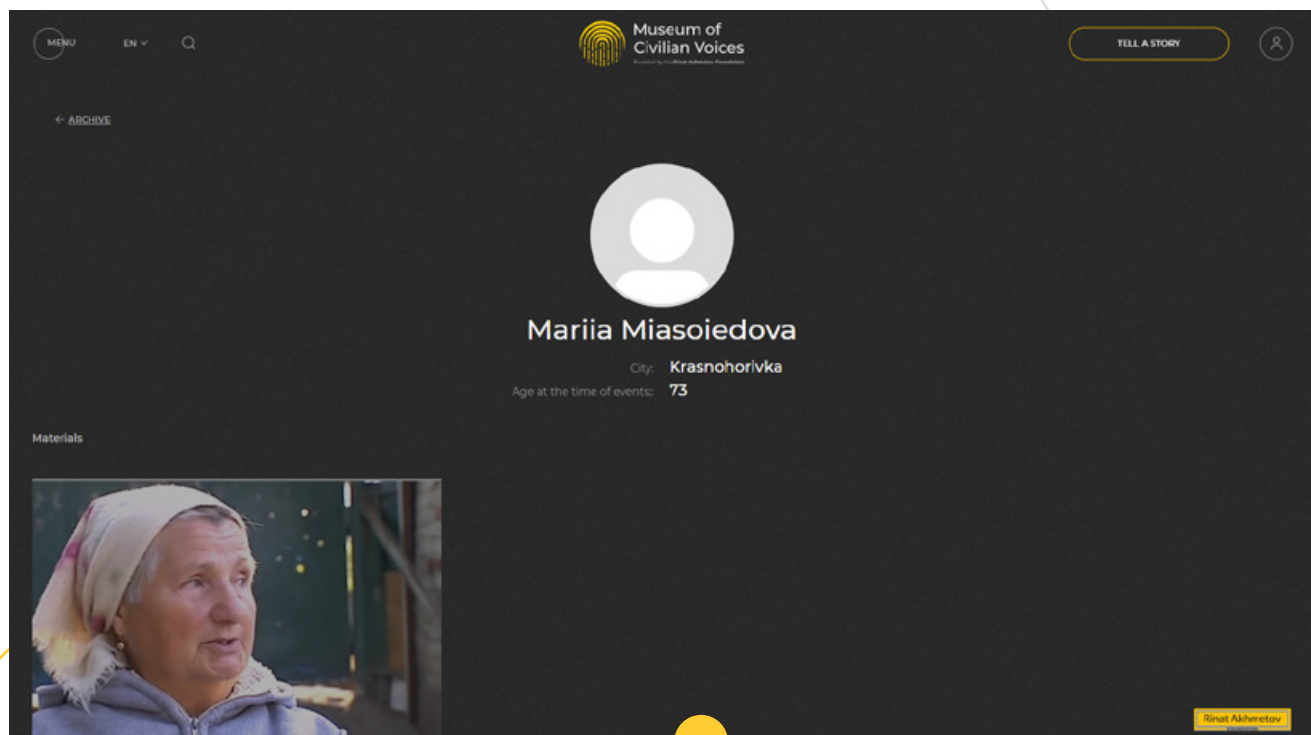
#2014





## 4.1 Working with profiles of the Museum's heroes/characters

From time to time, the Foundation's experts return to the Museum's heroes/characters who have given their testimonies or provided their artifacts, and ask them to share their experiences of life after the war. Sometimes one person or one family donates not only their testimonies but also some of their belongings or personal items to the Museum. That is why the portal also hosts profiles of authors of stories, which can be accessed by clicking on the name of a story's author. Such a profile contains information about all the archive items provided by this character, his/her name, surname, age and settlement/locality at the time when the Museum experts last contacted the author.



## 4.2 Special features of working with the Museum's artifacts

Artifacts displayed in the archive of the online Museum of Civilian Voices are described similarly to other archive items. The structure of the information includes a detailed description of the place where the hero/character provided an item to the Museum, this item's place of origin, the date when it was donated, and the category.



EN Q Museum of Civilian Voices TELL A STORY

Nataliia Anatoliivna Arykh

## Artifact "A library that turned into a shield from shelling"

views: 107

Place of Interview:  
**Chermalyk**

Location:  
**Chermalyk**

Time of interview:  
**28.08.2017**

Category  
**Artifacts**

Below the photographs of an artifact, there is a detailed description and, if available, the context of the story that accompanies it. In addition, below you can find a set of tags for this particular archive item.

EN Q Museum of Civilian Voices TELL A STORY

Natalya Arykh, a resident of Chermalyk village in Volnovakha district of Donetsk region, inherited a huge library from her father who was a book lover. It was so large that part of it had to be placed in the attic. Who could then think that the desire to keep the memory of her father would save Natalya and her family from death?

When hostilities began in 2014, Chermalyk village was almost at the frontline. It was shelled day and night. One of the shells fell straight on the roof of the house belonging to the Arykh family. The father's library became a shield that protected the family from danger. Natalya Arykh donated three books to the Museum of Civilian Voices of the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation in order to keep this astonishing story of salvation for future generations.

Three books. Extensional, size: 20.5 cm \* 13.5 cm, height 2 cm

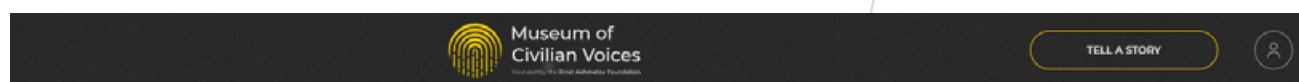
#CHERMALYK #2017 #WOMEN #DESTROYED OR DAMAGED HOUSING #SHELLING  
#SAFETY AND LIFE SUPPORT #HOUSING

The work with artifacts is not limited to visualization only. You can also contact the team of the Museum of Civilian Voices if you want to study the artifacts or want to use them in your learning/awareness-raising projects (for example, a visit of school students to get acquainted with the Museum's artifact) by writing an e-mail request to: [stories@fdu.org.ua](mailto:stories@fdu.org.ua).

## 5. How to use a personal account of a researcher

The researcher's personal account offers a possibility of personalized use of the archive in the online Museum of Civilian Voices. As mentioned earlier, the Museum's portal allows you to store archive items in your own library, which will be displayed in your personal researcher's account. The two basic functions of the personal account are the *Library* with selected items and *Requests* for limited access materials.

To create a personal account of a researcher, click on the *Man* icon in the upper right corner.



A drop-down menu will then appear offering you to sign in to your existing account or create a new one, sign in or sign up with your Facebook, Google account, or email account.

### Log in

CONTINUE WITH FACEBOOK

CONTINUE WITH GOOGLE

or

E-mail

Password

LOG IN

[Forgot password?](#) [Create an account?](#)

### Create an account?

CONTINUE WITH FACEBOOK

CONTINUE WITH GOOGLE

or

E-mail

Your name Your surname

Password

Date of the birth

Month Day Year

January

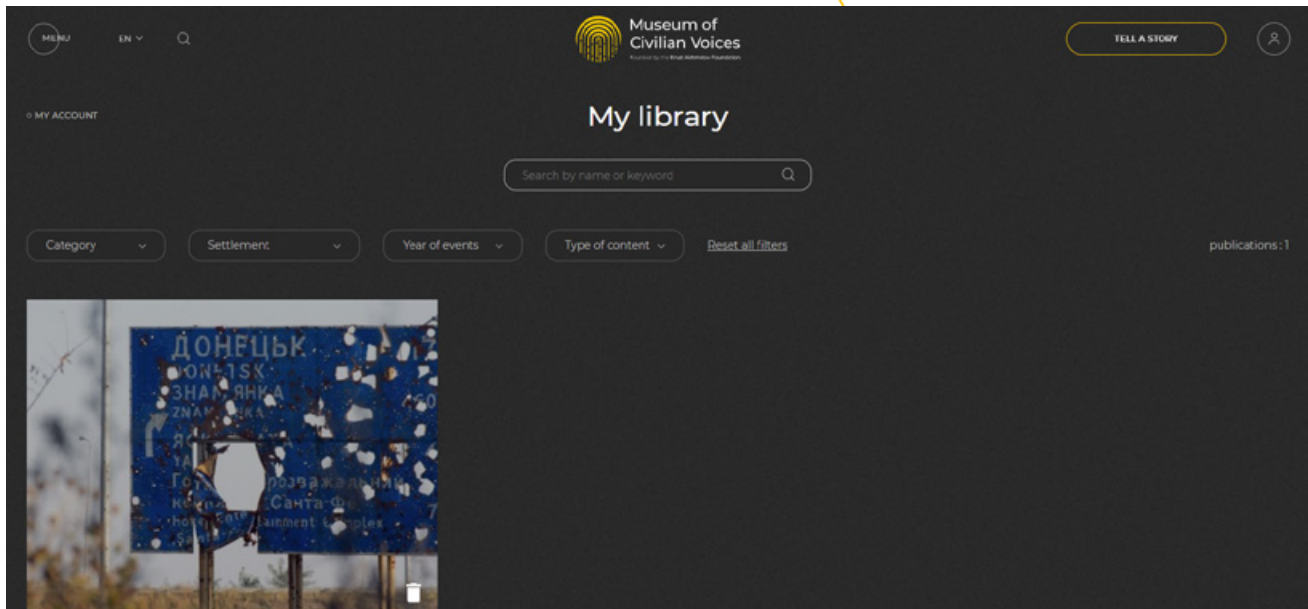
SIGN UP

Already registered? [Log in](#)

When registering by means of an e-mail account, a confirmation of registration will be sent to its address. After that, you will be able to log in to your personal account of the researcher and freely use its capabilities to store the required items.

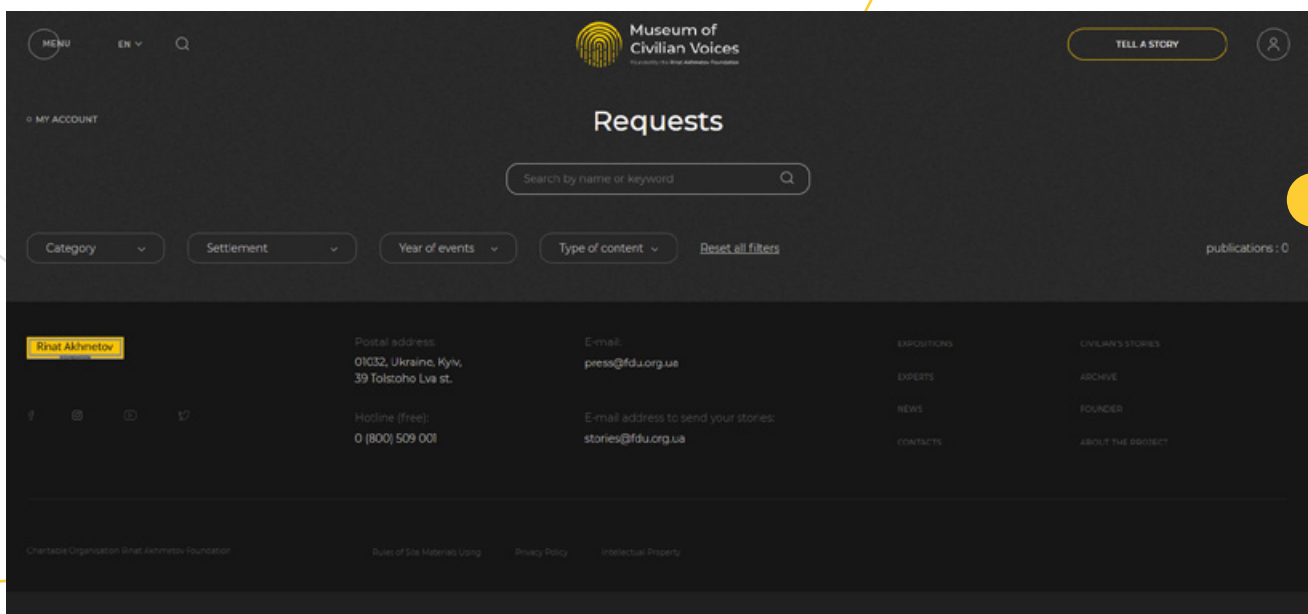


*My library* section contains all the archive items that you saved previously. Inside the library, you can filter selected items using the same filters as in the general search system.



In addition, in the researcher's personal account, there is a possibility to request access to the limited access materials that are marked by a *Lock* icon. Every access request is considered by experts of the Museum of Civilian Voices who decide whether an item will appear as accessible in your researcher's personal account.

In the personal online account, you can always see the status of a limited access material (*Under consideration, Open, Limited*).





## 6. Methodological limitations of the Museum's online archive

It is difficult to overestimate the uniqueness and usefulness of the online Museum of Civilian Voices for research on the impact of the armed conflict on the lives of civilians in Donbass and its consequences. Such large-scale open collections of testimonies of the war cannot be found anywhere else in Ukraine. And although some materials reminiscent of the Museum's collection can be found in other museums and archives based on some large memorial facilities and research universities, there is no similar collection dedicated to the war in Donbass.

The online archive of the Museum of Civilian Voices does not offer a representative portrait of a part of Ukrainian society living in Donbass or relocated from it. The methodology of the interviews and the process of their transcription and translation have their own peculiarities.

Some of the testimonies/stories were recorded before the concept of the Museum was developed. The stories were collected within the humanitarian missions of the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation in Donbass without using a structured questionnaire. After the official presentation, stories are collected using a standardized questionnaire with the help of groups of Museum's operators, and now everyone can send their stories to the Museum's collection using a special form on the website <https://civilvoicesmuseum.org/my-story>. All testimonies/stories from civilians are a reflection of their subjective experiences of living through the armed conflict. Some of those civilians naturally have a set of prejudices and distortions (cascade of available information (availability cascade), the effect of joining the majority, in-group favoritism, the just world delusion, out-group homogeneity, the below-average effect etc.). Historians usually respond to such limitations by conducting further research. In the case of the archive of the online Museum of Civilian Voices, some conclusions need to be analysed and compared with other available information sources on certain events described by their witnesses.

The Museum of Civilian Voices is a space of unique information sources that focus on the lives of civilians during the armed conflict. The Museum is always open to collaboration on art projects, research of the Museum's materials and other scientific research on how the conflict affected the lives of civilians. If you have any ideas for new projects or proposals for cooperation, please contact the Museum's team by e-mail: [stories@fdu.org.ua](mailto:stories@fdu.org.ua).