Evidence Log Template for Claim Verification

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A claim does not become verified because it looks organized.

It becomes stronger when every part of the claim is connected to a source, every source is checked in context, and every uncertainty is written down before the conclusion is written.

That is the purpose of an evidence log.

In OSINT, the evidence log is not paperwork. It is the part of the workflow that prevents a researcher from mixing facts, indicators, assumptions, and conclusions in the same paragraph. It forces the investigation to stay visible.

If a claim cannot be logged clearly, it is probably not ready to be summarized clearly.

What an Evidence Log Is

An evidence log is a structured record of what you checked, what each source supports, what it does not support, and what still remains open.

It should answer five questions:

1. What exact part of the claim am I checking?

2. Which source did I use?

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3. What does that source actually show?

4. What is the limitation of that source?

5. What confidence level is justified?

The log does not need to be complex. For most claim verification tasks, a simple table is enough.

The important point is separation.

A source may support one part of a claim but not another. A timestamp may support publication time but not recording time. A username match may support a lead but not an identity. A visual match may support location but not date. A local article may support that an event happened but not that a specific video shows that event.

The evidence log keeps those boundaries visible.

Start With One Claim

Before creating the log, write the claim as one sentence.

Example:

```
This video shows police using tear gas during a protest in Madrid on 10 June 2026.
```

That sentence contains several smaller claims:

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- the content is a video;
- the actor is police;
- the action is the use of tear gas;
- the event is a protest;
- the location is Madrid;
- the date is 10 June 2026;
- the video is connected to that specific event.

Do not verify the sentence as one block.

Break it into components first. Then log evidence for each component separately.

The Basic Evidence Log Template

Use this structure:

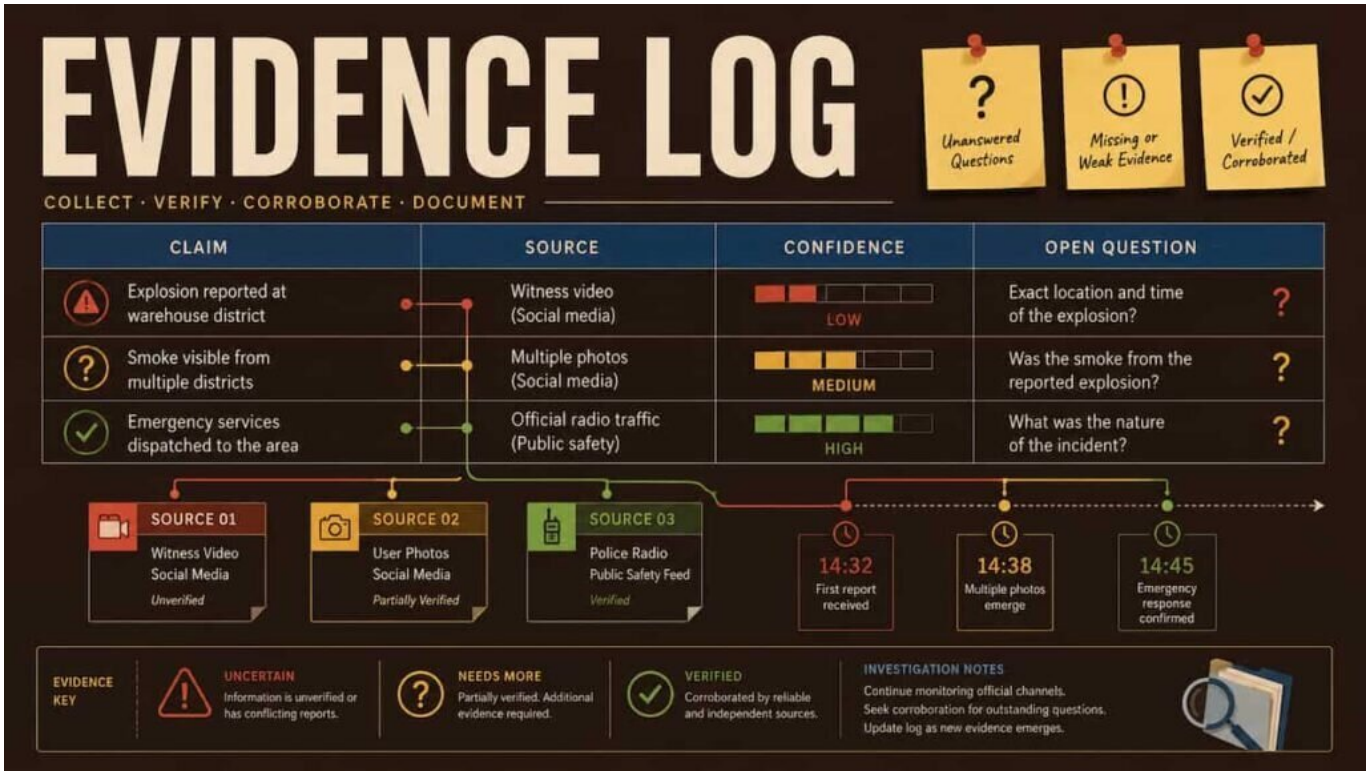
Claim Component	Source Checked	What the Source Shows	Limitation	Confidence	Next Step
Location	Street-level imagery	Building shape and signage appear consistent with the claimed street	Visual match only; no date confirmation	Medium	Find local source from the same date
Date	Original upload timestamp	Video was uploaded on 10 June 2026	Upload time is not recording time	Low/Medium	Check earlier uploads and event reports
Event	Local media	A protest was	Does not prove	Medium	Compare

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Claim Component	Source Checked	What the Source Shows	Limitation	Confidence	Next Step
	report	reported in Madrid on that date	this video shows that protest		location and timing
Actor	Uniform and vehicle markings	Clothing and vehicle markings appear consistent with police presence	Visual indicators are not enough alone	Low/Medium	Look for official or independent reporting
Media origin	Platform search	Same video appears on multiple accounts	Reposts may not identify original source	Low	Search for earliest visible upload

This table is not a final conclusion. It is the working surface of the investigation.

Each row should be specific enough that another person can understand what was checked and why the confidence level was assigned.



Column 1: Claim Component

The first column should contain only one component at a time.

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Weak entry:

```
The video is real.
```

Better entries:

```
The video was recorded in Madrid.
The video was uploaded on 10 June 2026.
The video shows a protest.
The protest involved police.
The visible incident involved tear gas.
```

The goal is not to make the work longer. The goal is to avoid accidental confirmation.

If the location is verified, that does not verify the date. If the date is plausible, that does not verify the actor. If the event happened, that does not prove this media belongs to it.

Separate rows protect the conclusion from moving too fast.

Column 2: Source Checked

This column should identify the source type and, in your private notes, the exact URL, archive link, screenshot filename, document title, or database record.

Examples:

- original platform post;

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- archived page;
- local media article;
- official statement;
- map or street-level imagery;
- satellite imagery;
- weather record;
- company registry;
- domain record;
- public court document;
- public blockchain explorer;
- public abuse report;
- secondary article.

The evidence log should make the source hierarchy clear.

An official document, an archived page, a local report, a repost, and a screenshot are not equivalent. They may all be useful, but they do not support the same level of confidence.

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Column 3: What the Source Shows

This is the most important column.

Write only what the source shows, not what you want it to mean.

Weak entry:

```
Confirms the claim.
```

Better entry:

```
Confirms that a protest was reported in Madrid on 10 June 2026.
```

Better still:

```
Reports a protest in central Madrid on 10 June 2026, but does not include the same vi
deo or name the exact street visible in the footage.
```

This kind of wording protects the investigation from overclaiming.

Most sources do not confirm a full claim. They support a fragment.

Column 4: Limitation

Every source has a limitation.

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Writing it down is not a sign of weakness. It is how OSINT stays honest.

Common limitations include:

- upload date is not recording date;
- caption is not independent evidence;
- screenshot lacks source context;
- repost may not identify the original uploader;
- metadata may be stripped, edited, or unavailable;
- reverse image search may miss earlier versions;
- machine translation may distort names or terms;
- map imagery may be outdated;
- official statements may be partial;
- similar usernames do not prove same identity;
- wallet activity does not prove personal attribution;
- absence of results does not prove absence of evidence.

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If you cannot name the limitation, you may be trusting the source too much.

Column 5: Confidence

Confidence should describe the strength of the evidence for that component, not the confidence of the whole claim.

Use simple levels:

Confidence Level	Meaning
High	Multiple relevant sources support the component, and the main alternatives have been checked
Medium	Evidence is consistent and useful, but at least one important gap remains
Low	The source creates a lead or weak indicator, but it is not enough for a finding
Unknown	The component has not been checked or the available evidence is unclear

Avoid using "verified" too early.

For example:

```
Location: High
Date: Low/Medium
Actor: Medium
Original source: Unknown
```

That is a valid result.

A claim can be partially verified. A careful conclusion should say so.

Column 6: Next Step

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The last column keeps the investigation moving.

It should contain one concrete action:

- find earliest visible upload;
- compare street-level imagery;
- check weather for the claimed date;
- search local-language reports;
- archive the current page;
- identify original document;
- verify company registration number;
- compare usernames across platforms;
- check whether two sources are independent;
- ask whether the source supports the exact claim or only the context.

The next step should not be "research more."

It should say what to check next.

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A More Detailed Template for Sensitive Claims

For more complex investigations, use a wider log:

Component	Verification Question	Source Type	Source / Link	Finding	Supports	Does Not Support	Confidence	Open Question
Location	Does the video match the claimed place?	Map / street-level imagery	[URL or local note]	Facade, sign and road layout appear consistent	Possible location	Date, actor, event	Medium	Need independent local source
Time	Was the media recorded on the claimed date?	Timestamp / archive / weather	[URL or local note]	Uploaded on same date; weather appears plausible	Publication window	Recording time	Low/Medium	Need earlier upload search
Source	Who first posted it?	Platform search / archive	[URL or local note]	Earliest visible post found from account X	Current earliest known source	Original capture	Low	Search other platforms
Event	Did the event happen?	Local media / official statement	[URL or local note]	Event reported in same city on same date	General event context	This specific video	Medium	Match event location
Conclusion	What can be said now?	Evidence log	Internal summary	Location and event are consistent; recording date remains open	Limited finding	Full verification	Medium	Do not publish as fully verified

This version is useful when the claim involves identity, security incidents, conflict footage, platform behavior, financial traces, or legal risk.

How AI Can Help Without Becoming the Source

AI can help create and review an evidence log.

It should not fill the log with facts unless you provide the sources.

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Useful prompt:

```
Create an evidence log template for this claim.
Break the claim into separate components.
For each component, suggest source types, likely limitations, and possible false posi
tives.
Do not decide whether the claim is true.

Claim:
[paste claim]
```

After you collect sources, use a second prompt:

```
Review this evidence log.
Identify weak assumptions, missing source types, overclaimed findings, and components
 with insufficient evidence.
Do not add facts that are not present in the log.

Evidence log:
[paste log]
```

This keeps AI in the right role.

It helps structure the investigation, challenge weak reasoning, and improve clarity. It does not replace source checking.

Common Mistakes in Evidence Logs

The most common mistakes are small but serious.

Treating a Source as a Conclusion

A source is not a conclusion. It is a piece of support for a specific component.

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Do not write:

```
Source confirms the whole story.
```

Write:

```
Source confirms that the event was reported, but does not verify the media origin.
```

Forgetting the Date Checked

Online sources change.

Pages are edited. Posts are deleted. Search results shift. AI answers change. Platform labels appear and disappear.

Always record when you checked the source. If the claim matters, archive the page or keep a contextual screenshot with URL and timestamp.

Confusing Consistency With Verification

"Consistent with" is useful language.

It is also limited language.

A video can be consistent with a location and still have the wrong date. A username can be consistent with a lead and still belong to another person. A technical indicator can be consistent with one explanation and still have alternatives.

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Use cautious wording until the evidence supports stronger wording.

Logging Only Supporting Evidence

An evidence log should include negative checks and failed searches.

If you searched for earlier uploads and found none, record that. If you checked local media and found related reports but not the exact incident, record that. If a source type was unavailable, record that too.

Failed checks help explain the limits of the conclusion.

From Evidence Log to Conclusion

The conclusion should follow the log.

Not the other way around.

Before writing a final paragraph, review the confidence levels:

- Which components are supported?
- Which components are only consistent?
- Which components remain unknown?
- Which source types are missing?
- Which alternative explanations remain plausible?

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Then write the conclusion with limits.

Example:

```
The available evidence supports the location claim with medium confidence and confirm
s that a related protest occurred in Madrid on the stated date. However, the current
sources do not establish the original uploader or prove that the footage was recorded
 during that specific event. The claim should be treated as partially supported, not
fully verified.
```

That kind of conclusion may feel less dramatic.

It is also more useful.

Copyable Evidence Log Template

Use this as a starting point:

Claim Component	Verification Question	Source Checked	What the Source Shows	Limitation	Confidence	Next Step
Entity	Who or what is being identified?				Unknown	
Action	What allegedly happened?				Unknown	
Location	Where did it allegedly happen?				Unknown	
Time	When did it allegedly happen?				Unknown	
Source Origin	Where did the claim or media first appear?				Unknown	
Context	What surrounding event or				Unknown	

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Claim Component	Verification Question	Source Checked	What the Source Shows	Limitation	Confidence	Next Step
	situation is claimed?					
Alternative Explanation	What else could explain the evidence?				Unknown	
Conclusion	What can be said with limits?	Evidence log review			Unknown	

The template is simple by design.

A strong investigation does not need a complicated table. It needs a visible chain between claim, source, finding, limitation, and conclusion.

If that chain is missing, the answer may sound confident, but the verification is not complete.

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