



Ukraine: NGOs urge to protect civilians from bombing and shelling in populated areas

Since the beginning of the year at least 860 civilians have been killed and 2 580 wounded in Ukraine in at least over [950 incidents involving the use of explosive weapons with wide area effect in populated areas](#).

The month of May has registered the highest record of civilian casualties since June 2023 and a significant increase in civilian deaths compared to April 2024. This increase is mainly due to the ground offensive launched by the Russian Federation in the Kharkiv region. More than half of the civilians killed or wounded were in the Kharkiv region, while the vast majority of civilian casualties were in territory controlled by the Ukrainian government.

While the ground offensive launched by the Russian Federation has severe consequences for civilians, they have overall been particularly exposed to the use of explosive weapons since the escalation of the war in February 2022.

The year 2024 continues to see significant damage inflicted on civilians in the conduct of the war.

We choose to highlight 22 significant incidents, based on the reports of the [UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine](#), along with 5 last significant incidents that occurred in June 2024, involving the use of explosive weapons with wide area effect in populated areas that have resulted in the death or injury of civilians.

January 2024

- On 2, 8 and 23 January, missile and loitering munitions attacks struck several cities and towns, including Kyiv and Kharkiv, killing at least 26 civilians and injuring 190.
- On 6 January, a missile strike in Pokrovsk and Rivne, Donetsk region, killed members of two families and injured another 10 civilians. Two boys are still considered missing.
- On 21 January, shelling hit two markets and a residential area in the city of Donetsk, killing 24 civilians (15 women and 9 men) and injuring at least 11 civilians.

February 2024

- On 3 February, an attack struck a bakery and a café in Lysychansk, Luhansk region, which reportedly resulted in 29 people killed and 9 injured. At least 13 individuals among those killed and injured were civilians.
- On 9 February, seven civilians were killed, including two men, two women and three young boys, when loitering munitions struck a fuel station in a residential area of Kharkiv, starting a fire that burned at least 15 residential homes to the ground.



- On 14 February, a central hospital in Selydove, Donetsk region, was struck, resulting in two women and a 9-year-old boy killed and at least two women, one man and one boy injured.
- On 20 February, a UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) attack killed an entire family in their home in Nova Sloboda, Sumy region.

March 2024

- On 2 March, 11 civilians were killed and 8 civilians injured in Odesa from a loitering munitions attack. Three families lost at least two family members in this attack. This incident was the deadliest for children in more than nine months.
- On 12 March, 6 civilians were killed and at least 25 injured when missiles struck Kryvyi Rih, Dnipropetrovsk region.
- On 15 March, two consecutive missile strikes within 15 minutes reportedly killed 21 and injured 66 individuals in Odesa. The HRMMU has verified that at least 20 among those killed and injured were civilians, some of whom were emergency and medical workers who came to help the injured after the first attack.

April 2024

- On 5 April, 4 civilians were killed and 27 civilians injured in Zaporizhzhia as a result of consecutive missile strikes. Journalists were among the injured.
- On 19 April, missiles and loitering munitions struck railway infrastructure and its vicinity in Dnipropetrovsk region, including in Dnipro, Kryvyi Rih and Synelnykove, killing 8 civilians and injuring 22. One strike killed four members of one family, including two children, leaving an injured 6-year-old boy an orphan.
- On 29 April, what appears to have been a cluster munition struck a seafront promenade in Odesa city in the evening hours, killing 7 civilians and injuring dozens, including a 4-year-old girl.

May 2024

- On May 19, two consecutive strikes on a lakeside recreation center in Cherkaska Lozova, Kharkiv region, killed 6 civilians and wounded at least 13.
- On May 23, missiles hit a printing works in the city of Kharkiv, killing 7 employees and wounding at least 21 civilians.
- On May 25, an attack hit a large construction hypermarket in the city of Kharkiv, killing 19 civilians and wounding 54, including many employees.

- The same day, a missile hit Kharkiv city center, wounding 25 civilians.
- Around midnight on May 30 and 31, several missiles hit a residential area of Kharkiv, including a multi-storey building, killing 9 civilians and wounding at least 15.

June 2024

- On June 12, [missiles hit a residential area of a densely populated city, Kryviy Rih City](#) in the Dnipro Region, which killed 11 civilians and injured 28 according [to local authorities](#).
- On June 17, several missiles hit Poltava oblast wounding 12 civilians according to [the head of the oblast military administration](#).
- [On June 19, several missiles hit Kharkiv](#) region killing 1 civilian and wounding 6. A woman has been killed after a missile hit a residential area on Vilkhivka, according to the prosecutor's office of the Kharkiv administrative region.
- On June 22, a [missile hit a residential building in Kharkiv](#), killing 3 civilians and wounding 53.
- On June 28, a missile [rocked a high-rise building](#) in the city of Dnipro, that killed at least 3 and injured 18 civilians.

The bombing and shelling of Ukrainian towns and villages is directly affecting the civilian population, who face a high risk of death, war-related injuries and psychological trauma, resulting in increased needs for rehabilitation, psychological and psychosocial support and other services. The new offensive by the armed forces of the Russian Federation is leading to an upsurge in bombardments in populated areas, with devastating consequences and reverberating effects for civilians in terms of access to essential services, health, food and energy supplies.

We strongly denounce the harm caused to civilians by bombing and shelling of towns and cities taking place in the current war in Ukraine. We condemn all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. This includes violation of the principles of distinction, proportionality, and feasible precautions, the use of indiscriminate attacks, the use of internationally prohibited weapons, such as landmines and cluster munitions, the attacks on civilians and civilian objects, including health facilities and other critical civilian infrastructure, and attacks against medical and humanitarian workers.

We also call upon governments to urgently endorse and implement the Political Declaration on strengthening the protection of civilians from the humanitarian consequences arising from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.