



## **Ukraine: Humanity & Inclusion's statement on the intensifying use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas and the rising civilian toll (October–December 2025)**

As the **war in Ukraine has entered its fourth winter** since the full-scale invasion in February 2022, civilians continue to bear the brunt of indiscriminate attacks. The last quarter of 2025 was characterized by the sustained and widespread use of explosive weapons in populated areas, with repeated strikes on residential zones, energy infrastructure, schools, hospitals, and humanitarian facilities. Throughout 2025, the war further escalated and spread to new territories, which led to increased humanitarian needs and rendered entire areas uninhabitable. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), at the beginning of 2026, **10.8 million people** were in need of humanitarian assistance, of whom 3.6 million were identified as the most vulnerable and prioritized for support.<sup>1</sup>

The OHCHR report documents a horrifying civilian toll, with at least 54 339 civilians killed or injured since the full-scale invasion. Between October and December 2025, **at least 531 civilians were killed and over 2769 injured** across Ukraine including territories controlled by the Russian Federation.<sup>2</sup>

During the last quarter of 2025, Russia launched **ten large-scale, coordinated waves of missile and drone attacks targeting Ukraine's energy grid and densely populated urban areas**, causing widespread civilian harm. These strikes resulted in prolonged emergency power outages and scheduled **electricity cuts lasting up to 18 hours per day, leaving millions without heating and water**. Russian strikes have destroyed more than half of Ukraine's natural gas production capacity ahead of winter.<sup>3</sup> In December, due to massive Russian strikes, more than 1 million households were left without electricity or heat only in Kyiv, Odessa and Kherson regions.<sup>4</sup><sup>5</sup> More than **340 educational facilities in Ukraine have been damaged or destroyed in 2025** as the full-scale war rages, disrupting children's learning and depriving them of their right to education.<sup>6</sup><sup>7</sup> The impact of hostilities on essential services also extended to healthcare. Overall, Ukraine accounted for **nearly 43 percent of all attacks on health care globally** in 2025, with 561 attacks recorded throughout the year according to the World Health

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<sup>1</sup> [Ukraine | Ukraine | Humanitarian Action](#)

<sup>2</sup> [All reports | UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Russian strikes reportedly destroy over half of Ukraine's gas output before winter](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Ukraine: Attacks disrupt heating as temperatures plunge | UN News](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Full restoration of damaged substations in Odesa region could take up to two years – DTEK](#)

<sup>6</sup> [More than 340 educational facilities damaged or destroyed in Ukraine this year - Ukraine | ReliefWeb](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Ukraine: Record attacks on energy infrastructure close some schools and disrupt remote learning for children - Ukraine | ReliefWeb](#)

Organization). These attacks resulted in 19 deaths and 201 injuries, further undermining access to essential health services, particularly in front-line areas where many remaining residents are older people with chronic health conditions.<sup>8</sup> The indiscriminate nature of these assaults, which devastated residential buildings, hospitals, and essential infrastructure, compounded humanitarian needs and disproportionately affected older people, people with disabilities, and families forced to flee uninhabitable areas<sup>9</sup>

These attacks on civilian infrastructure and their disastrous humanitarian impact highlight the devastation caused by certain types of weapons when used in populated areas, in particular the following weapons :

- **Loitering Munitions (Shahed-136/131).**

Thousands of Shahed drones were launched in waves, often at night, deliberately targeting Ukraine's energy grid and residential areas. The largest attack occurred on **23 December 2025**, when Russia launched over **650 drones and dozens of missiles in a single day**, causing blackouts across multiple regions and killing at least 3 civilians

- **Short-Range Drones (FPV, Lancet-type).**

Documented strikes continued against evacuation buses, humanitarian warehouses, and frontline towns in **Kherson<sup>10</sup>, Sumy, and Zaporizhzhia**. OHCHR reported civilian deaths and injuries, including humanitarian workers and people with disabilities, as drones pursued victims in real time and struck ambulances.

- **Aerial Bombs (Glide and unguided variants).**

Strikes in **Kharkiv and Donetsk regions** caused mass casualties in residential areas, destroying hospitals and clinics, and leaving communities without access to basic healthcare. These attacks compounded humanitarian needs, particularly for older people and people with disabilities.

- **Cruise and Ballistic Missiles (X-101, Iskander-M).**

Over **400 missiles** were launched during the quarter, often in combination with drone waves to overwhelm air defenses. Major strikes hit hospitals, schools, and shelters across central and western Ukraine.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.unocha.org/news/todays-top-news-ukraine-12>

<sup>9</sup> Ukraine civilians face escalating attacks and mounting hardship, UN warns | UN News

<sup>10</sup> War in Ukraine: The daily lives of Kherson residents who live underground, threatened by Russian drones

*The following chronology highlights the most devastating attacks in Ukraine impacting civilians from October to December, underscoring urgent protection needs and accountability gaps<sup>11</sup>*

## October 2025

Civilian casualties in October 2025 remained high, with at least **148 killed and 929 injured**. Most death and injuries (65 per cent) occurred near the frontline, with particularly high casualties reported in Kherson, Kharkiv and Donetsk regions.

- On **1 October**, Russian strikes on Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, Donetsk, and Kharkiv oblasts killed 5 civilians, injured 24, and damaged dozens of homes, high-rise buildings, and critical infrastructure including hospitals, schools, shops, and transport.
- On **8 October**, Russian strikes across Ukraine killed 5 civilians, injured 37, and damaged a thermal power plant along with residential buildings and critical infrastructure, leaving communities facing blackouts and disrupted essential services.
- On **9 October**, Russian strikes on port of Odessa and energy infrastructure killed 5 civilians, injured 19, and damaged critical facilities, disrupting essential services and worsening humanitarian conditions.
- On **October 11**, Russian attacks across Ukraine killed 7 civilians and injured 25 others, including children, while damaging energy, gas, and civilian infrastructure and leaving around 10,000 homes without electricity.
- On **13 October**, Russian aerial bomb strikes hit a hospital complex in Kharkiv, killing at least 4 civilians and injuring dozens more across Ukraine, while damaging medical facilities and other civilian infrastructure.
- On **22 October** in a mass overnight assault, Russia launched ballistic missiles against multiple Ukrainian cities, killing at least 6 civilians, injuring at least 44, and damaging residential buildings and critical infrastructure. Later, loitering munitions caused significant damage to a private **kindergarten in Kharkiv** City. One man was killed. Around 50 children were inside the kindergarten when the attack occurred. Though frightened by the explosions, they remained unharmed due to the swift actions of the staff.
- On **24 October**, during morning commuting hours, Russian armed forces carried out a massive Multiple Launched Rocket Systems (MLRS) strike in Kherson, damaging residential areas and killing 2 women and injuring 31 people.
- On **26 October**, Russian drone attack on Kyiv overnight killed at least 3 civilians and injured 32, including 7 children, with strikes hitting residential buildings.
- On **29 October**, during morning hours, Kherson Children's Clinical Hospital came under artillery fire by Russian armed forces. At the time, the hospital housed child patients,

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<sup>11</sup> The list below is not exhaustive and does not capture all incidents that occurred between October and December 2025. The attacks mentioned were chosen due to their significant impact on civilian lives and infrastructure.

their parents, and medical staff. 9 civilians were injured, including 4 children and 3 medical workers.

## November 2025

Civilian casualties in November 2025 remained high, with at least **226 killed and 952 injured**. Long-range strikes with missiles and loitering munitions launched by Russian armed forces in November caused 51 per cent of all civilian casualties, usually affecting urban centers far from the frontline. An attack with long-range weapons that struck the western city of Ternopil on 19 November killed more civilians (at least 38) than any other single verified incident in more than two years.

- On November 1, Russian missile and drone attacks across Ukraine killed at least 15 civilians, injured 20 more, caused widespread damage to homes, hospitals, energy and transport infrastructure, and left entire regions such as Donetsk without power.
- On November 8, Russia launched a massive wave of drones and missiles against Ukraine, killing at least 11 civilians, injuring 44 others, and causing widespread damage to residential buildings, energy facilities, and civilian infrastructure across multiple regions.
- On November 14, Russia launched a massive drone and missile attack on Kyiv and other regions, killing at least eight civilians, injuring over 40 including children and a pregnant woman, damaging residential buildings and heating networks, and causing widespread fires and power outages.
- On November 17, Russian forces launched two missile strikes on Balakliia in Kharkiv region, killing three men, injuring 15 civilians including four children, and damaging multiple apartment buildings and a kindergarten.
- On 19 November, Russian missile and loitering munition attack killed at least 38 civilians (18 women, 12 men, 4 girls and 4 boys) and injured 99 others (52 women, 30 men, 11 girls and 6 boys) in Ternopil City. Ten families lost at least two members each. Two residential buildings were particularly affected: one was directly hit by a powerful missile, causing major structural collapse; less than a kilometer away, a loitering munition struck a boiler house and detonated in the courtyard, with the blast and resulting fire spreading to an adjacent residential building.<sup>12</sup>
- On November 21, Russian strike on Zaporizhzhia killed 5 civilians, injured 8 more, damaged at least five apartment buildings and commercial pavilions.
- On November 25, a large-scale Russian missile and drone strike on Kyiv killed 7 civilians, injured 20 others including children, and caused severe damage to high-rise residential buildings, warehouses, and infrastructure across multiple districts

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<sup>12</sup> [OVERNIGHT DEADLY ATTACKS KILLED CIVILIANS, INJURED CHILDREN AND DISRUPTED VITAL SERVICES IN UKRAINE | United Nations in Ukraine](#)

## December 2025

Civilian casualties in December 2025 remained high, with at least **157 killed and 888 injured**. The number of casualties in December was similar to the casualty numbers in recent months, but a 66 per cent increase compared with December 2024.

- On December 1, Russian ballistic missile strike on Dnipro killed 4 civilians and injured 45 others, while subsequent drone and aerial bomb attack damaged infrastructure and wounded additional residents in surrounding communities of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast
- On December 5, Russian drone and artillery attacks on Dnipropetrovsk Oblast killed a 12-year-old boy, injured three civilians including his parents.
- On December 14, Russian forces struck a supermarket in a residential neighborhood of Zaporizhzhia, injuring at least 14 civilians including a six-year-old child, as well as two first responders and a police officer, and causing severe damage to the building
- On December 16, Russia launched a massive drone and missile campaign across Ukraine, killing at least 2 civilians and injuring 16 others, with strikes hitting 15 locations, damaging homes, power lines, vehicles, and energy infrastructure in Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Sumy, Odesa, and Volyn oblasts, leaving thousands without electricity.
- On December 17, Russian air strikes on Zaporizhzhia damaged more than 130 apartments in a high-rise building and left at least 26 civilians injured.
- On December 23, Russia launched a massive missile and drone attack across Ukraine, killing at least three civilians including a four year old child, injuring several others, and causing sweeping emergency power outages in 13 regions, with energy facilities in Rivne, Ternopil, Khmelnytskyi, Lviv, Odesa, and Chernihiv hardest hit; Poland scrambled jets as strikes neared its border.
- On December 27, Russia launched a massive overnight missile and drone attack on Kyiv and Kyiv Oblast, killing 2 civilians, injuring at least 32 including children, damaging residential buildings and energy facilities, cutting heat to a third of the capital, and leaving thousands without electricity and water amid freezing temperatures.<sup>13</sup>

The actual extent of civilian harm – both casualties and infrastructure damage - is likely considerably higher as many reports of civilian harm, have not been possible to verify due to the lack of access to areas near frontline and to the occupied territories. Incidents that occurred in Russian territory have not been mentioned due to a lack of credible sources verification.

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<sup>13</sup> [Today's top news: Ukraine | OCHA](#)

The vast majority 97 percent of casualties reported between October and December 2025 occurred in territory controlled by the Government of Ukraine.<sup>14</sup> During this period, 3 212 civilians have been injured or killed in territory controlled by Ukraine and 88 in territory controlled by the Russia Federation.

## **Our Call to Action**

Humanity & Inclusion once again strongly condemns these indiscriminate attacks against civilians, medical and humanitarian workers, and civilian objects, including health facilities and other critical civilian infrastructure.

We strongly denounce the widespread use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas which cause devastating harm to civilians and relentlessly flout international humanitarian law (IHL). These attacks may likely imply violations of either the principles of distinction, proportionality, and/or feasible precautions.

We call upon governments to urgently endorse and implement the [Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas](#), and to uphold all its commitments.

We further **call on the international community to condemn and investigate violations of international humanitarian law**, and to support accountability mechanisms together with survivor-centered assistance, including mental health and inclusive rehabilitation services.

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<sup>14</sup> [Protection of civilians | UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine](#)