

## **Ukraine: Statement on the Escalating Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas and its Devastating Impact on Civilians (July - September 2025)**

As the war in Ukraine surpasses its third year since the full-scale invasion in February 2022, civilians continue to suffer the gravest consequences. The summer of 2025 has seen a dramatic escalation in the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, with record-breaking drones and missile attacks targeting residential zones, energy infrastructure, and humanitarian facilities far from the frontlines.

Between July and September 2025, Ukraine witnessed a sharp escalation in attacks on civilians, with over **708 killed** and **3131 injured** across more than 20 regions[1].

The indiscriminate nature of these attacks, including the deployment of over 700 loitering munitions in a single day, underscores the urgent need to stop these attacks, recall that civilians are protected under international humanitarian law, and the need for accountability for any violations of this fundamental and universal norm[2].

The psychological and physical toll on civilians - especially children, older people, and people with disabilities - is immeasurable. Civilians are killed and injured, with many experiencing life-changing injuries, and yet more suffering severe psychological harm and distress. Damage and destruction of vital infrastructure, including housing, hospitals, and schools, causes further harm. Unexploded ordnance poses an ongoing threat to civilians during and long after hostilities have ended, impeding the safe return of refugees and displaced persons[3].

In this statement, we once again chose to highlight the most disastrous attacks impacting civilians and the death toll hindered by the extensive use of explosive weapons with wide area effect in populated areas from both parties to the conflicts. Although the vast majority (97%) of reported civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructures and humanitarian, occurred in territory controlled by the Ukrainian government[4].

We also choose to highlight the weapons frequently used with the most destructive impact on civilians:

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

- Over **5,800 Shahed drones** launched across Ukraine during the reporting period, with peak activity on **July 9** (728 drones in one night), **July 12** (597 drones), and **September 7** (810 drones). Responsible for at least **112 civilian deaths** and **489 injuries**, primarily in Kyiv, Lviv, Dnipro, and Mykolaiv. These drones targeted hospitals, schools, and energy infrastructure, often in nighttime waves to maximize psychological disruption[5].

### Short-Range Drones (FPV and Lancet-type)

- An estimated 1,200+ short-range drone strikes, with a sharp increase in August and September, targeting evacuation convoys, aid warehouses, and IDP shelters, caused **78 civilian deaths** and **312 injuries**, including multiple incidents involving humanitarian workers and persons with disabilities. Notable attacks include the 27 July strike on an evacuation bus in Sumy and the 13 August hit on an NGO warehouse in Mykolaiv[6].
- Russian armed forces have systematically targeted civilians and civilian infrastructure using short-range drones across Kherson, Dnipropetrovsk, and Mykolaiv oblasts. These attacks - launched from positions along the left bank of the Dnipro River - have pursued victims in real time, struck ambulances and emergency services, and rendered entire localities unlivable. The UN Commission of Inquiry for Ukraine concluded that such conduct may amount to crimes against humanity, including murder and forcible transfer of population. The terror instilled by persistent drone strikes has forced thousands to flee, with survivors describing conditions where “it was not possible to go out” due to hourly drone presence[7].

### Aerial Bombs (Glide and unguided variants)

- Over **230 aerial bombs** dropped on civilian areas, with high-casualty events in Kharkiv, Dobropillia, and Bilenke, accounted for **94 civilian deaths** and **367 injuries**, often in densely populated zones. These weapons caused structural collapse and mass casualties, including the **July 28** strike on a penal colony and the **September 3** bombing of a residential block in Kharkiv[8].

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

- Approximately **540 missiles** launched during the quarter, including **X-101**, **X-555**, and **Iskander-M** types, resulted in **162 civilian deaths** and **721 injuries**, with major strikes on hospitals (e.g., Sumy, Kamianske), schools (Zaporizhzhia, Chernihiv), and shelters (Poltava, Kropyvnytskyi). These attacks often coincided with loitering munition waves to overwhelm air defenses[9].

These figures reflect a clear escalation, mainly documented from the Russian armed forces, of coercive aerial campaign resulting in humanitarian operations disruption, and intolerable physical and psychological harm caused to civilians.

***The following chronology highlights the most devastating attacks in Ukraine impacting civilians from July to September, underscoring urgent protection needs and accountability gaps[10].***

## July 2025

July 2025 recorded at least **286 civilians killed** and **1,388 injured**, the highest monthly toll since May 2022. Civilian casualties were verified in 18 of Ukraine's 24 regions, with aerial bombs, loitering munitions, and short-range drones causing the majority of deaths and injuries [11].

- **July 1 - Huliaipole, Dnipropetrovsk Region.** Two missiles struck the village of Huliaipole, killing 11 civilians (Six women and five men) and injuring five more. The attack occurred early in the morning, targeting residential homes and a local clinic. Emergency services were delayed due to ongoing shelling, and survivors described scenes of collapsed buildings and trapped residents.
- **July 4 - Kyiv City.** A large-scale attack involving missiles and loitering munitions hit central Kyiv, killing a man and a woman and injuring 31 civilians, including a child. The strike damaged a shopping center, a metro entrance, and nearby residential blocks. Witnesses reported panic as people fled underground shelters during the second wave of munitions.
- **July 9 - Multi-Region Drone Barrage.** Russian forces launched 728 drones across five regions: Chernivtsi, Lviv, Cherkasy, Volyn, and Kirovohrad. In Chernivtsi, civilian casualties were recorded for the first time since February 2022, with five killed and four injured. The drones targeted energy infrastructure and residential buildings, causing widespread blackouts.
- **July 12 - Nationwide Drone and Missile Attack.** A combined overnight assault of 597 Shahed drones and 26 missiles struck multiple cities. While casualty numbers were lower than expected due to early warnings, two civilians were killed and 41 were injured. The attack damaged schools, hospitals, and apartment blocks, with debris injuring people in underground shelters.
- **July 16 - Dobropillia, Donetsk Region.** An aerial bomb struck the town center of Dobropillia, killing three women and injuring 27 civilians. The explosion destroyed a pharmacy and a bus stop during peak hours. Medical responders noted severe trauma cases, including burns and shrapnel wounds.
- **July 27 - Ivzhanske, Sumy Region.** A short-range drone hit a passenger bus near Ivzhanske village, killing three older women and injuring 17 civilians. The bus was evacuating residents from the frontline areas. Survivors described the drone circling before impact, and many suffered limb injuries and concussions.

- [July 28 - Bilenke, Zaporizhzhia Region](#). Aerial bombs struck a penal colony in Bilenke, killing 16 prisoners and injuring 43 others. All victims were men. The facility was not near active combat zones, raising concerns about deliberate targeting. HRMMU noted this as one of the deadliest single incidents of the month.
- [July 29 - Kamianske, Dnipropetrovsk Region](#). A missile strike damaged the maternity ward of Kamianske city hospital, killing two patients, including a pregnant woman, and injuring 22 civilians. A nurse suffered internal injuries, and several newborns were evacuated to underground shelters. The attack disrupted medical services for days.
- [July 29 - Novoplatonivka, Kharkiv Region](#). A multiple rocket launch system hit civilians queuing for water distribution in Novoplatonivka village, killing seven people (Four men and three women). The area had no military presence.
- [July 31 - Kyiv City](#). A missile and loitering munition attack on Kyiv caused the highest verified civilian casualties in the capital since the full-scale invasion began: 32 killed, including five children, and 171 injured. A residential building was directly hit, collapsing several floors.

## August 2025

At least **208 civilians were killed** and **827 injured** in August 2025 - a 41% decrease from July, attributed to a temporary reduction in long-range attacks during the first half of the month<sup>[12]</sup>.

- [August 6 - Kanivske, Zaporizhzhia Region](#). At approximately 06:00, Russian forces dropped aerial glide bombs on a resort near Kanivske, killing a man and a woman and injuring 12 civilians (Seven men, three women, two boys). The strike damaged nine vacation cottages and vehicles, sparking fires across the site.
- [August 9- Inzhenerne, Kherson Region](#). A short-range drone struck a civilian passenger bus evacuating residents from frontline areas near Inzhenerne. Three men were killed and 15 civilians injured (Nine women, six men). The drone reportedly tracked the bus before impact.
- [August 10 - Zaporizhzhia City](#). Aerial bombs struck the area near the central bus station, injuring 21 civilians (10 men, eight women, three boys). The blast damaged public transport infrastructure and nearby residential buildings.
- [August 18 - Zaporizhzhia City](#). A missile attack killed three people and injured 20 civilians (13 women, four men, two boys, one girl). The strike hit a residential block and nearby shops.

- **[August 21 - Mukacheve, Zakarpattia Region.](#)** A large-scale attack involving missiles and loitering munitions resulted in the first verified casualties in Zakarpattia since February 2022. In Mukacheve, 19 civilians were injured (14 women, five men). The strike damaged a shopping center and residential buildings.
- **[August 28 - Kyiv City.](#)** A combined missile and loitering munition attack struck a residential district, killing 24 civilians (12 women, eight men, three girls, one boy) and injuring 51 (24 women, 20 men, six boys, one girl). The majority of fatalities occurred in a high-rise apartment building.
- **[August 30, 2025 - Kharkiv city.](#)** Russian air strikes hit Kharkiv, killing seven civilians, including a 14-year-old girl, and injuring 59, including nine children. Five strikes were recorded, with the deadliest hitting a 12-story residential building and playground. Several victims required limb amputations.

## September 2025

At least **214 civilians were killed and 916 were injured** in September 2025, with a sharp increase in attacks on schools, hospitals, and public gathering sites[\[13\]](#). Russia fired some 5,638 long-range drones and 185 missiles in overnight attacks throughout the month - up 36 percent compared with August[\[14\]](#).

- **[September 2](#)** - Russian attacks across Ukraine killed at least eight civilians and injured 29, including a child, with strikes reported in Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kyiv, Sumy, Zaporizhzhia, and Odesa regions.
- **[September 3 - Donetsk region.](#)** Russian artillery and FPV drone strike on Kostiantynivka, killing nine civilians and injuring seven, damaging residential buildings, a shopping center, and market pavilions.
- **[September 7](#)** - A record mass Russian drone and missile attack on cities across Ukraine overnight, involving 810 drones and 13 missiles, has killed at least five people and injured 44 others. In Kyiv, a woman and her newborn child were dead, and 20 people were injured.
- **[September 9 – Yarova, Donetsk Region.](#)** An airstrike on the village of Yarova killed 25 civilians and wounded 18 while pensions were being distributed.
- **[September 22,](#)** Air and missile strikes hit Zaporizhzhia and nearby areas, damaging residential and industrial buildings. At least three civilians were killed, and dozens were injured.

- [September 28 – Kyiv City](#). A drone and missile attack killed four civilians (including a 12-year-old girl) and injured at least 70. The strike damaged residential buildings, a medical facility, and a kindergarten.

**We, Humanity and Inclusion, operating in Ukraine, strongly condemn the continued use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas and call for immediate action to protect civilians and uphold international humanitarian law.**

We urge

**Both parties to the conflict:**

- To immediately cease the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas.
- To facilitate safe, rapid, and unhindered humanitarian access to all affected territories.

**The international community:**

- To condemn and investigate violations of international humanitarian law, including indiscriminate attacks and failure to take feasible precautions.
- To support accountability mechanisms and survivor-centered assistance, including mental health and rehabilitation services.

[\[1\]All reports | UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine](#)

[\[2\]OHCHR – Ukraine: Impact on civilians of wave of Russian attacks underscores need for immediate ceasefire](#)

[\[3\] OHCHR August 2025 Report \(PDF\)](#)

[Ukraine: Situation Report, September 2025 | OCHA](#)

[\[4\]](#) Some incidents may have also occurred in Russian territory or in a Russian-controlled area, although the lack of reliable sources makes it impossible to verify that information.

[\[5\] CSIS Firepower Strike Tracker](#)

[\[6\] CSIS - The New Salvo War](#)

[\[7\] UN Commission of Inquiry - 22 September 2025 Statement](#)

[\[8\] CSIS - The New Salvo War](#)

[\[9\] CSIS Firepower Tracker](#)

[10] The list below is not exhaustive and does not capture all incidents that occurred between July and September 2025. The attacks mentioned were chosen due to their significant impact on civilian lives and infrastructure.

[11] [HRMMU - July 2025 Protection of Civilians Report \(PDF\)](#)

[12] [Ukraine - protection of civilians in armed conflict \(August 2025\)\\_ENG.pdf](#)

[13] <https://ukraine.ohchr.org/uk/Protection-of-Civilians-in-Armed-Conflict-September-2025>

[14] [Russia Upped Drone, Missile Strikes on Ukraine in September: AFP Analysis](#)