



PRESS RELEASE

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Explosive Weapons Drive Persistent Civilian Harm Across Global Conflicts

New report warns of growing normalisation of civilian suffering and calls for urgent implementation of international commitments to protect civilians

Civilians around the world continued to bear the devastating consequences of explosive weapons use in 2025 amid a broader pattern of sustained harm, a new report by the Explosive Weapons Monitor has revealed.

The *Explosive Weapons Monitor 2025* paints a concerning picture, where civilian suffering from the use of explosive weapons has become a routine feature of warfare rather than an exception. For the third consecutive year, communities in many conflict-affected countries endured daily bombing and shelling of towns and cities, while new conflicts and emerging patterns of explosive weapons use further expanded the scope of harm.

“The devastating impact of explosive weapons on civilians is both foreseeable and preventable. Yet across numerous conflicts, their continued use has entrenched a pattern of civilian harm that is increasingly treated as routine rather than exceptional,” said Katherine Young, Research and Monitoring Manager of the Explosive Weapons Monitor. “When explosive weapons are used in populated areas, civilians suffer. What is particularly alarming is that this harm has become persistent across conflicts worldwide, risking the normalisation of civilian suffering on a massive scale.”

More than 22,600 civilians were killed by explosive weapons in 2025, despite a 21 percent decrease from 2024 driven largely by ceasefires in Palestine and Lebanon. Civilian deaths nonetheless remained alarmingly high, with more than half of all recorded civilian deaths attributed to Israeli armed forces and rising fatalities linked to other state and non-state actors across multiple conflicts.

Civilian infrastructure and essential services also came under growing threat. The report found that the use of explosive weapons in attacks affecting humanitarian aid increased by 52 percent in 2025, placing aid workers and life-saving assistance at greater risk and further limiting access to populations in need. “We have observed in multiple conflicts that communities have been

driven into dependence on humanitarian aid after explosive weapons devastated local food systems through the destruction of agricultural land, water infrastructure, and markets,” said Christina Wille, Director of Insecurity Insight. “When humanitarian workers responding to these growing needs are attacked and killed, life-saving assistance is disrupted at the very moment people need it most, deepening human suffering and leaving already vulnerable communities at even greater risk.”

The report also recorded a dramatic increase in attacks on education, where explosive weapons damaged or destroyed educational facilities, or killed students and teachers, 64 percent more frequently in 2025 compared with the previous year.

Beyond the immediate death and destruction, the report highlights the long-term humanitarian consequences of attacks on essential services.

- In **Gaza**, a surge in attacks on infrastructure essential to humanitarian relief efforts and food production in 2025 severely undermined Palestinians’ ability to locally produce or access food, while increasing dependence on humanitarian assistance.
- Since the start of the conflict in **Ukraine**, more than 3,800 schools have been impacted by explosive weapons, severely disrupting children's access to education and forcing many schools to close or operate under emergency measures.
- Attacks on water and related energy infrastructure in **Lebanon** severely disrupted access to safe water in at least 36 incidents, damaging critical supply systems and leaving many communities dependent on costly alternative sources.

The report findings come at a time of growing concerns over violations of international humanitarian law and increasing pressure on norms designed to protect civilians in armed conflict. The report warns that the normalisation of such severe civilian harm risks weakening the international commitments that seek to prevent suffering and protect civilians.

The report therefore calls for renewed efforts to bring the *2022 Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences of the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas* into effect. Doing so not only includes placing limits on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas but also taking action to reinforce and defend the Political Declaration’s norms and principles.

“States must refuse to normalise the devastating toll of explosive weapons on civilians. By signing the Political Declaration, states are sending a clear message that harm to civilians, and destruction of the infrastructure they need to survive, will not be tolerated,” said Alma Taslidzan, Disarmament and Protection of Civilians Advocacy Manager at Humanity & Inclusion. “The challenge then is to translate the Declaration’s commitments into concrete action that reduces harm.”

This international agreement to protect civilians from the devastating effects of explosive weapons in urban areas has been endorsed by 91 countries so far.

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For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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Explosive Weapons Monitor civilian harm dashboard:

[Explosive Weapons Monitor Civilian Harm Dashboard](#) displays data from the Explosive Weapons Monitor 2025 in an interactive format. See country specific analysis and incidents of civilian harm attributed to specific categories of weapons and different actors.

Notes to editors:

[The Explosive Weapons Monitor](#) *is a civil society initiative that conducts research and analysis on harms from and practices of explosive weapon use in populated areas for the International Network on Explosive Weapons. It works with partner organisations to collect and publish data on incidents of explosive weapon use around the world as reported in open sources.*

[The International Network on Explosive Weapons](#) *is an international network of nearly 50 NGOs that calls for immediate action to prevent human suffering from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Its member organisations engage in research, policy and advocacy to promote greater understanding of the issues arising from explosive weapons use in populated areas, and concrete steps that can be taken to address it.*