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PRESS RELEASE

The Explosive Weapons Monitor presents its report: More than 80% of explosive weapon casualties are civilians due to escalating armed conflicts around the world

Montreal, April 24, 2023 - The number of civilians killed or injured by bombing and shelling in urban areas globally soared by 83 percent in 2022, largely driven by the increased use of explosive weapons by Russian armed forces in Ukraine, and rising incidents in Ethiopia, Myanmar and Somalia, a new report by the Explosive Weapons Monitor (EWM) has revealed.

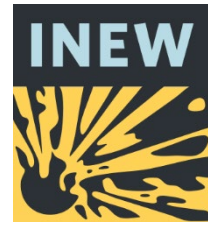
According to "Two Years of Global Harm to Civilians from the Use of Explosive Weapons (2021-2022)", explosive weapons used in cities, towns and villages caused at least 20,793 civilian deaths and injuries around the world in 2022, compared with at least 11,343 in 2021. The highest civilian toll was recorded in Ukraine where 10,351 people were killed or injured by explosive weapons in 2022, following Russia's full-scale invasion of the country, compared with 28 casualties in 2021.

"This first publication provides compelling evidence of the human suffering and humanitarian disasters caused by explosive weapons in populated areas. Civilians are paying the ultimate price when explosive weapons with a wide destructive radius are launched or dropped on populated towns and cities. We see a disturbing pattern of harm caused by the use of explosive weapons in new and ongoing conflicts that extends well beyond the area of attack," said Anne Delorme, Executive Director of Humanity & Inclusion in Canada.

Humanity & Inclusion contributed to the report along with Action on Armed Violence, Insecurity Insight, and is part of the International Network on Explosive Weapons, which calls on all states to sign the [Political Declaration](#) against the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. An international agreement, endorsed by 83 countries to date, to protect civilians from the devastating effects of explosive weapons in urban areas.

Attacks on schools and hospitals

Modern wars are increasingly fought in urban areas, putting civilians at risk of immense harm and suffering from explosive weapons that were designed for use against military targets in the open



battlefield. These include aerial bombs, rockets, artillery and missiles, which have a wide blast or destructive radius.

Many of these inaccurate and often recklessly deployed weapons have an indiscriminate effect on civilian populations. Bombarding populated areas from afar often leads to homes, schools, hospitals and other vital infrastructure being pulverised causing reverberating impacts on education, healthcare and other critical services long after conflicts end.

“Not only do explosive weapons kill and maim, they also cause massive damage to schools, health clinics, power lines, water supplies and other essential infrastructure which can last long after conflicts have ended. This inflicts further, long-term suffering on populations whose lives have been made unbearable by being under bombardment,” explained Katherine Young, Research and Monitoring Coordinator at EWM.

According to EWM, incidents in which hospitals, ambulances and health workers were bombed or shelled globally almost quadrupled to 603 in 2022, from 165 in 2021. In Ukraine, ground-launched artillery shells and missiles fired by Russian forces have damaged and destroyed hundreds of health facilities, clinics, pharmacies and emergency response centres. At least 53 hospitals were reported to have been hit multiple times by explosive weapons, while one in 10 of the country’s hospitals have been damaged.

Damage to health facilities providing specialist care can have catastrophic consequences. In Ethiopia’s western Tigray region, a rocket attack forced a facility providing maternity care to close with serious implications for the already low infant survival rates in the area.

The report also showed that incidents involving the use of explosive weapons on schools and teachers rose to 168 in 2022, from 133 in 2021. In Myanmar alone, 190 attacks involving explosions in and around school buildings were documented between February 2021 and March 2022. By June 2022, at least 7.8 million children in the country were out of school.

A monitoring tool for the international agreement against explosive weapons in populated areas

The Explosive Weapons Monitor calls on all governments to take steps to prevent the harm to civilians caused by the use of explosive weapons, and to provide necessary and lifesaving assistance to victims and survivors

The report urges governments to:

- Endorse the Political Declaration against the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas.
- assess the steps required at the national level to implement the commitments in the political declaration.
- develop and express interpretations, as appropriate, of the declaration’s commitments, in consultation with the UN, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and civil society, to



advance the declaration's humanitarian objectives and strengthen the protection of civilians during and after armed conflict.

- Continue to publicly acknowledge and call for action to address the severe direct and indirect harm to individuals and communities resulting from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

To read the full report, visit the EWM website: <https://www.explosiveweaponsmonitor.org/>.

About:

[Humanity & Inclusion](#) (HI) is an international solidarity organization that has been working for over 40 years with people with disabilities and populations affected by crises, conflicts and disasters. HI designs a different future for the most vulnerable by meeting their basic needs, improving their living conditions and promoting respect for their dignity and fundamental rights. The organization is present in nearly 60 countries where it carries out projects in inclusive education, rehabilitation, mines clearance and more. Recognized for its advocacy work, HI is one of the six founding organizations of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), co-winner of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize and winner of the 2011 Conrad N. Hilton Award. HI also co-founded the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW), a coalition that launched the Campaign against Bombing in Populated Areas, which led to the adoption of an international agreement on November 18, 2022 by 83 States, including Canada.

[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.

[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.

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