

Ukraine: Protection of civilians in armed conflict December 2024 update



A building in Kharkiv impacted by a loitering munitions attack on 20 December 2024.

9 January 2025

Summary

- At least 105 civilians were killed and 514 injured in Ukraine in December, making it the month with the lowest number of civilians killed since the full-scale invasion.
- The vast majority of civilian casualties (93 per cent)¹ and damage to educational and health facilities (86 per cent)² occurred in territory controlled by Ukraine.
- The majority of casualties (78 per cent)³ occurred near the frontline, with the highest numbers in Kherson and Donetsk regions. Almost half of the frontline casualties⁴ were caused by attacks with short-range drones.
- Twenty per cent⁵ of the casualties resulted from the use of long-range weapons (missiles and loitering munitions) launched by Russian armed forces. Civilian casualties from missiles and loitering munitions were recorded in eight regions of Ukraine.
- Russian armed forces conducted two large-scale, coordinated attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, damaging at least 13 electricity and heat generation, as well as distribution facilities in nine regions. The attacks resulted in emergency power outages in many regions and the resumption of daily scheduled power outages across the country.

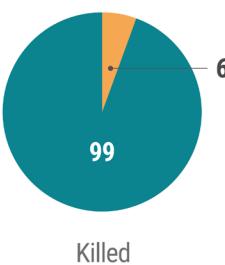
Civilian casualties December 2024⁶

Total civilian casualties **619** [**105** Killed **514** Injured]

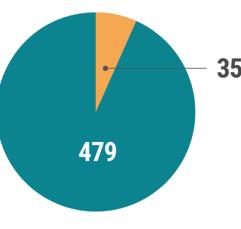
1. By territory where they occurred



controlled by the Government
occupied by the Russian Federation

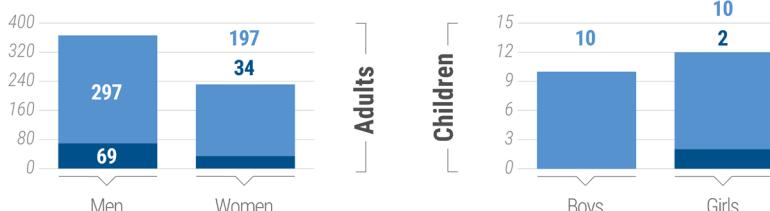


Killed



Injured

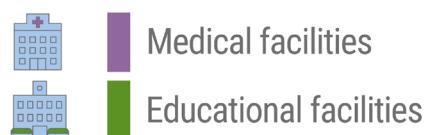
2. By age and sex



3. By type of weapon/incident



Attacks damaging educational and health facilities December 2024



Representative incidents

- On 1 December, an attack with a short-range drone in the morning hours on a minibus in Kherson City killed 3 civilians (2 women and 1 man) and injured 8 (4 women and 4 men).
- On 6 December, air bombs destroyed a car service station and significantly damaged a nearby area in Zaporizhzhia City. As a result, 10 civilians (5 men, 3 women and 2 girls) were killed and 27 injured (12 men, 12 women, 2 girls and 1 boy).
- On 6 December, a missile struck residential areas of Kryvyi Rih (Dnipropetrovsk region), killing 3 men and injuring 18 civilians (12 women, 5 men and 1 boy).
- On 10 December, a missile struck a commercial building in Zaporizhzhia City, where two medical facilities were located. In total, 11 civilians (8 women and 3 men) were killed, including four staff members of an ophthalmological center, and 20 civilians (12 women, 7 men and 1 girl) sustained injuries in the attack.
- On 13 December, a coordinated missile and loitering munitions attack damaged at least 5 energy facilities in 4 regions of Ukraine. The attack also resulted in at least three civilians (men) injured.
- On 25 December, another coordinated missile and loitering munitions attack damaged at least 10 energy infrastructure facilities, including hydroelectric and thermal power plants, in 8 regions of Ukraine. The attack also resulted in at least one civilian man killed and three civilians (2 men and 1 woman) injured, national wide power outages, and damage to housing and property.

"This was the most terrifying attack I've ever experienced. I heard a whistle and realized that a missile was coming, and that it was already too late to run and hide. There were many explosions, and from the window, I saw flames".

- A witness describing the 25 December missile attack on energy infrastructure in Dnipropetrovsk region

Civilian casualties since 24 February 2022⁸

Total civilian casualties **40,838**

12,456

Killed

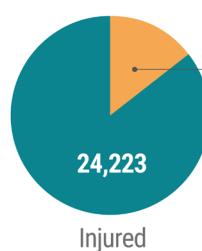
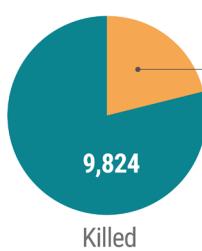
28,382

Injured

1. By territory where they occurred



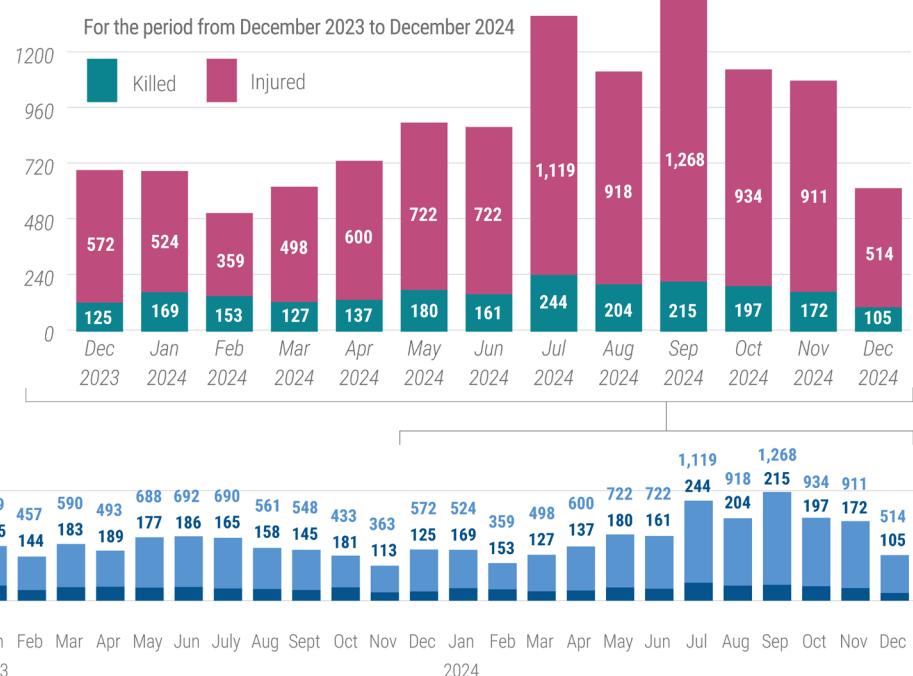
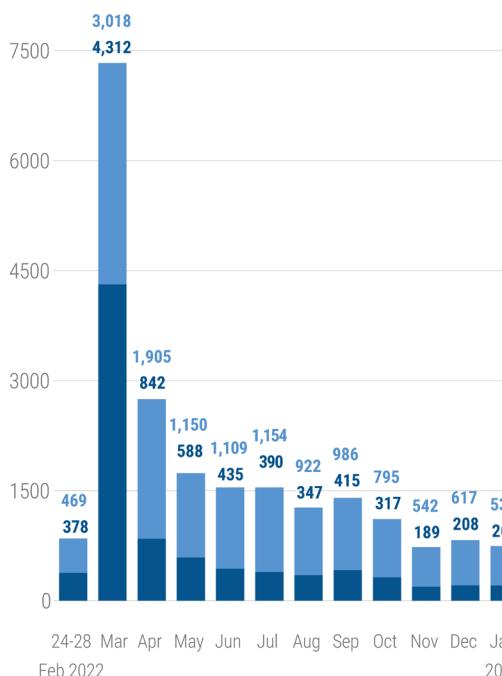
controlled by the Government
occupied by the Russian Federation



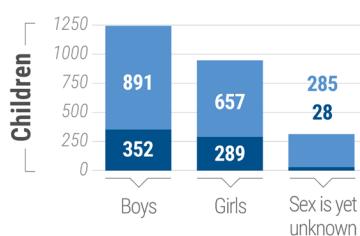
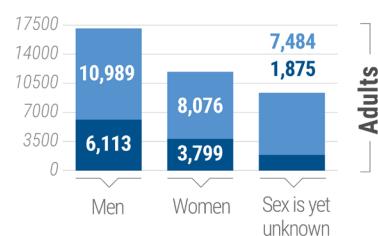
2,632

4,159

2. By month



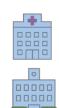
3. By age and sex



4. By type of weapon/incident



Attacks damaging educational and health facilities since 24 February 2022



Medical facilities



Educational facilities

Destruction

Damage

Damage

Civilians killed since 2014





The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine

HRMMU collects information about civilian harm from conflict-related violence from a wide range of sources, including through interviews with victims, their relatives, and witnesses; open-source information, including photo and video material; forensic records and reports; criminal investigation materials; court documents; reports by international and national non-governmental organisations; public reports by law enforcement and military actors; data from medical facilities and local authorities.

All sources and information are assessed for their relevance and credibility and cross-checked against other information. In some instances, corroboration takes time. This means that as more information becomes available, conclusions on civilian casualties may be revised and numbers may change.

Statistics presented in the current update are based on individual records of civilian harm where the “reasonable grounds to believe” standard of proof was met, namely where, based on a body of verified information, an ordinarily prudent observer would have reasonable

grounds to believe that the harm took place as described. HRMMU refers to information that meets this criterion as “verified.” When HRMMU has not yet verified a casualty or reported an individual case of death or injury, it does not necessarily mean that HRMMU has established the individual as an active member of an armed group or as someone who directly participated in hostilities. In many cases, the non-designation of an individual as a civilian reflects a lack of information, rather than a confirmation the individual’s status as a combatant.

The actual extent of civilian harm – both casualties and infrastructure damage – is likely considerably higher as many reports of civilian harm, particularly from the period immediately after the full-scale armed attack of 24 February 2022, have not been possible to verify due to the large number of reports and the lack of access to relevant areas. The number of civilian casualties is likely particularly undercounted in cities such as Mariupol (Donetsk region), Lysychansk, Popasna, and Sievierodonetsk (Luhansk region), where there was protracted intensive fighting at the start of the armed attack in 2022.

¹ 578 civilian casualties in territory controlled by Ukraine and 41 in territory occupied by the Russian Federation.

² 56 in territory controlled by Ukraine and 9 in territory occupied by the Russian Federation.

³ 82 killed and 404 injured.

⁴ 36 killed and 190 injured.

⁵ 22 killed and 100 injured.

⁶ The actual number might be higher as some reports are still pending confirmation.

⁷ Incidents in which civilians were killed or injured by shelling from artillery, tanks and multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS), by cruise and ballistic missiles (air, sea and land-based), and by air strikes, including loitering munitions and other unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

⁸ An increase in total figures in this update compared with the previous update is not only due to casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure that occurred in the reporting period as OHCHR also continues to corroborate cases that occurred before the reporting period.

⁹ Incidents in which civilians were killed or injured by fire from small arms and light weapons, including as a result of crossfire, sniper fire, escalation of force incidents (cases in which military opened fire on civilians whom they perceived as a threat), and wilful killings, as well as road accidents involving either military vehicles or civilian vehicles driven by military in the area of hostilities.