

Ukraine: attack on humanitarian convoy shows Russia's 'utter disregard for civilian lives'



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Missile struck civilian vehicles this morning as they prepared to deliver aid to a Russian-occupied location in Zaporizhzhia

According to media reports, at least 25 people were killed and 50 wounded

'It is devastating to see more lives ruined by wanton death and destruction' - Denis Krivosheev

Responding to reports that at least 25 civilians were killed today by a missile strike on a humanitarian convoy in the Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia, Denis Krivosheev, Amnesty International's Eastern Europe and Central Asia Deputy Director, said:

"The fact that a humanitarian convoy was struck in this horrendous attack is further proof of Russia's utter disregard for civilian lives in Ukraine. "People delivering humanitarian aid are not military targets, and it is devastating to see more lives ruined by wanton death and destruction. "All those responsible for Russia's repeated unlawful attacks in Ukraine must be held accountable for their actions."

The convoy was struck as it was preparing to go a Russian-occupied part of the region to deliver humanitarian aid. Intentionally directing attacks against personnel, installations, material, units or vehicles involved in a humanitarian assistance mission is a war crime.

By analysing photos and video from social media, Amnesty's

Crisis Evidence Lab confirmed that the strike hit a line of civilian vehicles as they gathered at the Avtorynok car scrapyard market on the southern outskirts of Zaporizhzhia, approximately 17 miles from the front line. A crater near the convoy measured approximately five yards wide and 2.5 yards deep, which is consistent with the warhead of a large guided missile.

According to media reports, at least 25 people were killed and 50 wounded - all civilians. Amnesty was able to confirm 23 individual deaths of women and men by analysing photos and videos to identify unique clothing and distinctive features on the victims' bodies.

Ukrainian authorities reported that 16 missiles were fired at or near Zaporizhzhia during the attack, and online records indicate that the alarm sirens of the civil defence warning system sounded at 7.11am local time, nearly simultaneously with the strike. Based on the distance inside Ukrainian controlled territory, the warning sirens, the size and type of crater, and the number of weapons simultaneously fired, Amnesty believes this was almost certainly an attack by Russian military forces.

The strike comes as Vladimir Putin today announced the annexation of four Ukrainian territories occupied by Russian forces in the Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia regions. Amnesty has called the referenda that preceded the announcement illegal and their results a sham, and warned that Russia's annexation of occupied territory would violate international law.

Since the beginning of the conflict, Amnesty has been documenting Russian war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law committed during Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine. Amnesty has repeatedly called for members of Russian forces and officials responsible for violations to be held to account, and has welcomed the ongoing International Criminal Court investigation in Ukraine. Comprehensive accountability in Ukraine will require the concerted efforts of the UN and its organs, as well as initiatives at the national level pursuant to the principle of

universal jurisdiction.

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