



Ukrainian army maimed own civilians with banned mines – NGO

Description

UKRAINE: Kiev's forces scattered thousands of antipersonnel landmines in the city of Izium, Human Rights Watch has said

The Ukrainian military injured scores of civilians when it fired thousands of illegal mines across the city of Izium last year, Human Rights Watch (HRW) has alleged. The mines, similar to those allegedly used by Ukraine against civilians in Donetsk, were found near schools and kindergartens.

The mines were fired into the city by rocket while it was occupied by Russian forces between April and September of last year, the NGO said in a [report](#) published on Tuesday. Dispersed hundreds at a time, the Soviet-era PFM mines are distinctively butterfly- or petal-shaped devices and are designed to maim rather than kill those unfortunate enough to step on them or pick them up.

The HRW team entered the city following Russia's withdrawal in mid-September and found the mines in nine locations, including a school, and kindergarten, and a hospital.

Healthcare workers said that more than 50 civilians, including at least five children, were wounded by the mines. Around half of the injuries led to amputations of the foot or lower leg. At least one death was recorded, that of an elderly man who picked up one of the devices in his yard. However, investigators could not rule out other factors in the man's death.

Some of the mines were fitted with timed fuses, and would explode without warning up to three days after being dispersed.

According to more than 100 residents, Russian forces attempted to warn locals of the danger posed by the Ukrainian mines, cleared some of the explosives, and transported victims to Russia for treatment. Once the Russians left Izium, demining duties were reportedly carried out by Ukrainian troops.

Use of such antipersonnel mines is prohibited under the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, to which Ukraine is a signatory. The US and Russia are not parties to the treaty.

Questioned by HRW, the Ukrainian government insisted that it abides by all of its international obligations, but refused to comment on the type of munitions it used in and around Izium.

“Any use of antipersonnel landmines is unlawful, and Ukraine should thoroughly investigate what happened and ensure its forces do not use them,” HRW arms division director Steve Goose stated in the report. Speaking to US news outlet NPR, Goose said that while HRW believes that Russia has also used these mines, Ukraine’s *“moral high ground has been compromised”* by the latest findings.

Ukraine also used PFM mines in the cities of Kharkov and Donetsk last year, according to officials in both locations, though Kiev denied the claims. The mines were also found strewn across Russia’s Belgorod Region in large numbers after a Ukrainian bombardment last summer.

Category

1. Army-Wars-Conflict Zones-Military Tech.
2. Main

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