

UN Commission concludes that Russian armed forces' drone attacks against civilians

Источник: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/05/un-commission-concludes-russian-armed-forces-drone-attacks-against-civilians>

Сохранено в архиве decolonial.ist: 29.08.2026 · файлов в оригинале: 1

Press releases Independent investigation

UN Commission concludes that Russian armed forces' drone attacks against civilians in Kherson Province amount to crimes against humanity of murder

28 May 2025

Ukrainian Українська (PDF)

GENEVA / VIENNA, 28 May 2025 – Russian armed forces have committed murder of civilians as crimes against humanity using drones, concludes the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine in a new report.

From July 2024, Russian forces have recurrently killed and injured civilians in an area stretching over more than 100 kilometres along the right bank of the Dnipro River in Kherson Province. The drone attacks have been widespread, systematic and conducted as part of a coordinated state policy, the report said.

The attacks followed a regular pattern and the same modus operandi, demonstrating that they were planned, directed, and organized. There is no information suggesting that Russian military and civilian authorities have taken any steps to prevent or stop the commission of the crimes.

Nearly 150 civilians have been killed and hundreds more injured as a result of the drone attacks in Kherson city and 16 localities in the Ukrainian-controlled areas, according to official sources. Victims were men, women, and children, mostly men. Civilians were targeted in various circumstances, as they stepped out to carry out their daily activities whether on foot or in any type of vehicle.

The drone operators used video feeds transmitted in real time by the cameras embedded in the drones, focused on targets that were visibly civilian, and dropped explosives on them. Hundreds of these video feeds have been regularly disseminated on Russian Telegram channels, some of them with thousands of subscribers, displaying the crimes, as well as text posts announcing further attacks.

Ambulances, which have special protection under international law, have been targeted and struck by drones, so as to prevent them from reaching victims who had been previously attacked. Some of these victims have died as a consequence of not being moved to a medical facility in time. A 45-year-old man from Stanislav village recounted that in November 2024, a drone dropped an explosive near him as he was riding a moped, badly injuring his leg. An ambulance arrived, and while he was receiving first aid, a drone dropped two explosives on the ambulance.

The use of drones to target civilians and civilian objects is a violation of the fundamental principle of international humanitarian law, according to which attacks may only be directed at military objects. The evidence collected leaves no doubt that the perpetrators intended to carry out these acts. The Commission therefore concludes that Russian armed forces perpetrated the war crime of intentionally directing attacks against civilians in Kherson Province. It also finds that posting videos of civilians being killed and injured amounts to the war crime of outrages upon personal dignity.

The civilian population in the areas affected by drone attacks lives in constant fear. Residents take risks every time they go outside, as they fear being struck by drones. Many wait for cloudy days to go out, or seek cover under trees, where possible. Fear is further induced by frequent messages posted on Telegram, such as “Get out of the city before the leaves fall, you who are destined to die.”

The circumstances of the attacks, the videos, and the explicit threatening text posts demonstrate that Russian armed forces and those supporting them have committed acts or threats of violence for the primary purpose of spreading terror among the civilian population, in violation of international humanitarian law. Referring to Russian soldiers, a senior health professional of a hospital in Kherson said: “They are simply chasing and hunting civilians who are on their way to work or walking their dogs. They drop explosives from drones like it is a video game.”

The scale and intensity of the drone attacks against civilians and civilian objects as well as the destruction of houses and basic infrastructure, the targeting of all means of transport, and attacks against emergency and rescue services, have all rendered the affected areas unliveable and left many residents with no other choice than to flee.

The recurrent drone attacks, the widely disseminated videos showing them, and numerous posts explicitly exhorting the population to leave suggest a coordinated state policy, on the part of the Russian authorities, to force the population of Kherson Province to leave the area. The Commission therefore concludes that Russian armed forces may have committed the crime against humanity of forcible transfer of population.

The Commission examined over 300 publicly available videos of attacks and over 600 text posts on Telegram channels and, where possible, identified victims of these attacks. It interviewed 91 persons from the areas affected by drone attacks, including victims, witnesses, local authorities and medical personnel.

Background: The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine is an independent body mandated by the UN Human Rights Council to, among other things, investigate all alleged violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, and related crimes in the context of the aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation. The Commission comprises Erik Møse (Chair), Pablo de Greiff and Vrinda Grover.

The Commissioners were appointed by the President of the UN Human Rights Council; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. While the UN Human Rights Office provides support to the Commission of Inquiry, the commissioners serve in their individual capacity and are independent from any government or organization, including the UN. Any views or opinions presented herein are solely those of the mandated commissioners.

For media requests and queries, please contact: Saule Mukhametrakhimova, Media Adviser, Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, , or (+43-1) 26060-83450 or (+43-676) 3493464; or Todd Pitman, Media Adviser for the UN Human Rights Council’s Investigative

Missions, or (+41) 76 691 1761; or Pascal Sim, Human Rights Council Media Officer, .

VIEW THIS PAGE IN: