

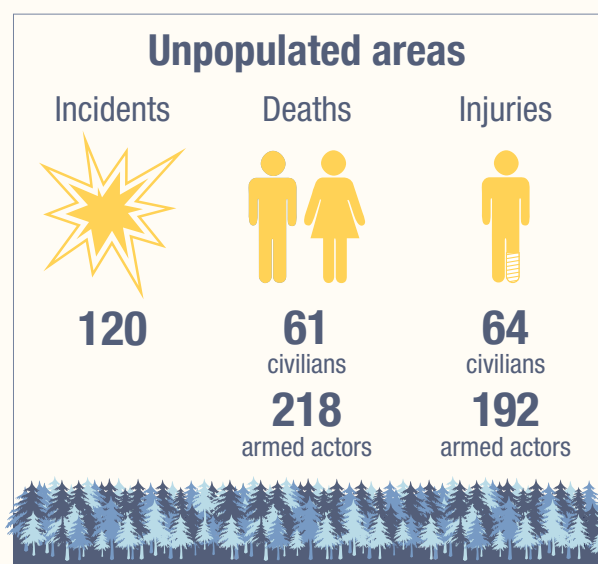
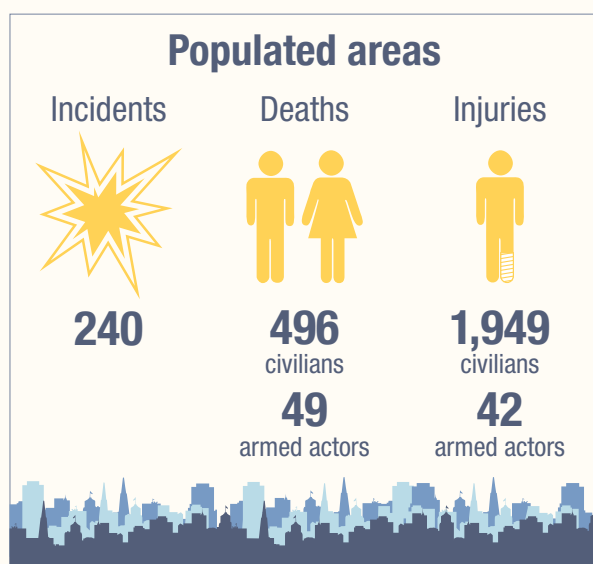
EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS MONITOR

A civil society initiative that conducts research and analysis on harms and practices from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas for the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW).

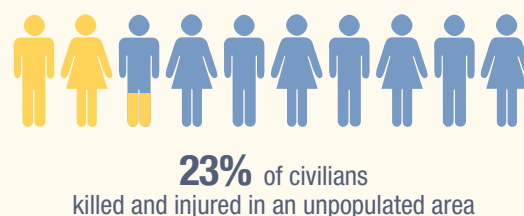
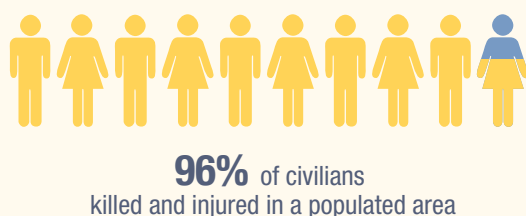
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MONTHLY UPDATE FOR MAY 2021

Casualties



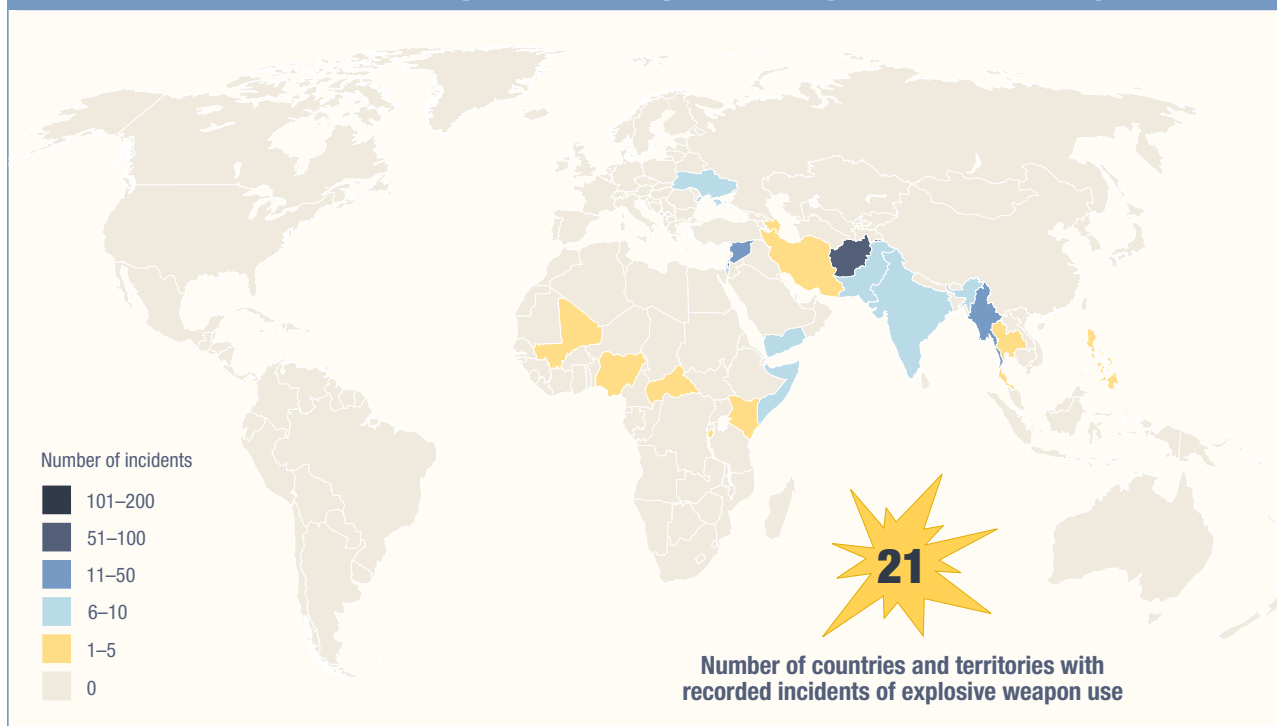
Impact on civilians in populated vs unpopulated areas



At least one death or injury from the use of explosive weapons was recorded in **21** countries and territories in May 2021. The five most affected countries/territories in terms of civilian casualties resulting from the use of explosive weapons were the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Afghanistan, Israel, Syria, and Myanmar. Worldwide, there were **360** recorded incidents of explosive weapon use, causing **3,071** casualties, of which **2,570 (84%)** were civilians.

There were **61** incidents of explosive weapon use affecting aid access, education and healthcare services in seven countries. A high number of incidents affected the provision of education in Myanmar (**32**), and healthcare services in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (**14**). This data includes some data where the device did not detonate or where there were no civilian casualties, and may include some incidents where historical items such as unexploded ordnance were found and which affected the provision of these services.


Recorded incidents of explosive weapon use by state / territory



Occupied Palestinian Territories



1,474 Civilian casualties

Over the space of eleven days from 10-21 May 2021, 140 incidents of explosive weapon use were recorded in the occupied Palestinian territories causing 1,474 civilian casualties. Of these, 233 civilians were recorded killed and 1,241 injured, including 140 children. The use of air-launched weapons by Israel accounted for 89% of attacks and 83% of civilian casualties. 94% of these incidents took place in populated areas. Critical infrastructure, residential areas, and encampments were attacked, with 55% of attacks striking residential areas. Casualties from airstrikes frequently caused multiple casualties, including members of the same families. The two highest civilian casualty incidents recorded took place overnight on 13 May in Beit Lahia, when Israeli airstrikes attacked residential areas and apartment buildings causing 72 civilian casualties, at least 20 of whom were children. In an Israeli airstrike on a residential area in Beit Hanoun on 10 May, 16 children were among 26 casualties, and six children died. Encampments for displaced people were also attacked, with 87 casualties recorded in these areas. The worst incidents took place in al-Shati and al-Bureij refugee camps. In two days, from 13-14 May, 26 civilian casualties were recorded as a result of Israeli airstrikes on al-Bureij camp, five of whom died, and four of whom were children. In one Israeli airstrike on 15 May on al-Shati camp, 25 civilian casualties were recorded, 10 of which were fatal, including 8 children.  Sources: *Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), PCHR, PCHR, PCHR, PCHR, PCHR, PCHR, PCHR, PCHR, PCHR.*

NOTE: These numbers under report actual casualty figures. In situations of intense conflict and explosive weapon use, not all casualties or incidents can be recorded due to the requirements of AOAV methodology.

Occupied Palestinian Territories



Aid Access

During May 2021 in the occupied Palestinian territories, four incidents of explosive weapon use affecting aid access were recorded. All four incidents took place in Gaza during which a Qatar Red Crescent office, an IDP camp and an INGO-supported hospital were damaged in air-launched weapons by Israel. 🔗 Sources: *Al Jazeera I*, *Al Jazeera II*, *BBC*, *New York Times*, *The New Arab*, *The Guardian I*, *The Guardian II* and *Twitter*.



Education

During May 2021 in the occupied Palestinian territories, two incidents of explosive weapon use affecting the provision of education were reported. Both incidents took place in Gaza during which a UNRWA school, a highschool and a six-storey building housing bookstores and educational centres used by the Islamic University and other colleges were damaged by airstrikes. 🔗 Sources: *AP* and *The Electronic Intifada*.



Healthcare

During May 2021 in the occupied Palestinian territories, 14 incidents of explosive weapon use affecting health services were recorded. All 14 incidents took place in Gaza. Hospitals, a Ministry of Health building and an ambulance centre were damaged or destroyed and health workers were killed and injured by Israeli airstrikes. Primary healthcare, dentistry, COVID-19, emergency, ophthalmology, and trauma services were all impacted. 🔗 Sources: *Al Jazeera*, *BBC*, *Palestine Chronicle*, *The Irish Times* and *The New Arab*.

Afghanistan



693 Civilian casualties

Across 73 incidents in May 2021, Afghanistan suffered 693 civilian casualties from explosive weapon use, 226 of which were fatal. Civilians accounted for 76% of the total casualties (910). 60% of these incidents (44) were from directly emplaced explosive weapons, predominantly IEDs in the form of roadside bombs (24), non-specific IEDs (15), and car bombs (4). 37 of the 73 incidents took place in populated areas, and of the total casualties from these incidents (666), 96% were civilians (641). The deadliest incident recorded this month took place on 7 May in Kabul, when three explosives, including a car bomb, were detonated outside the Sayed-UI-Shahada high school in Dasht-e-Barchi, a Hazara neighbourhood in western Kabul. 90 civilians were killed and 240 injured, mostly female students. The Afghan government blamed the Taliban for the attack, though the group has denied responsibility. May has been the deadliest month for Afghan civilians so far this year from the use of explosive weapons. Civilian casualties have more than doubled April's recordings (306), while armed-actor casualties have seen a 15% increase from April (189) to May (217). The increase in civilian casualties is widely attributed to a rise in attacks perpetrated by the Taliban since 1 May, when the US announced the date for the final withdrawal of troops would be 11 September, 2021. 🔗 Sources: *NYT*, *Al Jazeera*, *BBC*, *Reuters*.

Afghanistan



Education

During May 2021 in Afghanistan, four incidents of explosive weapon use affecting the provision of education were reported, two in Kabul, and one each in the provinces of Parwan and Paktika. Students were killed and injured while at school, and lecturers and students were killed and injured en route to a university. Directly emplaced explosive weapons, including landmines, car and roadside bombs, were used in these incidents.

🔗 Sources: *Al Jazeera I*, *Al Jazeera II*, *BBC*, *CNN*, *NPR*, *Sayhoun*, *The New Arab I*, *The New Arab II*, *The New Arab III*, *The New Arab IV*, *The New Arab V*, *Twitter I*, *Twitter II*, *Twitter III*, *TOLOnews*, *UN News* and *World Vision*.

Israel



96 Civilian casualties

Across eight incidents, Israel suffered 96 civilian casualties and six armed-actor casualties. 86 of the civilian casualties were injured, 10 were killed, and eight were reportedly children. All incidents were perpetrated by Hamas, using ground-launched weapons, including rockets (4), missiles (2), shelling (1), and mortars (1). The highest casualty incident took place on 11 May, when Hamas fired rockets that hit residential areas in southern Israel killing five civilians and injuring 70. 🔗 Sources: *Al Jazeera*, *Jerusalem Post*, *LBC*.

Syria



94 Civilian casualties

There were 49 recorded incidents of explosive weapon use in Syria, which caused 94 civilian casualties. 25 of these casualties were killed, and 17 casualties were reportedly children. The use of IEDs and mines caused 53 of the civilian casualties, while 29 were the result of air-launched weapons, and 12 were caused by ground-launched weapons (shelling, missiles, and rockets). The worst incident took place on 3 May, when an airstrike hit a weapons depot near the Al-Furouisiya camp for the displaced. Four civilians were killed, including two children, and 11 others were wounded, including five children. The number of casualties and patterns of explosive weapon use recorded in May is very similar to April, with civilians accounting for just under half of the total casualties, primarily from the use of directly emplaced weapons. Aleppo and Idlib provinces remain the most dangerous areas for civilians, accounting for 60 of the 94 civilian casualties, as well as the highest rates of armed-actor casualties. 🔗 Sources: *Airwars*, *Syrian Observatory for Human Rights*.

Myanmar



66 Civilian casualties

In an escalation of hostilities in Myanmar in May 2021, 14 incidents of explosive weapon use were recorded, resulting in 66 civilian casualties, accounting for 81% of total casualties. Though the number of incidents of explosive weapons use has doubled, from seven in April to 14 in May, civilian fatalities have dropped significantly, from 91 killed in April, to 19 killed in May. Recorded incidents are seen to be less deadly but more injurious, with 47 civilians injured in May, compared to two people who were reported as wounded in April. Most incidents took place in populated areas and involved the use of ground-launched weapons, including shelling, grenade, and mortar attacks, by Myanmar state forces. Airstrikes by state forces caused exclusively civilian casualties, 13 in total, three of which were fatal. The worst incident for civilian casualties took place on 2 May, in Hpakant, Kachin State, in northern Myanmar when at least 20 civilians were wounded and one killed by State forces detonating hand grenades during a public demonstration.

🔗 Source: *The Irrawaddy*.



Education

During May 2021 in Myanmar, 32 incidents of explosive weapon use affecting the provision of education were reported. Schools and universities were damaged by directly emplaced explosive weapons including homemade bombs. Incidents were reported in 11 of Myanmar's 21 administrative subdivisions and were most frequent in the central Magway region. 🔗 Sources: *ACLED*¹, *Tachileik News Agency* and *The Irrawaddy*.

¹ Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) *database attribution policy*. Accessed 02 June 2021.



Healthcare

During May 2021 in Myanmar, three incidents of explosive weapon use affecting health services were reported in Bago, Sagaing and Shan states. Hospitals and staff quarters were damaged and a health worker was injured by directly emplaced explosive weapons including homemade bombs. 🔗 Sources: *MDHR*, *Mizzima News*, *Tachileik News Agency* and *Zalen News*.

Pakistan



36 Civilian casualties

In May 2021 in Pakistan, there were ten incidents of explosive weapon use resulting in 36 civilian casualties, down from 42 in April. Eight of the 36 civilian casualties were killed, and eight of those injured were children. Most incidents occurred in populated areas and involved directly emplaced weapons, specifically IEDs and landmines. The worst attack took place on 21 May, when an IED was detonated at a pro-Palestine rally in Chaman, Balochistan, killing seven and injuring 14 others. 🔗 Sources: *Tribune*, *Reuters*.

Yemen



26 Civilian casualties

In Yemen there were seven incidents of explosive weapon use, up from four in April. All recorded casualties were civilians (26), seven were reported to be children and 13 of the casualties were fatal. Five of the recorded events involved the use of ground-launch weapons, four resulted from shelling by Saudi Arabian forces, all in populated areas and resulting in 14 civilian casualties in total. On 5 May, three civilians were killed and four wounded by shelling from Saudi forces on a village in Saada, north-western Yemen.

🔗 Source: *Shia Waves*.



Education

On 27 May 2021, in Tuhayat city, Al Hudaydah governorate, a school was hit by a drone strike, injuring four children playing in the school playground. 🔗 Source: *CIMP*.



Healthcare

On 18 May 2021, in the Marran area of Haydan, Saada governorate, a health centre was hit by airstrikes, killing a health worker and injuring six civilians, including two health workers.

🔗 Source: *CIMP*.

Somalia



22 Civilian casualties

There were 22 civilian casualties from explosive weapon use in Somalia in May 2021, eight of whom were killed and 14 were injured. There were 23 recorded armed-actor casualties, all of which were fatal. IEDs accounted for six of the seven incidents of explosive weapon use in the country. Two incidents were suicide attacks. On 10 May, six people were killed and six injured when a suicide bomber detonated outside a police station in Mogadishu's Waberi district. There has been a decrease in the number of civilian casualties compared to April, which saw triple the number of civilian casualties and over four times the number of civilian deaths, across eight incidents of explosive weapon use. 🔗 Source: *Xinhua Net*.

Iraq



19 Civilian casualties

Across 22 incidents of explosive weapons use in May 2021 in Iraq, there were 19 civilian casualties, one person was killed and 18 were injured. There were 43 armed-actor casualties, 21 injured and 22 killed. IEDs accounted for 17 of the 22 incidents. The worst incident recorded took place on 25 May in Haditha, Anbar province, when the blast from an IED attached to a vehicle injured 10 civilians. 🔗 Source: *ISHM*.

India



13 Civilian casualties

Across nine incidents, there were 13 civilian casualties from explosive weapon use, three of whom were killed, 10 injured, with two casualties recorded as children. There were eight recorded armed-actor casualties, two killed and six injured. Five of the nine incidents in May 2021 took place in populated areas, and IEDs were used in most incidents. On 4 May, an IED placed in an empty ice cream box detonated in Kannur, Kerala, injuring two children. [Sources: Times of India, Kaumundi.](#)

Nigeria



12 Civilian casualties

In Nigeria, there were 12 civilian casualties from one recorded incident involving explosive weapons on 4 May 2021, when a vehicle hit a landmine in Ranh, near the border with Cameroon. Five people were killed and seven injured in the blast. [Source: News 24.](#)



Education

On 25 May 2021, in Afikpo LGA, Ebonyi state, a suicide bomber detonated himself opposite the Capuse 2 Amaizu/Amangaballa Primary School. [Source: Eons Intelligence.](#)

Maldives



5 Civilian casualties

On 6 May 2021, the former president of the Maldives, and four others including his bodyguards and bystanders, were injured when an IED fixed to a motorcycle was remotely detonated when the former president was getting into his car near his house.

[Source: BBC.](#)

Iran



3 Civilian casualties

In Iran in May 2021 there were three civilian casualties from the use of explosive weapons. In three individual incidents, a civilian was injured by a landmine. All three incidents took place in Kurdish regions. [Sources: Hengaw, Hengaw, Hengaw.](#)

Ukraine



3 Civilian casualties

In Ukraine there were 11 casualties from explosive weapon use in May 2021, across six incidents. Eight were armed-actors, three were civilians, including one child. All recorded incidents took place in the Donbas region and most involved ground-launched weapons, specifically shelling. In one incident on 3 May, a 5-year old boy was killed and his grandmother injured by a drone-dropped bomb, allegedly controlled by Ukrainian government forces, in Oleksandrivske, Donbas region. [Source: Al Jazeera, DPA International.](#)



Healthcare

On 5 May 2021, near Donetsk city and oblast, four shell strikes of unidentified origin hit the buildings of a treated water storage and a pumping facility. [Source: UNICEF.](#)

Central African Republic



3 Civilian casualties

In the Central African Republic there were two incidents of explosive weapon use in May 2021, both involving directly emplaced weapons, one a roadside bomb and the other a landmine. In total, 13 casualties were recorded in the country, three were civilians. On 30 May, five people were killed, including two police officers and three Russian instructors from a private military company, and five others were injured when police cars hit a roadside bomb in Berberati, in the southwest of the country. [Source: Polish News.](#)

Kenya



3 Civilian casualties

In Kenya there were 14 casualties from explosive weapon use, all roadside bombs, across three incidents. Eight people died, of which three were civilians, and seven people were injured, including one civilian. On 3 May in Lamu county near the border with Somalia, two civilians were killed and one injured when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb, allegedly placed by al-Shabaab militants. [Source: DT Next, Xinhua Net.](#)

Burundi



2 Civilian casualties

In Burundi there were two casualties from one incident of explosive weapon use in May 2021, when two civilians were killed and others reportedly injured in a grenade blast in the country's commercial capital, Bujumbura, western Burundi. [Source: Xinhua Net.](#)

Philippines



Casualties

In the Philippines one soldier was injured by a landmine in Iloilo province during an encounter with the New People's Army (NPA) on 16 May 2021. There were no civilian casualties. [🔗 Source: Manila Bulletin.](#)

Thailand



Casualties

In Thailand, one soldier was injured by a landmine on 19 May 2021 during a patrol in Si Sa Ket's Kantharalak district, near the border with Cambodia in southeastern Thailand. No civilian casualties were recorded. [🔗 Source: The Nation.](#)

Azerbaijan



Casualties

In Azerbaijan, one soldier was injured on 28 May 2021 as a result of shelling on the Nakhchivan region near the border with Armenia, allegedly by Armenian forces. No civilian casualties were recorded. [🔗 Source: Urdu Point.](#)

Mali



Casualties

In Mali, three soldiers were killed and six were injured on 7 May 2021, when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb in Hombori, a town in the Inner Niger Delta region. No civilian casualties were recorded. [🔗 Source: The Australian.](#)

Ethiopia



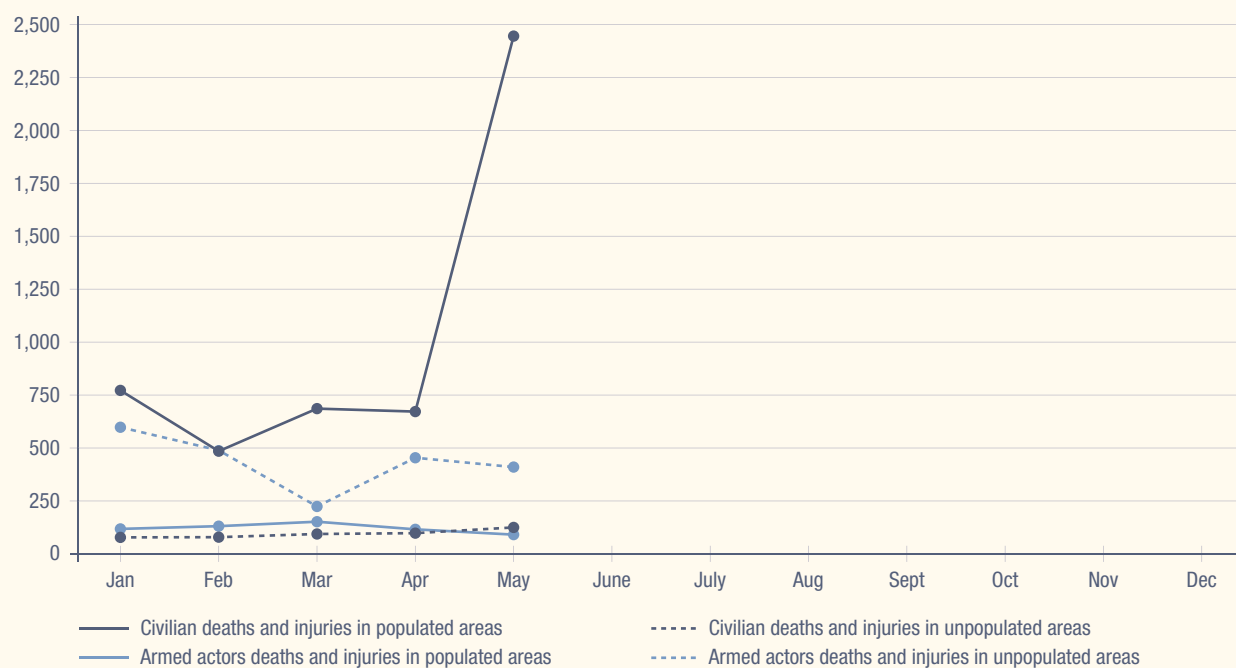
Education

On 16 May 2021, in Axum town, Tigray region, Ethiopian soldiers armed with grenades, machine guns, and sniper rifles raided the University Teaching and Referral Hospital. The soldiers questioned patients, intimidated caretakers and threatened health workers, contaminated the operating room, and stopped all surgical operations.

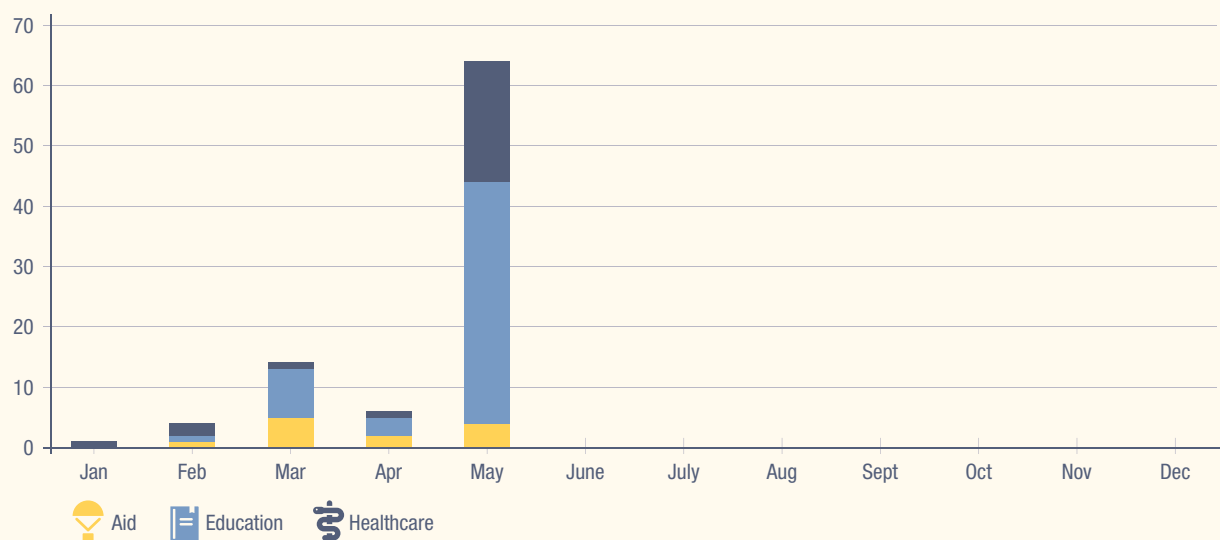
[🔗 Sources: Barron's and CNN.](#)









ANNUAL 2021 COUNT

Recorded casualties



Recorded incidents affecting aid access, education and healthcare



Explosive Weapons Type				
Recorded incidents between 1 January and 31 May 2021				
	Air-launched 	Ground-launched 	Directly emplaced 	Combination 
	1,430 Civilian casualties 64% of total	1,183 Civilian casualties 74% of total	2,594 Civilian casualties 76% of total	242 Civilian casualties 86% of total
	5 Aid access incidents	1 Aid access incidents	6 Aid access incidents	0 Aid access incidents
	7 Education incidents	8 Education incidents	36 Education incidents	1 Education incidents
	17 Healthcare incidents	6 Healthcare incidents	2 Healthcare incidents	0 Healthcare incidents

This bulletin produced by Explosive Weapons Monitor publishes data on incidents of explosive weapon use around the world as reported in open sources. It uses data collected by [Action on Armed Violence \(AOAV\)](#) on incidents of explosive weapon use and casualties (including deaths and injuries), and data collected by [Insecurity Insight](#) on incidents of explosive weapon use affecting aid access, education and healthcare.

