

## Cluster Munitions Kill 13 in Ukraine

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Russian-backed separatist forces and beleaguered Ukrainian government troops traded cluster munition attacks in January that killed 13 civilians, according to reports received by the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe and confirmed by Human Rights Watch.

In one reported attack in Artemivsk, a government-controlled city near Donetsk, a woman and a boy were killed on a playground. In Komsomolske, a village about 40 kilometers southeast of Donetsk, a father and his 10-year-old son were killed as they walked on a street in the late evening.

In a March 25 interview, Human Rights Watch investigator Ole Solvang said he was “highly confident” that both sides in the Ukraine conflict had used the deadly air-dropped explosives that indiscriminately spray sharp bomblets over a wide area in a single blast.

The Ukrainian military denies using cluster munitions in crowded urban areas. Separatist forces and the Russian government have categorically denied use of cluster of munitions in the Ukraine conflict. Neither Ukraine nor Russia is a signatory to the global treaty banning the use of cluster munitions.

Solvang said that he had presented information gathered from witnesses and authorities in seven towns to the representatives of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense and military prosecutors.

As for the attacks emanating from rebel-held areas, Solvang said the perpetrators could not be identified. “Were they from rebel forces or from Russian forces operating in rebel-held areas? We don’t know,” he said.

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