

Repeated attacks on humanitarian vehicles in Kherson, Ukraine

ODESA, UKRAINE—24 April 2026: Today, a Russian fibre-optic drone struck a humanitarian vehicle of Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP)'s partner organisation "Strong Because Free" in the city of Kherson, Ukraine. Three humanitarian workers were injured. NP expresses its strongest condemnation of the attack and reiterates its call for the protection of humanitarian workers and civilians, as required under international humanitarian law.

The strike occurred when the humanitarian team arrived at a shelter to pick up a civilian who need urgent medical aid. Protected by helmets and ballistic vests, the team survived the attack, with three of them sustaining concussions and shrapnel injuries. Trained in first aid and equipped with first aid kits, their colleagues were able to immediately assist them, before medical personnel arrived.

The armoured vehicle, struck by a Russian drone, now damaged beyond repair, had been used for humanitarian purposes only.

"Once again, people in Kherson have come under attack. Our team arrived at a collective shelter to collect a 77-year-old displaced person as part of a scheduled hospitalisation," said Ihor Chorny, the founder and director of Strong Because Free non-governmental organisation. "Just as the team was about to move, they spotted a drone mere moments before the impact. The team credited their previous drone-awareness training for helping them stay alert and get everyone to safety."

This is the second attack on "Strong Because Free" vehicles in Kherson this month. On April 15, a clearly marked civilian evacuation vehicle was also damaged in a drone strike by Russian forces.

"What is happening in Kherson requires urgent international attention. When attacks on ordinary people become routine in one place, it sets a dangerous precedent everywhere", Chorny adds.

The escalating Russian drone strikes in Kherson point to a deeply disturbing pattern in which the distinction between civilians and military is not only blurred but rather appears to be disregarded altogether. Recent incidents include drone strikes on civilian private and public transport, residential areas, and clearly identified civilians, killing and injuring people in spaces that should not be targeted under International Humanitarian Law. While these attacks are now occurring on a daily basis, they cannot be normalised.

Nonviolent Peaceforce remains committed to strengthening the capacity of local humanitarian organisations by providing the tools, training, and support necessary to operate safely in high-risk frontline areas. While it is essential that frontline workers are equipped with the much-needed skills and resources to reduce risks and operate as safely as possible, it must not obscure a clear reality: attacks on humanitarian workers and civilians are unacceptable and illegal, and civilians must be protected at all times.

ABOUT NONVIOLENT PEACEFORCE:

Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is an international protection agency. Our mission is to protect civilians in violent conflicts through unarmed strategies, build peace side-by-side with local communities, and advocate for the wider adoption of these approaches to safeguard human lives and dignity. NP's duty of care programming aims to reduce the physical risks volunteers are exposed to as well as support the psychological resilience of volunteer networks and the communities they serve.

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