



International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW)
c/o Article 36, 81 Rivington Street, London, EC2A 3AY, UK

**For attention of relevant government ministries
c/o Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York**

Improving protection of civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas

Dear Excellency,

The UN Secretary-General has asked Member States to make available to the United Nations and other relevant actors “information on civilian harm resulting from the use of explosive weapons” and “policy statements that outline the conditions under which explosive weapons might be used in populated areas.”¹ In follow-up to the UN Secretary-General’s request, this letter seeks from Member States information regarding the use of explosive weapons relevant to improving the protection of civilians. It is circulated on behalf of INEW, a network of non-governmental organisations working together to prevent harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

We kindly request that the questions below are sent to the relevant national ministries, and that responses are then sent to:

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A summary of responses will be produced which will also indicate which states provided answers to the questions circulated and which did not.

The term ‘explosive weapons’ refers to weapons that function mainly through blast and fragmentation (through the detonation of a ‘bursting charge’). It includes both explosive ordnance and improvised explosive devices. The category includes some light weapons such as grenades as well as heavier explosive weapons such as high explosive artillery, rockets and aircraft bombs. It does not refer to weapons that function through launching a projectile that does not contain a high-explosive filling, often referred to as ‘firearms’.

Some of the questions refer to ‘populated areas’. This means areas that contain concentrations of civilians, such as cities, towns, villages, refugee camps, etc. National policies may use different terms, e.g. urban areas (for example, the United States Collateral Damage Estimation Methodology CJCSI 3160.01, D-5)

Many thanks for taking the time to consider these questions and for any information that can be provided to us.

Yours faithfully,

Richard Moyes
Coordinator, INEW

¹ Report of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, 11 November 2010, S/2012/579. These recommendations are reinforced in the 2012 report (22 May 2012, S/2012/376).

Questions on the protection of civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas

Please provide references or links to supporting documents where they can be made available.

1. Which state agencies in your country are approved to use explosive weapons?

Protecting friendly forces

2. Do the armed forces of your country have standing or operation-specific policies that set, for different explosive weapon types, distances from a proposed target at which friendly forces would be considered to be at particular risk? *e.g. so-called 'danger close' policies.*
3. According to such policies, what precautions must be taken to protect friendly forces within that distance? *e.g. higher authorisation required for an attack.*
4. Please provide examples of the danger distances for different explosive weapon types in these policies.
5. What factors are taken into account in these distances? *e.g. blast radius, fragmentation radius, other effects (e.g. incendiary), accuracy of delivery, additional weaponeering options?*

Collateral damage estimations

6. What formal methodologies do the armed forces in your country use for collateral damage estimation?
7. Is the use of all explosive weapons within the arsenal of the armed forces covered under these methodologies or are some excluded? *e.g. direct fire weapon systems are excluded in United States CJCSI 3160.01*
8. Does the collateral damage estimation methodology note particular risks for certain explosive weapon types in populated areas, urban areas etc.? *e.g. rocket assisted projectiles or extended range artillery and mortars are identified as a particular risk in United States CJCSI 3160.01*
9. Within the arsenal of the armed forces, which explosive weapons produce the largest area of danger for the assessment of collateral damage? *Please provide examples.*
10. Within the arsenal of the armed forces, which explosive weapons are considered to pose the greatest likelihood of harm to civilians if they were to be used against targets located in a populated area/urban area? *Please provide examples.*
11. Are there explosive weapons within the arsenal of the armed forces that, as a matter of policy or law, are considered inappropriate for use against targets in or near populated areas? *If so, please list.*

Civilian casualty recording

12. Do the government or armed forces gather data on civilian casualties caused by specific weapon types by a) itself and b) others, and is that data used to inform policies on the future use of those weapons?