



## **Towards a political declaration to address the harm from explosive weapons in populated areas**

### **Key issues ahead of the informal consultation in Geneva on 18 November 2019**

The International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW), in line with the call of the UN Secretary-General, strongly supports the urgent development of an international political declaration to prevent and reduce the harms caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

The development of an international political declaration can help to set a stronger international standard of behaviour, serving as a tool to drive forward positive policies and practice at a national level and building a community of positive practice.

We encourage States to participate in the informal consultation being convened by Ireland on 18 November in Geneva (the Save the Date is attached), on developing “*a political declaration to address the harm from explosive weapons in populated areas*”.

We also encourage states to raise key elements of a possible political declaration in this first round of consultations and ahead of a declaration text being drafted, aimed at preventing and reducing harms to civilians. This includes:

- developing strong commitments to actively address the humanitarian harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, including both direct and indirect effects
- in particular, recognising the harm from, and working to prevent the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas
- ensuring recognition of the rights of victims, and assistance to victims and affected communities.

### **Key elements of a political declaration**

The Vienna Conference on the Protection of Civilians in Urban warfare highlighted many of the key points that should be included in a political declaration.

**From INEW’s perspective, a declaration should include a description of the different impacts, including:**

- Civilian deaths and physical injury, including physical impairment, psychological trauma (and social discrimination and economic deprivation often faced by victims and survivors)
- Destruction of housing, water and sanitation, health, energy, education, transport infrastructure, and interruption of associated services, and costs for reconstruction and recovery
- Contamination of territory with explosive remnants of war, and environmental degradation
- Displacement and denial of return
- Denial of humanitarian access

**A political declaration should commit States to:**

- Develop operational policies and procedures that will stop the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas
- Recognise the rights of victims and affected communities and provide assistance
- Support and undertake data gathering including data on victims disaggregated by sex and age
- Enable humanitarian and protection measures
- Build a community of practice, including through regular meetings to discuss the issue and progress towards reducing harm
- Share positive practice and experiences.

# SAVE THE DATE

## Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare

### Towards a political declaration to address the humanitarian harm from explosive weapons in populated areas

Ireland is pleased to invite all States, as well as UN agencies, international and regional organisations and civil society, to an informal consultation to contribute to the elaboration of a political declaration.

**18 November 2019, 10h00 —13h00**

Coffee & tea will be provided from 09h30

**Room VII at the Palais des Nations, Geneva**

Kindly **RSVP** to [disarmament@dfa.ie](mailto:disarmament@dfa.ie) by **6 November 2019**

*Formal invitation and agenda to follow*

