

Press release

NGOs demand new efforts to stop bombing of civilians

(Geneva, 30 March 2011) Two dramatic reports, launched today at the United Nations in Geneva, highlight the impact of explosive weapons on children and the wider long-term impact on civilian lives and livelihoods. Save the Children and Action on Armed Violence are launching the reports a day after a group of NGOs came together to demand protection for civilians from explosive weapons.

“Our ongoing monitoring of bombings in populated areas paints a grim picture: around 10,000 direct civilian deaths and injuries in 63 countries in the past six months. But behind the headline statistics these reports reveal a problem that is much worse than we thought,” said Katherine Harrison, co-author of the report [*“100 Incidents of Humanitarian Harm,”*](#) by UK NGO, Action on Armed Violence (AOAV). For the first time this report shows the destructive impact of explosive weapons on people’s health, homes, jobs and security. *“We are seeing a pattern of harm that goes beyond large numbers of deaths and severe injuries – it’s also about displacement and long-term psychological, social, and economic damage.”*

In [*“Devastating Impact: explosive weapons and children,”*](#) Save the Children finds that thousands of children were killed in recent years as a direct consequence of explosive weapons. Many more have died or will die because of the damage caused to health services and infrastructure, and thousands more will have to live with the physical, mental, environmental and economic consequences, and the deprivation of education.

“One child killed by one shell fired at a school is appalling; the pattern of harm we are seeing in Cote d’Ivoire, Gaza, Libya and elsewhere is an outrage,” said Nick Martlew, Humanitarian Advocacy Officer at Save the Children UK. *“We are challenging the silence around this issue. Bombing public places has a massive impact on children. It is simple, devastating, but rarely addressed directly.”*

These reports coincide with NGOs forming an international network to address the humanitarian suffering caused by explosive weapons in populated areas. The International Network on Explosive Weapons was established in Geneva on 29 March, 2011 by Action on Armed Violence, Handicap International, Human Rights Watch, IKV/Pax Christi, Medact, Norwegian People’s Aid, Oxfam International, and Save the Children UK.

Recent events in Côte d’Ivoire, Gaza, and Libya have highlighted the impact of explosive weapons when used in populated areas. In recent statements on [Libya](#) and [Côte d’Ivoire](#), the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, has expressed grave concern on this issue.