



***Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare
Towards a Political Declaration to Address the Humanitarian Harm Arising from the use
of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas***

UPDATE

Dear colleagues,

I hope that you are well and managed to have a restful break over the holiday period.

As set out in my letter of 14 December 2020, I am writing to provide you with further details on the next step in our process: *Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare: Towards a Political Declaration to Address the Humanitarian Harm Arising from the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas*.

Although the global public health situation has disrupted the process, Ireland remains fully committed to continuing our efforts to reach agreement on a Political Declaration as soon as possible. I would like to reiterate my sincere appreciation for your continued engagement, and patience.

I am pleased now to be able to share with all delegations the latest draft of the Political Declaration. The draft takes into account the submissions received as part of the written consultation in 2020 and bilateral feedback we have received over the past number of months.

Recognising that delegations will need time to review and consult with capital-based experts on this revised draft of the Political Declaration, and in keeping with the current public health measures, Ireland proposes to host an initial informal exchange of views on this text in a fully virtual format. The virtual meeting will take place over three afternoon sessions from 3 – 5 March (14.00 – 18.00 CET). It will, unfortunately, not be possible to provide interpretation services for these informal virtual consultations and the meeting will be conducted in English.

The objective of this meeting is to review the revised draft on a section-by-section basis. In terms of preparation for the meeting, we strongly encourage delegations to tailor their contributions during the meeting to specific elements in the text and to avoid general statements.

While virtual meetings cannot replace in-person negotiations, we believe it is vital to maintain the momentum in this process and continue our work towards concluding a Political Declaration. We hope that the proposed times and dates will allow for the widest possible engagement from delegations based in capitals and Geneva.

Full details on registration and access, as well as an agenda for the meeting will follow in due course.

Following these informal consultations, we hope to conclude negotiations on the text with a final consultation in late spring/early summer. Mindful of the changeable nature of the public health guidance, we anticipate that this consultation will either be fully in-person or in a hybrid format.

We remain committed to maintaining the transparent and inclusive process necessary for drafting and adopting an effective Political Declaration. Should you have any queries in the interim, please contact us at GenevaConsultations@dfa.ie.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued constructive engagement. I look forward to working with you in a more hopeful 2021.



Michael Gaffey

Permanent Representative of Ireland, Geneva

Geneva, 29 January 2021