



## **Provisional Conference Programme**

The first international follow-up conference to the adoption of the  
*Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the  
Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in  
Populated Areas (EWIPA Declaration)*

**Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel, Oslo, 22–24 April**

### **22 April**

19:00–21:00      Opening reception for the Conference

Opening Reception for all participants hosted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at *Høymagasinet*, Myntgata 7, Akershus Fortress.

### **23 April**

08:00–09:00      Registration for the Conference

09:00–10:00      Opening session with high-level participants

The session will consist of introductory remarks by high-level participants, and other key actors, focusing on the continued relevance of the Declaration and the humanitarian impacts of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, including lived experiences and testimonies from relevant contexts. The opening session will set the stage for the Conference by highlighting the urgent need to strengthen the protection of civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

#### **Speakers during the opening session:**

- **Andreas Kravik**  
State Secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway
- **Rear Admiral Bjørn-Erik Martinsen**  
Deputy of the Norwegian Defence Staff
- **Ambassador Noel White**  
Permanent representative of Ireland to the United Nations in Geneva



- **Melanie Regimbal**  
Chief of Service of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs' Geneva Office
- **Marwa Almbaed**  
Survivor from Syria
- **Dr. Al Khatib**  
President of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society
- **Radhya al-Mutawakel**  
Representative for the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW)
- **Ukrainian Red Cross Society (TBC)**

10:00-11:30      Session 1: Military policies and practises

The session will focus on the commitments in the Declaration pertaining to the adoption, review and implementation of policies and practices by states aimed at strengthening the protection of civilians and avoiding civilian harm (primarily commitments 3.1.–3.4.). Participants will have the opportunity to share examples of steps being taken at the national level to review and revise existing policies and practices, or to adopt new ones, and will share lessons learned and good practices that support the implementation of the Declaration. This may include relevant operational experiences, from both states and humanitarian organisations, and measures undertaken to prevent and mitigate civilian harm, as well as the development of rules of engagement, operational or tactical directives, and other policy initiatives relevant to the Declaration. The session will also be an opportunity to provide information about meetings and workshops with military experts held since the endorsing ceremony in Dublin in 2022.

**Speakers in the panel discussion:**

- **Wendy Mac Clinchy (moderator)**  
Director of the United Nations program at Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)
- **Lt Col. Peter de Boeck**  
Policy Advisor on Protection of Civilians, Directorate of International Affairs, The Netherlands Ministry of Defense
- **Dan Stigall**



Director for Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Policy, Office of the United States Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Irregular Warfare and Counterterrorism, Special Operations & Low-Intensity Conflict

- **Laurent Gisel**

Head of the Arms and Conduct of Hostilities Unit, Legal Division of the ICRC

- **Diana Castillo (TBC)**

Director of International Relations, Colombian Ministry of Defense

### **Statements from delegations and organisations**

Guiding questions for thematic statements:

- What concrete steps are being taken by your state to ensure that the armed forces implement the EWIPA Declaration?
- What national policies, training and practices do states and their armed forces need to review, develop and improve in order to better protect civilians in armed conflict involving the use of explosive weapons in populated areas?
- How should states and their armed forces determine when it is appropriate to restrict and/or refrain from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas to avoid civilian harm, and how can this be incorporated into policy and implemented operationally?
- What national military policies and practices are needed to adequately foresee the direct and indirect effects of the use of explosive weapons on civilians and civilian objects?

11.30-12.00      Coffee break

12.00-13:30      Session 2: Understanding direct and indirect effects

The session will focus on the direct and indirect effects arising from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, and the centrality of data collection in understanding these effects (primarily commitments 3.4., 4.2.–4.3.). The aim is to initiate a discussion on how direct and indirect effects are understood, what the long-term consequences might be, and how this can be factored into the planning and execution of military operations. The session will look at approaches to establishing mechanisms to collect data on civilian harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. It will also



provide an arena for sharing findings from recent data collection efforts and elaborating on how mechanisms of data collection can be used to improve the tracking of and responses to civilian harm. The session will also address opportunities and challenges relating to the sharing of data on direct and indirect effects.

### **Speakers in the panel discussion:**

- **Robin Geiss (moderator)**  
Director, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)
- **Ambassador Ammar Hijazi**  
Assistant Minister for Multilateral Affairs, Palestinian Authority
- **Simon Walker**  
Chief, Rule of Law and Democracy Section, The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- **Katherine Young**  
Research and Monitoring Coordinator, Explosive Weapons Monitor
- **Ezequiel Heffes**  
Director, Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict
- **Additional state representative (TBC)**

### **Statements from delegations and organisations**

Guiding questions for thematic statements:

- What types of data are needed to understand the direct and indirect effects of military operations involving the use of explosive weapons on civilians and civilian objects in populated areas?
- What mechanisms to collect and share data on [direct and indirect effects of] the use of explosive weapons in populated areas already exist, or are being adapted or established by states and their armed forces, and how can this data be used to shape operational and institutional learning?
- How can data collection on direct and indirect effects be supported by different actors, including efforts by the UN, ICRC, and relevant civil society organisations to collect data in order to improve the understanding of effects and shape policies to prevent, minimise and respond to civilian harm?



13:30- 14:30      Lunch

14:30–16:00      Session 3: Assisting conflict-affected communities

The session will present the perspectives of communities affected by explosive weapons in populated areas and focus on the humanitarian-centred aspects of the Declaration (primarily commitments 3.5., 4.4., 4.5. and 4.6). The discussion will centre on the different types of assistance needed by affected communities, both during and after conflict, and steps that can be taken to protect civilians and facilitate and maintain humanitarian access. It will also emphasise the importance of supporting the work of humanitarian organisations in providing assistance and protection, including clearance of contaminated areas, risk education and victim assistance, and call attention to the gendered impacts of explosive weapons. Conflict-affected countries and communities and humanitarian organisations will be encouraged to share their experiences.

**Speakers in the panel discussion:**

- **Dina Abou Samra (moderator)**  
Protection Advisor in the Policy Advice and Planning Section, The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- **Alma Taslidzan**  
Disarmament and Protection of Civilians Manager, Humanity & Inclusion
- **Ambassador Julien Thöni**  
Ambassador (Disarmament and Multilateral Affairs), Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations in Geneva
- **Hazel de Wet**  
Deputy Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, United Nation’s Children Fund (UNICEF)
- **Alonso Martínez Ruiz**  
Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations in Geneva
- **Additional state representative (TBC)**

**Statements from delegations and organisations**

Guiding questions for thematic statements:



- What types of assistance do victims of explosive weapons and conflict-affected communities need, both during and after conflict?
- What actions are needed to support and/or facilitate humanitarian access to populations affected by explosive weapons and what steps are already being taken?
- How can states support the work of the UN, ICRC and civil society organisations in assisting and protecting the victims of explosive weapons and communities affected by armed conflict?

16:00–16.30      Coffee break

16:30–18:00      Closing session with high-level participants:  
The way forward and universalisation

The closing session will provide an opportunity to direct attention to the work ahead, discuss efforts to secure broader support for the Declaration and present a set of goals to further strengthen implementation. The Chair’s proposed “Way Forward” outlining suggestions for how to further institutionalise and implement the Declaration will be distributed in advance of the Conference. Norway, as host country, will outline ways of advancing the work relating to the Declaration, with particular focus on commitments 4.7–4.8.

**Speakers in the closing session:**

- **Anne Beathe Tvinnereim (TBC)**  
Minister of International Development, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Alejandro Solano Ortiz**  
Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Costa Rica
- **Tine Mørch Smith**  
Director General, Department for Multilateral Affairs, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Clare Brosnan**  
Director, Disarmament & Non-Proliferation, Irish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Juliana Helou van der Berg**  
Political Affairs Officer (UNODA)



## **Additional information**

Each session will be introduced by a group of speakers who will focus on implementation measures and activities carried out since the signing of the Declaration in Dublin in November 2022. The aim is to inform participants about the current implementation status of the Declaration, including best practices and lessons learned, with input from states, the United Nations, the ICRC, other relevant international organisations and civil society organisations.

The overall aim of the Conference, and reflecting commitment 4.7 of the Declaration, is to review in a collaborative spirit the implementation of the Declaration, including through an exchange of good policies and practices, and by identifying any relevant additional measures that may need to be taken. The Conference will also provide an opportunity to address emerging concepts and terminology.

**Delegations are encouraged to deliver thematic statements and engage in substantive exchanges during sessions one, two and three. Delegates will be invited up to the stage to deliver their statement after the panel discussions in each session. Please see the guiding questions for each thematic session above. Kindly note that thematic statements should not exceed three minutes. Delegations are invited to register their interest to speak by writing to [speakers.ewipa2024@mfa.no](mailto:speakers.ewipa2024@mfa.no) before 18 April 2024.**

The aim is to have interventions focusing on tangible and action-oriented implementation measures and/or exchanges aimed at fostering cooperation and the sharing of best practices.

Please note that the programme, list of speakers and timings provided may be subject to change. For the latest information and updates on the conference programme, please refer to the conference website at [Oslo Conference – UNODA](https://www.unoda.org/oslo-conference).



## Protection Forum and Thematic Workshops

### 22 April                      Protection Forum

The Norwegian Red Cross and the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW) are co-hosting a **Protection Forum** on Monday 22 April, at the *Norwegian Red Cross Conference Centre* in Hausmanns gate 5, prior to the opening reception for the official Conference. Conference participants are encouraged to attend. The preliminary programme for the Protection Forum is as follows:

10:00-11:00              Registration and viewing of exhibitions

11:00–12:15              Lunch

12:15–13:45              Session 1: Civilian harm and current contexts

This session will look at current contexts where explosive weapons are being used, and the impacts on civilians and broader communities.

13:45–14:15              Coffee break

14:15–16:00              Session 2: Responding to the needs of people and communities, and closing of the Protection Forum

This session will focus on the role that civil society organisations are playing in addressing the needs of conflict affected communities.

The full programme for the protection forum will be made available at the [conference website](#) and at <https://www.inew.org/events/osloprotectionforum>.

### 24 April              Thematic workshops

As an extension of the Conference and the Protection Forum on 22–23 April, two thematic workshops will be organised on 24 April by the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW), in collaboration with international organisations and states. The workshops will take place in the same venue and will provide participants with the opportunity to engage in a more in-depth discussion on key aspects of the Declaration related to 1) military policies and practices or 2) humanitarian access and assistance.





Conference participants are encouraged to attend and can select either workshop regardless of affiliation. More information about the thematic workshops will be provided in advance of the Conference. The preliminary programme for the workshops is as follows:

09:30–10:00      Opening of workshop in plenary

10:00–11:30      Parallel sessions

#### Workshop on military policies and practices

This workshop session will focus on commitment 3.3. and measures that can be taken in policy and practice to avoid civilian harm by restricting or refraining from use of explosive weapons in populated areas in policy and in practice.

#### Workshop on the humanitarian impacts of explosive weapons

This workshop session will focus on commitments 4.4 and 4.5. and measures that can be taken to provide rapid, safe and unhindered access in zones affected by use of explosive weapons, and immediate and long-term assistance to survivors and their communities.

11:30–12:00      Debrief and closing

12:00–13:00      Light lunch