

1st Informal Consultation on Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare

Towards a political declaration to address the humanitarian harm arising from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas

18 November 2019, Geneva

-Costa Rica Statement-

Costa Rica very much welcomes this first consultation and fully support the process that will lead to the negotiation and adoption of an international political declaration on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. We commit ourselves to engage constructively on the consultations.

The direct and indirect harm caused by these weapons is disproportionate and the civilians are the one who suffer the most and for longer time. It is time for the international community to act decisively to avoid the tragedy and pain caused to thousands and thousands of civilians around the world.

We expect that this process could lead to the further development of practical measures, including appropriate limitations, common standards and operational policies designed to prevent the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

Regarding the content of the political declaration, and in line with what we already presented at the Conference in Vienna, we consider that it should include to the maximum possible extent:

1. to reflect the commitment to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated and urban environments due to the great impact and harm caused to civilians and vital infrastructure.
2. to recognize the direct and indirect impact in urban areas to the damages to the infrastructure (transport, health, electrical, sanitary, educational, etc.)
3. to recognize the psychological effects for the victims and their families, as well as the inhabitants of the affected communities.
4. to underline the need to act in compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law in order to protect civilians and essential basic infrastructure, particularly schools and hospitals, and to due reduce risks to civilians and avoid the indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks.
5. To promote effective measures to respect the international humanitarian law and to strengthen its compliance developed to prevent attacks in violation of international humanitarian law.

6. to promote cooperation and exchange of good practices to reduce the damage caused by explosive weapons in populated and urban environments, at bilateral and multilateral level.
7. to promote information gathering to increase knowledge, dissemination and visibility of the indirect and indirect harm caused by explosive weapons in populated and urban environments.
8. to recognized that effective and timely attention and assistance should be given to victims of explosive weapons in populated and urban settings, in all its aspects - physical, psychological and economic.
9. to ensure that the recognition of assistance will be extended to the families of the victims and affected communities.