



ICRC

ICRC views on elements for a political declaration to address civilian harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA)

The ICRC believes that a political declaration to address civilian harm from the use of EWIPA could be a powerful tool for strengthening the protection of civilians and facilitating compliance with international humanitarian law. In the ICRC's view, a political declaration could significantly contribute to this goal if it:

- 1. Recognises the grave humanitarian consequences** explosive weapons with a wide impact area have when used in populated areas, including not only the direct effects of such use (death or injury of civilians or destruction of civilian objects), but also the indirect or 'reverberating' effects (e.g. the disruption of essential services caused by damage or destruction of critical infrastructure).
- 2. Recognises that explosive weapons with a wide impact area**, namely those that have wide area effects due to their high explosive yield, the inaccuracy of their delivery system and/or their delivery of multiple munitions simultaneously over a large area, **are ill-adapted for use against military objectives located in populated areas** due to their wide impact area and consequent high risk of indiscriminate effects.
- 3. Recalls the obligation of all States and parties to armed conflicts to respect international humanitarian law (IHL)** when conducting hostilities in populated areas, in particular the prohibitions of indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks and the obligation to take all feasible precautions in attack, and **acknowledges the challenges in employing explosive weapons with a wide impact area against military objectives located in populated areas in conformity with these rules.**
- 4. Commits States to avoiding the use of explosive weapons with a wide impact area in populated areas as a matter of policy and good practice, and to operationalising this commitment through mitigation measures** to limit the wide area effects of these weapons and the consequent risk of civilian harm and to facilitate respect for IHL.
- 5. Commits States to reviewing and adapting their military policy and practice**, including doctrine, training and equipment, so as to better prepare their armed forces for urban warfare.
- 6. Commits States to identifying, developing and exchanging "good practices"** in relation to weapon-target matching, targeting procedures, planning and training, as well as tracking of civilian casualties, battle damage assessments and lessons learned, exports of heavy explosive weapons and support to parties to armed conflict, to mitigate civilian harm.
- 7. Commits States to developing mechanisms and tools to strengthen the collection of data** on the types of weapons used in populated areas and their effects (both direct and indirect) on civilians.
- 8. Commits States to taking all appropriate measures to provide victims of explosive weapons in populated areas with adequate assistance**, including in the form of physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support and socio-economic reintegration.