

Geneva, 18 November 2019

Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare

Geneva Consultations

Statement of Poland

I thank you Ambassador for initiative and for organizing this important meeting. In view of increasing number of casualties caused by the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas it is very useful and timely to intensify our debate on the issue of EWIPA.

I would like to underline few aspects from our national perspective.

First, it is worth stating that by keeping debate on EWIPA within the CCW we need to mainly focus on the states' responsibility. However, applicability of this concern is not equal. Therefore, it is important to have in mind who is primary an addressee of this initiative.

Second, we think that special role can be envisaged for those states – and Poland belongs to this group – which pay due attention to the existing IHL rules in using explosive weapons. They can share and promote rules and good practices. It would constitute important elements of effective public communication on EWIPA.

Third, as it was also stated by Ambassador Hwang of France it is very important to differentiate, to make a distinction between legal and illegal use of EWIPA. In the context of CCW it is also important to differentiate between explosive weapons and IEDs. While it is indifferent from the victims point of view, it is very important when we speak on responsibility of states.

Fourth, we perceive a political declaration as a way to reaffirm the existing international norms. We would prefer, already at this stage, to have a clarity that there is now intention to work out any restrictions on legitimate use of explosive weapons, also bearing in mind that this category consists of very wide range of weapon and munition.

In the context of our debate we support most of the elements contained in joint trilateral non-paper prepared by France, Germany and the United Kingdom. We thank also for set of elements of a political declaration proposed by Austria, which we consider very interesting.

To conclude, I can declare Poland's full and constructive engagement in this process.

I thank you Mr. Ambassador,