

Comments by Greece on the Draft Political Declaration

At the outset, we would like to thank Ireland for its initiative to hold these consultations in, and for the opportunity to share our views regarding key elements of the new draft of the “Political Declaration”, with an emphasis on the operational commitments that it aspires to establish.

We are all mindful of the complexity and challenges of urban warfare, especially when using explosive weapons in populated areas and the consequences to civilians. We also recognize that the standing provisions of the international humanitarian law (IHL) sufficiently address these challenges.

Our delegation is of the view that the “Political Declaration” should not seek to establish restrictions going beyond existing provisions of IHL but to highlight the unlawful use of these weapons. In this regard we are strong proponents of the use of the term “indiscriminate” as a defining feature of the concept of this use.

Therefore, we believe that paragraph 3.3 should be related to the outcome of the attack and to whether the cardinal principles of IHL and other applicable International Law, including International Customary Law have been respected before and during the attack.

In this context, we would like to mention that we have reservations on said paragraph of the draft of the “Political Declaration”, since, among others, the use of the phrase “effects that may be extended beyond military objective” create an ambiguity especially when it comes to urban warfare and we would like to propose the rewording of the paragraph as follows:

Ensure that our armed forces adopt and implement a range of policies and practices to avoid civilian harm, including by restricting or refraining from using explosive weapons in populated areas, where, despite any preemptive measures, they may cause indiscriminate attacks.

Last but not least we would also like to mention that we prefer the use of the term "indirect effects" instead of "Reverberating effects" throughout the text.