



Second International Conference of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas

Statement by Demi Della-Porta, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations

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Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies, and gentlemen.

Australia thanks the Government of Costa Rica for hosting the second international conference on the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (the Declaration).



The Declaration has been a uniting voice for States in their call to protect civilian populations from the risk of harm and suffering from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

While the deteriorating international security environment is of grave concern, it also gives cause to recommit to the principles espoused in the Declaration.

Australia reaffirms its full commitment to the EWIPA Declaration and the goal of strengthening the protection of civilians from the humanitarian consequences arising from the use of explosive weapons in armed conflict and promoting the need to uphold and champion international humanitarian law.

Our existing military policies, practices and processes support the tenets of the EWIPA Declaration with the Australian Defence Force's *Law of Armed Conflict Doctrine* referring specifically to the Declaration.



Australia recognises that it is civilians, particularly women and children, that are adversely affected by armed conflict and armed violence. In this 25th anniversary of UNSC resolution 1325, Australia remains committed to the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, including protecting human rights and reducing sexual and gender-based violence.

And the humanitarian workers who dedicate their lives to protecting civilians, often working in their own communities, are increasingly at risk. Australia has led efforts through the Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel, endorsed by over half the United Nations, to renew commitment at the highest political level to protect aid workers in conflict zones.

Along with our support for the EWIPA Declaration and the WPS agenda, this initiative continues Australia's strong tradition of championing conflict-related humanitarian efforts.



This year marks two decades since Australia joined Heads of State and Government to unanimously adopt the Responsibility to Protect at the UN World Summit in 2005. The responsibility to protect established a powerful international norm to protect populations.

This year also marks the tenth anniversary of the UN General Assembly Resolution "Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices" led by Australia, France and Nigeria. IEDs are still the cause of nearly half of all explosive ordnance casualties, with civilians comprising more than half of the casualties.

Australia stands ready to work with signatories of the Declaration to help promote its universalisation and to deliver on its commitments.

Thank you