

EWIPA CONFERENCE
Official Statement from Canada
San José, November 19, 2025

Excelencias, distinguidos delegados, señoras y señores:

En nombre de Canadá, deseo expresar nuestro más sincero agradecimiento al Gobierno de Costa Rica por acoger esta importante Conferencia. Es un honor estar hoy en un país que ha demostrado un firme compromiso con la paz, los derechos humanos y el multilateralismo.

La realidad humanitaria que enfrentamos en 2025 exige nuestra atención urgente. Las consecuencias devastadoras del uso de armas explosivas en zonas habitadas son una tragedia que no podemos ignorar. Esta conferencia representa una oportunidad crucial para reafirmar nuestro compromiso colectivo con el Derecho Internacional Humanitario y con la protección de los civiles en los conflictos armados.

It is a terrible reality that wars continue to devastate civilian lives, especially where explosive weapons are used in populated areas. International Humanitarian Law was designed to spare civilian lives and civilian objects from the effects of war. Yet, in today's conflicts, we are witnessing an increasingly permissive interpretation of the very rules we all committed to uphold.

But it doesn't have to stay this way. We have the collective responsibility to change course. In this regard, Canada's message is clear: in armed conflicts, International Humanitarian Law must be respected, always, and by all parties, for civilians to be protected worldwide.

During this Conference, we will all be reminded of the shattering consequences of explosive weapons in populated areas: the destruction of homes, hospitals, schools, and the lifelong trauma inflicted on civilians, especially children. Today, in Palestine, Ukraine, Lebanon, Myanmar, Yemen and elsewhere, we see civilians killed and injured by weapons that are wholly incompatible with the principles of military necessity, distinction, proportionality, and precaution, principles that lie at the heart of International Humanitarian Law.

When critical civilian infrastructure related to water, electricity, and sanitation systems are damaged or destroyed, it also affects lives and disrupts the delivery of humanitarian assistance and essential services like healthcare and education. These systems are interconnected - the destruction of one can cripple another, causing suffering that extends far beyond an explosion.

While the EWIPA Declaration does not change existing International Humanitarian Law obligations, there remains scope for practical improvements: for a faithful application of International Humanitarian Law, for the sharing of good practices, and for building accountability. We must find the courage, collectively and individually, to do everything in our power to prevent these tragedies from recurring. Recognizing the risks to civilians, Canada remains committed to its International Humanitarian Law obligations and will ensure such obligations continue to be at the center of the training of members of our armed forces. Canada will also continue to be a strong advocate for the protection of civilians in all fora, including by taking a vocal stance to support International Humanitarian Law, as we have done regarding the situations in Gaza and the West Bank, Sudan and Syria.

Today, we owe both our words and our actions to the civilians whose lives have been torn apart by such weapons and forever changed by violence. Their suffering must not become the reality of tomorrow.

We call on all States to unite their voices, not only to denounce violations of International Humanitarian Law, but to demonstrate genuine political commitment to its application. The protection of civilians from the effects of explosive weapons is not an abstract principle, it is a common humanitarian imperative.

We also call on all States who have not yet joined this important Declaration to do so, and above all, to apply International Humanitarian Law in a way that ensures civilians are protected, especially in conflicts where humanitarian considerations are too often disregarded. Indeed, our shared humanitarian principles remain our collective 'north star' when it comes to defending humanity, with efforts like the EWIPA Political Declaration as our guiding compass as we navigate conflicts.

Canadá reafirma su compromiso con la protección de los civiles y con la aplicación fiel del Derecho Internacional Humanitario. Hoy, más que nunca, debemos unir nuestras voces y nuestras acciones para evitar que el sufrimiento causado por las armas explosivas en áreas pobladas se repita.

Agradecemos nuevamente a Costa Rica por su liderazgo y hospitalidad al organizar esta conferencia. Que este encuentro nos inspire a actuar con valentía y convicción, guiados por nuestros principios humanitarios compartidos.

Juntos, podemos transformar el dolor de hoy en un futuro más seguro y digno para las generaciones venideras.

Muchas gracias/Merci/Thank you