



CONCEPT NOTE AND AGENDA

Military Workshop on the Implementation of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA)

From Commitments to Practice: Policy, Tools and Training

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

Building A Room XII

23-24 April 2026

1. BACKGROUND

The **Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA)**, adopted in Dublin in 2022, commits endorsing States to enhance the protection of civilians through strengthened policy, doctrine, training, operational practice, and data collection. It also commits endorsing states to review and adapt military policies and practices to better protect civilians.

The 2024 Military Workshop held in Vienna provided a critical forum for military practitioners to: exchange initial implementation experiences; discuss operational challenges; share emerging good practices; and identify capability gaps and training needs.

Based on the exchanges, participants highlighted:

- The need for practical implementation guidance
- The importance of peer-to-peer exchange, in particular military to military exchanges.
- The importance of including other actors (international organizations and civil society) into these exchanges.
- The crucial role of doctrine, training, and operational tools for implementation.
- The value of documenting policies and practices



2. WORKSHOP PURPOSE

Building on the outcomes of the 2024 Vienna workshop, this 1.5-day follow-up event aims to move from *awareness and exchange* toward creating *sustainable and practical implementation pathways*.

The workshop will provide a dedicated military-to-military platform with the following objectives:

1. Assessment / stock taking

- a. Take stock of implementation measures.
- b. Assess available tools and identify gaps.
- c. Examine how EWIPA commitments are being integrated into military training and education materials.

2. Support progress on implementation

- a. Identify key operational areas relevant to the implementation of the Political Declaration, such as understanding the civilian environment, assessing the effects of explosive weapons, and civilian harm tracking.
- b. Explore practical steps and approaches within these areas that support the humanitarian objectives of the Political Declaration, and that are required for effective implementation by and with the armed forces.
- c. Strengthen military contributions to implementation plans.
- d. Ensure continued military-level dialogue.

3. AGENDA

DAY 1 – From Policy to Operational Practice

09:30-10:00

Opening

Brigadier General Herbert Sailer, Head of Operational Command Division, Austrian Armed Forces

Mélanie Regimbal, Chief of Service, UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, Geneva Branch

10:00-11:00

Setting the Scene:

(i) Framing talk on the sessions and structure of the meeting

(ii) Defining key operational priorities and pathways for military engagement



(iii) Exchange on the status and progress made in the implementation of the Political Declaration

11:00-12:00	Session I: National Implementation Updates (<i>break out groups</i>)
12:00-12:30	Plenary Debrief
12:30-13:30	Lunch break
13:30-14:00	Afternoon Framing
14:00-15:30	Session II: The Role of the Military (<i>tabletop exercise</i>)
15:30-16:00	Plenary Debrief
16:00-16:30	Coffee Break
16:30-18:00	Session III: Tools for Implementations
From 18:15	Reception hosted by the Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations Office and specialized institutions in Geneva

DAY 2 (Half Day) – Training and Education

09:30 - 10:00	Opening & Recap
10:00 - 10:45	Session IV Part 1: Education and Training (<i>tabletop exercise</i>)
10:45 - 11:15	Coffee Break
11:15 - 12:30	Session IV Part 2: Training of the force ahead of operations (<i>tabletop exercise continued</i>)
12:30 - 13:00	Plenary Debrief
13:00 - 13:30	<u>Takeaways, Next Steps and Closing</u>

H.E. Alexander Kmentt, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations Office and to the Specialized Institutions in Geneva



DETAILED SESSION OVERVIEW

Session I: National Implementation Updates

Objective: Move from policy discussions to identifying practical implementation measures and documentation pathways.

BREAK-OUT GROUP DISCUSSION

National updates on implementation

Overarching question: *What steps and measures have been taken to implement the EWIPA Declaration, and which of these are the most significant - either already undertaken or forthcoming?*

Additional guiding questions

- **Military Doctrine and Policy development**

How are restrictions or considerations regarding the use of EWIPA reflected in doctrine or policy frameworks?

How are military doctrine or policy frameworks addressing the effects of explosive weapons in populated areas, including consideration of blast, fragmentation, and area effects?

- **Integration into rules of Operational Guidance**

How do doctrine or policy frameworks guide armed forces in incorporating information about the civilian environment, such as population patterns, infrastructure, and essential services, into operational planning?

What tools or processes are used to ensure that civilian harm considerations are systematically integrated into operational decision-making at different command levels?

How are commanders supported in assessing reverberating effects on civilian infrastructure and services during operational planning?

- **Civilian Harm Mitigation Structures**

Are there established mechanisms for tracking, investigating, and responding to civilian harm during and after operations?

How are lessons learned from civilian harm assessments incorporated into doctrine, training, and future operational planning?



Outcome:

Identify existing and emerging policies and operational approaches to the implementation of the Political Declaration, highlighting practical experiences, ongoing challenges, and lessons learned.

Provide a space for information exchange on national policies and practices

Session II: The Role of the Military

Objective: Unpacking the Role of the Military in Implementation

TABLETOP EXERCISE

Exercise to address the full chain of military decision-making, including:

- How is policy translated into strategic direction?
- How can militaries translate political commitments into operational instructions?
- What responsibilities sit with operational commands, and how are these communicated down the chain of command?
- What internal processes enable sustainable implementation (review cycles, legal reviews, after-action assessments)?

Identify pathways for:

- Immediate actions (e.g., doctrine notes, operational guidance).
- Medium-term measures (capability adaptation, procurement considerations).
- Long-term cultural and doctrinal evolution.

Aspects to take into consideration

Targeting and battle damage assessment, civilian harm tracking, urban operations planning, information sharing

Outcome: Unpacking military ownership and institutional pathways, peer to peer exchanges between military representatives as well as civilian-military exchanges.



Session III: Tools for Implementation

Objective: Assess tools and guidance used to support the operationalization of the EWIPA commitments

Discussion on tools and guidance, including national doctrine and policy, operational guidance, civilian harm tracking systems and other documentation used to implement commitments under the Political Declaration as well as external resources.

Guiding Questions:

- *What tools, systems, or guidance do armed forces currently use to support implementation (e.g. doctrine, targeting procedures, data systems)?*
- *Do these tools require adaptation to better fit military processes?*
- *Where are the main gaps or challenges in operationalising EWIPA commitments?*
- *To what extent do existing resources and tools (including those provided by UNODA, ICRC, UNIDIR and civil society) support these needs?*
- *Should the EWIPA process develop practical and voluntary military guidance (i.e. template methodologies to review military policies and practices, generic training scenarios / curricula etc.)?*

Outcome: Peer to peer learning; understanding needs and gaps including by identifying which policies, measures, and tools are needed to support implementation within military structures; gaining a better understanding of what information could be documented in the policies and practices portal.

*Note: The objective is **not** an endorsement of any specific tools.*

Session IV: Training and Education

Objective: Assess how EWIPA is being integrated into training

SCENARIO-BASED EXERCISE

Several States have indicated that they have implemented the Declaration in training. On the basis of a scenario-based exercise the session will assess relevant steps for how training is designed, structured, and implemented in two segments:

Session IV Part 1: Education and training

Session IV Part 2: Training of the force ahead of operations



The first session will provide an opportunity to exchange on how EWIPA can best be integrated into education and training, and address the following points:

- *Level of integration (initial training, staff colleges, specialist courses such as targeting courses)*
- *Method (classroom instruction, scenario-based training, simulations)*
- *How the key operational areas are reflected in military training and how personnel are practically trained to: a) analyze the civilian environment; b) assess weapons effects in populated areas; c) incorporate civilian harm tracking and lessons learned into operational planning and conduct.*

The second session will examine how a force could be best prepared in EWIPA-related issues during transition to conflict and the build-up to combat operations. This will address how both the force HQ and subordinate commanders might incorporate EWIPA-related concerns.

Outcome: Gain a better understanding of the opportunities for EWIPA – related issues to be incorporated into training during routine operations and how this might change in the build up to conflict.