

General Statement by the Federal Republic of Germany

2nd International EWIPA Conference

19-20 November 2025, San José, Costa Rica

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since our last meeting in Oslo, the devastation caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas has not only continued unabatedly, but increased only further. The recent SG report on the “Protection of civilians in armed conflict” recorded 36,000 civilian deaths in 14 armed conflicts in 2024, a further increase from 33,000 civilian deaths in 2023. As previous speakers highlighted, these bleak statistics underline both importance and urgency of the subject matter.

Germany has been engaged in the EWIPA process since the very beginning: in 2017/18 we organized, together with the ICRC and GICHD a series of workshops - the “EWIPA talks” – to inform a first substantial debate within the CCW. Like previous German governments, the new federal government continues to attach high importance to addressing the humanitarian consequences of the use of EWIPA. This is why we are particularly grateful to our host country, Costa Rica, for its important contribution to the continuation of the EWIPA Process.

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Despite the urgency of the problem and the importance we all attach to the EWIPA process the, challenges of implementing the declaration remain substantial. Key actors in the deadliest ongoing military conflicts have not endorsed the declaration and do not participate in its implementation. We need to identify possibilities to reach out to those not participating in order to effectively reduce harm caused by the use of EWIPA.

At the same time, while ongoing conflicts and the extensive use of EWIPA highlight how little our calls for adherence to IHL are being heeded in so many conflict theaters around the world, sections 2 and 3 of the declaration contain areas of engagement where progress in implementing the declaration can be achieved in the shorter-term.

Colleagues,

A particularly important aspect of implementing the declaration consists in collecting relevant data and developing operative lessons on the basis of a thorough assessment of gathered information: Understanding indirect or “reverberating” effects from the use of EWIPA is a complex and continuous task. It is particularly important to inform our armed forces about the manifold, longer-term secondary effects from the use of EWIPA. Doing so is

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central to reduce humanitarian impacts of EWIPA and to improve support for victims in affected conflict settings.

Against this backdrop, since several years Germany is supporting UNIDIR's research on reverberating effects. Most recently, and together with Norway, Germany supported another workshop on how to effectively leverage "Data to Reduce Civilian Harm and Implement the Political Declaration on EWIPA". Its central goal was to operationalize previous work by UNIDIR and the Explosive Weapons Monitor conceptualizing and understanding the nature and scope of reverberating effects, identifying suitable indicators and effective approaches to data collection. We thank UNIDIR and the Explosive Weapons Monitor for their continued efforts to strengthen the understanding of reverberating effects and to work towards operationalization of this knowledge. We know from our participants that this exchange on the complexities of reverberating effects with military, research and humanitarian stakeholders was very valuable. Germany looks forward to continue its cooperation with UNIDIR and thereby its support of this research and efforts for operationalization.

Colleagues,

Another essential area of implementation consists in education and training of military stakeholders as well as exchange between members of the armed forces on policies and doctrine and on how to prevent and reduce civilian harm in EWIPA contexts. The German Bundeswehr places particular emphasis on training all soldiers in all ranks who are involved in the planning and execution of military operations in urban areas. Legal experts play a particular role in these training activities, including by updating training and instruction manuals. In terms of policy and doctrine, the Bundeswehr has clear guidelines, including NATO and national regulations, that apply international humanitarian law in very strict and narrow terms. These guidelines are adapted to the operational environment and other significant changes in circumstances. In line with its commitment to the declaration, Germany continues to explore possibilities to further increase consideration of central elements of EWIPA. Exchanging with other militaries on this is very helpful for our Bundeswehr and, as we believe, for other militaries as well.

Another area where progress in implementing the declaration remains possible in the short to medium term is improving protection of civilians in conflict settings by improving effectiveness in humanitarian support both by ensuring better access during and after conflicts and by improving targeted risk education and preparedness measures tailored to specific EWIPA settings. In its recent report and workshop series, Handicap International underlines the importance of both Explosive Ordnance Risk Education and Conflict Preparedness and Protection and provides clear and actionable recommendations.

Germany already incorporates a number of elements of both EORE and CPP in its humanitarian strategy and will strive for further strengthening of these measures. Two examples:

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- In Gaza, our humanitarian partners have conducted Risk Education sessions for the population throughout the ongoing war. With large parts of the population displaced and living in tents next to unexploded ordnance or on the move along roads not cleared for these, we hope to prevent deaths and accidents, especially for children.
- In Sudan, we are supporting risk education programs for displaced population before returning to their homes. We hope that this will make their journey safer and enable them to avoid triggering explosive remnants of war on their way and once they have reached their homes in the cities previously under attack.

Allow me to close by underlining Germany's commitment to the EWIPA declaration and again thanking our generous host for convening this important conference. Let me also thank colleagues at UNODA whose tireless work made this important conference possible. Germany had the privilege to provide dedicated funding to UNODA for supporting this conference and the declaration's implementation process in general and our parliament's recent budget decision allows us to continue our financial support for the year to come.

Thank you.