



1st international follow-up conference of the

**Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection
of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Aris-
ing from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated
Areas (EWIPA Declaration)**

Oslo, 23 April 2024

Check against delivery

Session 2: Understanding direct and indirect effects

Excellencies,

Distinguished experts,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start my brief intervention by thanking the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for hosting the first international follow-up conference to the EWIPA Declaration and all distinguished panellists and speakers for their contributions today.

Liechtenstein is appalled by the steep upsurge in the number of civilians harmed by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. This is of grave concern in the context of the wars in the Middle East and Ukraine, as it is in other armed conflicts in which urban warfare is applied. The rule of law and the protection of fundamental rights are guiding principles of Liechtenstein's foreign policy. We urge all parties in all armed conflicts to adhere and respect International Humanitarian Law and to immediately stop indiscriminate violence against civilians.

We urge all armed forces to establish clear responsibilities and internal procedures for identifying and responding to civilian harm. However, we also encourage the international community to recognise and support the importance of data collecting on casualties through national authorities, international organisations and civil society actors.

We welcome the efforts undertaken by the United Nations to collect comprehensive and verifiable data on civilian casualties in a large number of conflicts. Liechtenstein was proud member of the core group and penholder of the resolution on the human rights impact of casualty recording at the UN Human Rights Council in its 50th Session.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In order to fully understand the negative impacts of EWIPA, Liechtenstein is of the view that we must gather more than just fatality numbers. It is essential to record detailed casualty data. Improved occupational information about victims of EWIPA could also contribute to the quality of assessments of possible societal impacts of armed conflicts and enable improvements to the flow and coordination of humanitarian aid, including the activities of the ICRC.

Communities affected by armed conflict are often the experts about the impact of EWIPA, and their voices must be heard. Civilian organisations - including but not limited to healthcare providers, faith leaders, journalists and human rights groups – have unparalleled access to information about victims. Liechtenstein therefore encourages armed forces, international organisations and national authorities to engage directly with civilian casualty recorders to better understand and address the impact of their military operations.

When it comes to the collection of new and additional information on the impacts of EWIPA, Liechtenstein strongly encourages the use and respective adaptation of existing mechanisms and urges the need for standardisation. The true value of information can only be unlocked, if the available data is comparable and reliable. In this regard, we encourage all those involved in data collection to adhere to the 2019 Guidance on Casualty Recordings by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as the 2016 Standards for Casualty Recording by Every Casualty Worldwide.

To conclude, let me reiterate Liechtenstein's strong support for the goals of the EWIPA Declaration and for the protection of civil casualties in any armed conflict. We encourage all countries that have not done so, to declare their support for this important initiative and to work together to uphold and protect the core principles of International Humanitarian Law. Humanity, distinction, proportionality and military necessity.

I thank you!