



Statement of the Republic of Sierra Leone at the 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

San Jose, Costa Rica, 19 - 20 November 2025

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sierra Leone is honoured to participate in this Second International Conference on strengthening the protection of civilians from the humanitarian consequences arising from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. We thank the Government of Costa Rica for its leadership and hospitality, and extend our appreciation to Norway, Ireland, and all partners championing this vital Declaration.

Sierra Leone affirms its unwavering commitment to the protection of civilians and to the humanitarian principles at the core of the EWIPA Political Declaration. For us, this Declaration is not merely a policy document — it is a practical, humane, and urgently needed framework for reducing civilian harm and strengthening respect for international humanitarian law. Its relevance has only increased amidst the tragic civilian suffering we continue to witness in Sudan, Gaza, and other conflict settings, where hostilities in populated areas have resulted in severe casualties, widespread destruction, and acute humanitarian distress. These realities remind us why this Declaration exists, and why its implementation must be accelerated with renewed political will.

We welcome the growing global support for the Declaration, which now stands at 90 endorsing States, and look forward to further positive news during this conference. Sierra Leone encourages more States — particularly in Africa and other underrepresented regions — to join this collective commitment. Universalization and implementation must advance together.

At the national level, Sierra Leone has embedded coordination of the Declaration within its Commission on Arms and Ammunition and the Armed Forces, and maintains established procedures for the safe destruction of unserviceable munitions. We continue to integrate

responsible use of explosives into training for our military and police, and our new Harmonized Arms and Ammunition Act of 2023 strengthens national control of weapons and explosive materials. Sierra Leone also actively promotes the Declaration through African regional forums and other relevant fora to encourage wider endorsement. We recognise the need for a more structured review, stronger inter-agency coordination, and enhanced data-collection capacity, and stand ready to advance this work with more coordinated and sustained support from partners, tailored to our practical capacity needs.

As a nation scarred by conflict, we recognize that the use of explosive weapons in towns and cities — and the resulting harm to schools, hospitals, infrastructure, and livelihoods — demands urgent action. We particularly welcome the Declaration's focus on gender-responsive protection, rapid humanitarian access, and the differentiated impacts on women and children. We also value the explicit attention to the threats posed by armed non-state actors.

We underscore the importance of cooperation under Section 4, including peer exchange, regional workshops, and tailored support for States with limited capacity. Sierra Leone remains committed to working with the Group of Friends, the Troika, UN entities, the ICRC, and civil society to advance both universalization and implementation.

Excellencies,

The growing instability of our global environment demands stronger, not weaker, multilateralism. The EWIPA Declaration represents one of the most important humanitarian achievements of recent years. Let us ensure that this conference sends a clear message: that we remain united in protecting civilians, upholding international humanitarian law, and translating political commitments into concrete improvements on the ground.

Sierra Leone stands ready to continue contributing constructively, in solidarity with all partners, as we work towards a safer and more humane world.

I thank you.