

# Protecting civilians from explosive weapons in populated areas

## POC Week Side Event Concept Note

Thursday 23 May 2024, 08.30-10.00

### Background

For more than fifteen years, every UN Secretary-General report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict has drawn attention to the ongoing protection challenges that civilians face when explosive weapons are used in populated areas. One month after the first international follow-up 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\*](#), it is paramount to ensure that its norms and principles remain high on the international agenda.

During the Protection of Civilians' (PoC) week, a focussed discussion will be convened on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA), the ensuing humanitarian consequences that impact on civilian lives, and how the Political Declaration can help to prevent and address these. The event provides the opportunity to discuss actions required by states to better protect civilians in armed conflict, the significance and purpose of the Political Declaration, and how implementation of its commitments can better protect civilians and strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL). This follows previous events on this theme over the past few years in PoC week, emphasising its continued priority.

### Objectives of the event on protecting civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas

- Highlight the humanitarian impacts and protection challenges that civilians face when explosive weapons are used in populated areas, drawing on ongoing conflicts, including Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, Myanmar, Yemen, Syria and the DRC. A focus on the experiences of children is anticipated.
- Discuss how the international community should respond to the humanitarian consequences, and the urgent need to strengthen protection of civilians and respect for IHL, recognising that achieving stronger protection of civilians requires concerted effort.
- Promote the Political Declaration as a landmark response to the humanitarian consequences of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, emphasising the importance of universally promoting the principles and norms of the Declaration without discrimination.
- An update on the outcome and outlooks from the Oslo international follow-up conference on the Political Declaration.
- Provide an opportunity for states to endorse the Political Declaration.
- Encourage endorsers to speed up implementation of the Declaration through changes in policy and practice, including crucially military practice, and providing concrete recommendations.

### Co-sponsors of the side event (TBC)

Permanent Mission of Ireland  
Permanent Mission of Jordan  
Permanent Mission of Liberia  
Permanent Mission of Norway  
Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone

ICRC  
INEW  
OCHA  
UNODA

### Speakers

- Ambassador Mythen, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations - Moderator
- Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, President of the ICRC
- State Secretary Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik, Norway
- Edem Wosornu, Director for Operations and Advocacy, OCHA
- Mr. Hamza al-Kateab, Doctor & Human Rights Activist, Action for Sama
- Camilla Molyneux, Researcher and Project Lead, International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW)

### Format and engagement from the floor

After the panel of speakers, the floor will be open for select questions and inputs from Member States and organisations.

### Location

The meeting will take place at the Permanent Mission of Ireland.

### Contact

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