

**Twenty-fourth Annual Conference
of the High Contracting Parties to
Amended Protocol II to the Convention
on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use
of Certain Conventional Weapons Which
May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious
or to Have Indiscriminate Effects**

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Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)

Report on improvised explosive devices

Submitted by the Coordinators¹

I. Introduction

1. The Group of Experts of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) met in Geneva from 20 July to 21 July 2022 to discuss the issue of improvised explosive devices (IED), in accordance with the decisions taken at the Twenty-third Annual Conference of Amended Protocol II², and at the Sixth Review Conference of the CCW³.
2. Building on the work undertaken by the Group of Experts on this issue since 2009, the discussions on improvised explosive devices were structured as follows:
 - i. General exchange of views;
 - ii. A panel discussion on new types of improvised explosive devices;
 - iii. A panel discussion on methods of clearance;
 - iv. A panel discussion on IED risk education and other methods to protect civilians;
 - v. Updates on relevant developments in other fora addressing the threat posed by IED;
 - vi. A panel discussion on national and regional responses.
3. In accordance with the decision of the Twenty-first Annual Conference to “recognize the importance of a balanced involvement of women and men in the Group of Experts in support of its efforts to address the threats posed by IED,” the Coordinators actively engaged in efforts to achieve such balance in the composition of panels.⁴ As a result of these efforts, women made up over 75% of the panellists.

II. Conduct of the meeting (20 July to 21 July 2022)

A. General exchange of views

4. Representatives from States and from civil society organizations expressed their concern over the proliferation and increasing use of improvised explosive devices (IED) and

¹ Colonel Pascal Levant of France and Ms. Diana Esperanza Castillo Castro of Colombia.

² CCW/AP.II/CONF.23/6, paragraph 37.

³ CCW/CONF.VI/11, Decision 4, paragraph (i).

⁴ CCW/AP.II/CONF.23/6, paragraph 34 (g).



their detrimental impact on civilians. Delegations stressed the severe humanitarian implications of improvised explosive devices, in particular in urban environments, and their negative effects on security, stability and socio-economic development. The harm caused by improvised explosive devices to peacekeepers was also underscored by several delegations.

5. Amended Protocol II is seen by most delegations as a crucial element of international humanitarian law (IHL) that limits the devastating effects of mines, booby traps, and IED. In order to improve the implementation of the Protocol's obligations, several delegations underlined the importance of national annual reports and recalled the obligation of High Contracting Parties to submit such reports. Furthermore, many delegations stressed the need to intensify universalisation efforts for Amended Protocol II. The universalisation of this Protocol is seen as an essential step to reinforce its full implementation.

6. Several delegations highlighted the particular usefulness of the voluntary self-assessment tool by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) to assist High Contracting Parties in identifying gaps and challenges in their national regulation and preparedness regarding improvised explosive devices, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 73/67.⁵ A presentation of this voluntary self-assessment tool and updates on its implementation were shared by a representative from UNIDIR in one of the experts panels. The tool and its implementation were welcomed by a number of delegations.

7. Delegations noted that priority should be given to develop coherent regional approaches to counter the multifaceted threats posed by IED. Thus, High Contracting Parties stressed the need to i) create synergies among national, regional and international capacity building efforts, ii) improve institutional capacity and iii) promote public awareness.

8. Many delegations called for continued exchanges on best practices, with the aim of reaching a common understanding of the threat posed by IED, as well as of the consequences for civilians and peacekeepers, which would contribute to developing a comprehensive approach to such threat. In this regard, the updated voluntary questionnaire on IED was welcomed by delegations. Delegations were invited to answer to this questionnaire⁶.

B. Information exchange

i. The threat of improvised explosive devices and new types of improvised explosive devices

9. Panellists from the German Armed Forces, the Center for Strategic Studies and Innovations of Yaoundé, and Small Arms Survey (SAS) provided insight on the challenges posed by new types of improvised explosive devices. They all highlighted the increased sophistication of devices found on the ground. Furthermore, experts underlined that these devices are constantly evolving, which makes their detection and deactivation difficult. Consequently, following as closely as possible these developments is necessary to adapt counter-IED efforts accordingly, such as risk education. After the panel discussion, delegations exchanged information on new types of IEDs, types of main charges and detonators, acquisition of new components of device materials entering States' territories, and information on IED management.

ii. Methods of clearance of improvised explosive devices, focussing on urban environments

10. Representatives of the Mines Advisory Group (MAG), the UN Mine Action Service of Somalia (UNMAS-Somalia) and the Fondation Suisse de Déminage highlighted the constant need to develop new demining in response to the evolution of devices on the ground, as well as of the threat linked to IED. All panellists agreed that operating in areas with a high population density requires specific procedures. The expert from MAG underlined that

⁵ A/RES/73/67.

⁶ The responses of this questionnaire presented by High Contracting Parties are uploaded to a protected website which can be accessed by all the High Contracting Parties that have responded to the questionnaire.

encouraging women to take up technical roles within demining operations can help strengthen their status in local communities. The Fondation Suisse de Déminage also pointed out that demining teams must take into account specific environmental regulations to protect biodiversity.

iii. Protection of civilians: risk education and other methods

11. Panellists from the Campaña Colombia Contra Minas, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and Humanity and Inclusion (HI) participated in the discussion and agreed that risk education is a crucial step to mitigating risks related to IED. To this end, the experts stressed the need for an early inclusion of mine risk education in educational programs in affected countries pointing to several studies which show that education on IED increases the detection of devices thus, reducing the number of civilian casualties. Furthermore, collaboration with local communities and local leaders to disseminate information about IED was noted as a key aspect of risk education strategies. Following the panel presentations, delegations explained how the development of preventive measures and proactive approaches could further mitigate the risk of IED and help to increase awareness within the civilian population.

iv. Updates on relevant developments in other fora addressing the threat posed by IED⁷

12. Panellists from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), United Nations Office of Counter-terrorism (UNOCT), and Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) delivered presentations on counter-IED efforts in other fora. The three UN entities provided information on the discussions on, and links to, IED in the framework of at the General Assembly, the Security Council, the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda⁸. In particular, the representative from UNIDIR highlighted that the employment of women in different roles in mine action and in IED counter-proliferation, including operations and management, contributes to women's economic empowerment and participation in decision-making. The panellist from AOAV demonstrated the impact of COVID-19 on IED attacks in populated areas.

v. National and regional responses

13. Representatives from UNIDIR, the Organization of American States (OAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and African Union (AU) shared lessons learned on the development and consolidation of national and regional responses to counter the threat of IED. In this regard, panellists in particular highlighted the need for a coordinated approach, both at the national and regional levels and among all relevant stakeholders, noting that intergovernmental strategies should provide a framework for preventing and responding to the use of IED by facilitating greater cooperation, coordination, and collective action. In addition, UNIDIR presented the Counter-IED Capability Maturity Model and Self-Assessment Tool and provided an update on its implementation.

⁷ In accordance with paragraph 34 (f) of the final document of the Twenty-third Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties (CCW/AP.II/CONF.23/6).

⁸ S/RES/1325.