

Twenty-seventh 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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English only

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General exchanges of views

Working paper

Submitted by Canada *

1. Canada would have wished to deliver this document as a statement at the 27th Annual Conference of High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II of the CCW, and we regret to have to submit this document as a working paper only.
2. This Protocol remains a fundamental instrument in our collective efforts to reduce suffering and uphold international humanitarian law. Its principles are grounded in a shared recognition that indiscriminate weapons—particularly landmines and improvised explosive devices—continue to devastate civilians long after conflict has ceased.
3. The importance of this Protocol cannot be overstated. It plays a crucial role in reinforcing the norms that protect civilians during and after hostilities, and in promoting responsible state behaviour in the development, transfer, and use of such weapons. It represents a core pillar of the global rules-based system that safeguards life and human dignity.
4. However, to maximize its impact, universalization remains essential. We urge all states not yet party to Amended Protocol II to accede without delay. Universal adherence strengthens implementation, increases humanitarian protection, and ensures that no region is left behind. Let us move collectively toward a world where every state upholds these standards, and accountability and prevention serve as the foundation of our shared security.
5. Canada is deeply alarmed by the rise in the number of victims of landmines and improvised explosive devices in recent years. Civilians—particularly children—continue to account for the vast majority of casualties. These tragic numbers reflect the failure of armed actors to comply with established norms, the proliferation of improvised devices in conflict settings, and the misuse of anti-personnel mines in violation of international law.
6. We call on all parties to armed conflict to fully respect international humanitarian law and to refrain from the use of indiscriminate weapons. We further emphasize the need for enhanced international cooperation, capacity-building, and assistance to states affected by contamination.
7. Canada is proud to be a long-standing leader of the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel mines. This landmark treaty continues to save lives, enable development, and uphold human dignity by promoting clearance, stockpile destruction, victim assistance, and robust international cooperation. We encourage all states not yet party to the Ottawa Convention to join without delay. The Ottawa Convention and Amended Protocol II are complementary instruments, and together they reinforce global humanitarian norms and protect vulnerable communities.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



8. We are deeply concerned by recent withdrawals from the Ottawa Convention. Such decisions undermine decades of progress, weaken global humanitarian protection, and risk normalizing the use of a weapon that has no place in modern conflict. We call on all State Parties to reaffirm and defend the global majority that anti-personnel mines are unacceptable.

9. In this regard, Canada commends the Secretary-General's campaign to preserve and strengthen norms of disarmament and arms control. At a time when global security is strained and international law is under pressure, leadership and recommitment to multilateral principles are vital. We all share responsibility to prevent backsliding and to reaffirm that protecting civilians in conflict is a universal obligation, not an optional commitment.

10. Canada underscores the importance of gender-responsive mine action. Women, men, girls, and boys are affected differently by mines and explosive hazards, and they must be meaningfully included in mine-action decision-making, risk education, and victim assistance. Incorporating gender perspectives strengthens operational effectiveness, enhances community engagement, and ensures that assistance and clearance efforts are equitable and inclusive.

11. We also take this opportunity to highlight the indispensable role of civil society, including mine-action organizations, survivor networks, technical experts, and humanitarian actors. Their field-based knowledge, advocacy, and operational leadership are central to our collective success. Canada expresses deep appreciation for their contributions and reiterates our support for their continued engagement in this forum.

12. Canada remains committed to the universalization and full implementation of Amended Protocol II, to the Ottawa Convention, and to the broader framework of humanitarian disarmament. We must continue working together—states, civil society, and international institutions—to preserve and strengthen norms that protect human life and ensure that future generations can live free from the threat of landmines and other explosive remnants of war.
