

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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Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)

Report on improvised explosive devices

Submitted by the Coordinators ^{*}, ^{**}, ¹

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 9 September to 10 September 2025 to discuss the issue of improvised explosive devices (IED), in accordance with the decisions taken by the Twenty-sixth Annual Conference of Amended Protocol II,² and by the 2024 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW.³
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*,”⁴ the Coordinators and the CCW Implementation Support Unit undertook efforts to promote such balance in the composition of panels. As a result, women made up over 30 percent of the panelists.

* Agreement was reached to publish the present document after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.

** The present document is being issued without formal editing.

¹ Colonel Philippe Lejeune of France and Mr. Angel Horna of Peru.

² CCW/AP.II/CONF.26/5, paragraphs 19 and 20.

³ CCW/MSP/2024/7, paragraph 27 (b).

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



II. Conduct of the meeting (9 to 10 September 2025)

A. General exchange of views

4. Representatives from States underscored the continuing humanitarian challenges posed by explosive devices, including IEDs, booby traps, and unexploded ordnance (UXO). Continued dialogue within the framework of the Group of Experts was widely encouraged to foster practical solutions and strengthen the Protocol's implementation, ensuring its relevance in addressing evolving threats to peace, security, and civilian protection worldwide.

5. The IED Coordinators highlighted the multidimensional threat posed by these devices, especially in urban settings where civilians face disproportionate risks. Delegations emphasized that the growing sophistication and proliferation of IEDs—often employed by non-State actors and linked to organized crime—requires a comprehensive global response grounded in strong political will and international cooperation. Most delegations further underlined the significance of Amended Protocol II, noting that it remains the only international treaty specifically addressing IEDs and plays a unique role in regulating their use and mitigating civilian harm.

6. The importance of transparency through annual reporting by High Contracting Parties was stressed, alongside a call for continued cooperation within international frameworks to ensure effective implementation of Amended Protocol II. Delegations also emphasized the need for steady and sustained efforts to ensure the Protocol's provisions are fully implemented and adhered to by all High Contracting Parties.

7. Delegations provided examples of national measures taken to counter the threats posed by IEDs, including the establishment of counter-IED strategies. Key activities highlighted included integrating the provisions of the Protocol into national military regulations and enhancing risk education, especially through outreach initiatives aimed at vulnerable populations, such as children.

B. Information exchange

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

8. Panelists from Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), Argentina and the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) presented trends of the humanitarian impact of IEDs and offered insights on the challenges posed by new types of these devices.

9. The panelist from AOAV provided an analysis of the trends and patterns of the global impact of IEDs on civilians. AOAV maintains the Explosive Violence Monitor, a dataset built from English-language media reports, which tracks incidents of explosive violence and their human toll. Over the past decade, IEDs accounted for 23 percent of all explosive incidents and caused 30 percent of civilian casualties globally, with 92 percent of those casualties occurring in populated areas. The panelist highlighted that non-State actors, are responsible for most of the IED-related civilian harm, with Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan being the most affected States. Key challenges in addressing this threat include the accessibility of materials, the decentralized nature of manufacture, and limitations in global monitoring of IED incidents and difficulties in perpetrator attribution. Despite a decline in use, the panelist emphasized that the civilian harm remains severe, with non-state actors driving the threat, especially in non-international armed conflicts. In conclusion, she called for enhanced international cooperation, improved threat mapping, and strengthened civilian protection frameworks.

10. The expert from Argentina addressed the evolving nature of IEDs, emphasizing their shift from rudimentary to technologically advanced weapons. He highlighted emerging risks linked to artificial intelligence, robotics, and 3D printing, which complicate detection and attribution. The intervention underscored the importance of sociological analysis, regional cooperation, and intelligence sharing to anticipate threats. Argentina's participation in

operations such as INTERPOL's Claymore and Watchmaker was cited as part of its commitment to regional security and international collaboration.

11. The panelist from UNMAS presented emerging trends in IED manufacture, design and deployment, highlighting the adaptation of fiber-optic unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), plug-and-play artificial intelligence modules, and modified consumer technologies such as hoverboards. These innovations facilitate the production and deployment of IEDs and complicate detection, posing growing risks to civilians, humanitarian actors and security forces. The spread of IED tactics to criminal networks, particularly in urban settings, was noted as a rising concern. The intervention emphasized the need for international cooperation, anticipatory regulations to prevent further escalation, and the use of United Nations tools and trainings to address evolving threats and build sustainable counter-IED capacities. The presentation underscored that the fusion of commercial technology and improvised tactics is outpacing traditional countermeasures, requiring Member States to adapt norms and technical standards accordingly.

12. Delegations were invited to exchange views and share their national experiences in countering threats posed by IEDs. Concerns were expressed regarding the increasing sophistication and diversity of IEDs, including those incorporating photoelectric sensors, liquid explosive launchers, and modified munitions. Several interventions highlighted the integration of emerging technologies such as fiber optics, artificial intelligence, and repurposed consumer devices, which complicate detection and response. It was noted that explosive remnants of war (ERW), including failed or abandoned munitions, are often repurposed by non-State actors for the manufacture of IEDs, underscoring the importance of effective ERW clearance to prevent their misuse. Questions were raised regarding the adequacy of existing legal frameworks, the importance of credible and standardized information on incidents, technologies and responses, and the need for enhanced international cooperation and accountability of perpetrators.

13. A delegation underlined the recommendations linked to counter-IED put forward in the report of the Secretary-General titled "Assistance in mine action",⁵ which is currently put to the UN General Assembly.

14. The gendered impact of IEDs was also acknowledged, with calls for inclusive and multidimensional approaches that consider the differentiated effects on affected populations.

2. Methods of clearance of improvised explosive devices, focusing on urban environments

15. Panelists from the Fondation Suisse de Déminage (FSD), France, Germany, the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) presented on methods of clearance of IED and related challenges.

16. The panelist from FSD focused his intervention on IED demining and innovation in this sector. He outlined the specific features of humanitarian demining, which requires a permissive environment to operate, is often conducted in urban settings, and entails mitigating risks for civilians and returning land to local populations. These elements underpin the broader "land release" approach. He also underscored the need for methodologies tailored to humanitarian contexts and the importance of innovation, including remote tools and artificial intelligence. Looking ahead, he emphasized the value of strengthening the military–civil nexus in the field of innovation, while bearing in mind the requirements of humanitarian action, notably in terms of costs, logistics, and training.

17. The panelist from Germany focused his intervention on the technical challenges and humanitarian urgency of conducting IED clearance in urban environments. He highlighted the unique characteristics of these settings, including densely populated streets, unstable or collapsed structures, and the ever-evolving nature of the threat. The panelist provided an overview of the IED clearance process in urban areas, which begins with establishing a common operating picture and zoning, followed by opening safe corridors, conducting block-by-block clearance, and finally handing over cleared areas. He emphasized the need for an

⁵ "Assistance in mine action", Report of the Secretary-General, A/80/272, 28 July 2025.

integrated approach, combining clearance operations with risk education and maintaining a reliable community reporting network. He also stressed the role of technology, such as unmanned aerial systems (UAS), indoor micro-drones, and dual-sensor detectors, in enhancing operational effectiveness. He cautioned that while technology acts as a powerful force multiplier, it should not replace fundamental doctrine and training.

18. Panelists from France shared insights on the use of modern digital tools in demining training. While these tools cannot replace practical drills in simulated operational settings, they bring many benefits in the field of academic learning. These include easy access to educational materials, streamlined learning processes and the preservation of training equipment with high utility value. The panelists presented concrete innovation projects, such as the digitalization of the Center's ammunition educational collection and the digital simulation of an explosive ordnance (EO) demining environment using virtual reality tools. The digitalization of demining training also faces several challenges, including the limited availability of tools due to the small size of the corresponding market, and their rapid obsolescence.

19. The panelist from MAG shared lessons learned from urban IED clearance operations in Iraq and Syria since 2014. In certain contexts, flexible and adaptable equipment can be more effective than highly specialized machinery. He stressed the importance of complementing baseline non-technical surveys with technical expertise and robust information management to ensure assets are deployed where they are most needed. Risk management strategies should take into account specific dynamics and evolving nature of each conflict. He emphasized that successful clearance requires an integrated approach, that addresses not only the removal of IEDs but also associated challenges such as debris management, property concerns, and reconstruction. This requires coordination with relevant specialized actors, such as urban planners, to ensure comprehensive recovery. Looking ahead, the panelist recommended compiling best practices on urban IED clearance into a dedicated guide to complement existing resources, including the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).

20. The panelist from GICHD underscored the scale of IED casualties, the wide geographic spread of IED use and the increasing sophistication of such devices, as well as persistent challenges in counter-IED efforts, including low levels of reporting of incidents, data limitations, and the transnational nature of the threat. Against this backdrop, she underlined the need for innovative solutions while noting the limitations of modern technologies, particularly in IED detection. A review of available sensors showed that effectiveness remains limited for buried objects or partially exposed explosive ordnance, with performance often dependent on weather conditions. The panelist pointed to the potential of artificial intelligence to help address these limitations improving detecting emplacement or residual risks and improving data management. However, she emphasized that significant progress is still required before mature artificial intelligence models can be fully operationalized, particularly in view of data quality constraints and the need to avoid bias.

21. Following the panel, several delegations addressed the opportunities and challenges associated with the use of new technologies in demining and IED clearance, in particular artificial intelligence. Delegations emphasized that innovation in this field is essential to maximize limited resources and reduce civilian and military harm during survey and clearance operations. It was stressed that the use of new technologies should never compromise the safety of operators and should reflect the commitment of High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II to protect civilians in hostilities. Opportunities for training purposes were also discussed, with some delegations sharing national experiences in developing relevant courses, including in cooperation with international partners. The issue of funding for clearance operations, especially in urban settings, was also raised.

3. Protection of civilians: risk education and other methods

22. Panelists from Humanity & Inclusion (HI), the GICHD and the Explosive Weapons Trauma Care Collective participated in the discussion on the crucial importance of protection of civilians in the fight against IEDs, emphasizing risk education and immediate post-blast care as crucial aspects of mitigating the risks related to IED.

23. The panelist from HI presented a comprehensive armed violence reduction approach to IEDs, integrating Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE), conflict preparedness and protection, land release, victim assistance, and community-based first aid. In Ethiopia, HI's multi-pillar response in Tigray includes EORE outreach to over 14,000 individuals, radio campaigns, and training activities for community focal points, including EORE, community First Aid, Explosive Hazard Awareness and various capacity building initiatives. Nearly 700 victims have been referred for assistance, and over 870 explosive ordnances have been cleared. The inclusion of first aid in EORE enhances community resilience and emergency preparedness. Key recommendations included community-based delivery, tailored messaging, integration into broader services, and measurement of behavioral impact. Risk education and conflict preparedness and protection were reaffirmed as essential components of civilian protection in explosive ordnance-contaminated environments.

24. The panelist from GICHD shared insights from its ongoing study on the IED impact in the Sahel, revealing a sharp increase in incidents and casualties across Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, and Chad. Over 5,200 casualties have been recorded since 2020, with IEDs increasingly affecting civilians, infrastructure, and humanitarian access. The contamination has disrupted livelihoods, displaced populations, and hindered access to education and basic services. GICHD also presented the Technical Note for Mine Action (TNMA 12-10-01), which supplements IMAS 12-10 and provides operational guidance on implementing effective, context-specific IED risk education across affected regions. The note emphasizes conflict sensitivity, humanitarian principles, and tailored messaging based on local context and risk assessments. Key challenges outlined included limited national capacity, evolving IED threat patterns, and constraints in reaching at-risk populations.

25. The panelist from Explosive Weapons Trauma Care Collective presented on emergency care interventions to reduce preventable deaths among IED victims in low-resource conflict settings. She highlighted that civilian mortality in IED-related incidents remains disproportionately high due to limited trauma systems, evacuation capabilities, and medical resources. Drawing lessons from military trauma systems, the panelist emphasized the need to adapt best practices, such as data-driven care and layperson first responder training, to local contexts. Pilot programmes integrating first aid into explosive ordnance risk education have shown promising results in settings like Burkina Faso and Tigray. The presentation underscored the importance of context-sensitive approaches, co-designed with local actors, and called for victim assistance to be recognized as a core pillar of counter-IED frameworks, alongside prevention and long-term rehabilitation.

26. Following the panel presentations, several delegations shared national experiences and raised key considerations for enhancing risk education and civilian protection. Delegations noted the scale of contamination and its significant impact on socio-economic development, emphasizing that risk education programmes should be tailored to the specific needs of different groups, including women and children, and be adaptable to environmental factors, including those exacerbated by climate change. The importance of culturally sensitive communication strategies was also emphasized, particularly in regions where conventional danger symbols may not be universally understood. Panelists highlighted the value of community-based planning, multi-risk approaches, and integrating first aid training into EORE programmes. They also pointed to the critical role of open data, digital platforms, and innovative tools in customizing interventions and expanding outreach. Concerns were expressed over declining funding for mine action, with calls for sustained support to ensure the continuity of risk education, particularly in countries with limited operational capacity. The need for coordinated efforts across conventions and sectors was reiterated, alongside the recognition of victim assistance as a core component of counter-IED frameworks.

4. Updates on relevant developments in other fora addressing the threat posed by IED⁶

27. Panelists from the GICHD, the World Customs Organization (WCO) and Australia presented on counter-IED efforts in other fora.

⁶ In accordance with paragraph 33 (e) of the final document of the Twenty-fourth Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties (CCW/AP.II/CONF.24/5).

28. The panelist from GICHD tackled the gender perspective and described several shared objectives between humanitarian disarmament, including Amended Protocol II, and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, namely to protect civilians, uphold international law and promote peace and security. In her presentation, she highlighted how women's participation in counter-IED activities and in mine action in general can lead to safer operations, increase access to affected populations and strengthen prevention efforts including through gender-sensitive risk education. On the other hand, specific needs of women should also be properly assessed and considered to better protect them from the threat of IEDs, as well as to guarantee that they equally benefit from relief and recovery processes. Moving forward, she underscored the positive example set in this field by the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan, adopted within the framework of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), which includes gender-sensitive actions (for instance, on workforce participation, and data and reporting). She concluded by underlining to reinforce links between the WPS Agenda and mine action, including in the counter-IED domain.

29. The panelist from WCO shared insights from the law enforcement perspective, providing a presentation of the Programme Global Shield (PGS) which monitors the licit movement and counters the illicit diversion of chemical precursors and detonators often used to manufacture IEDs. The programme is based on four complementary pillars, namely capacity building, analytics, intelligence and enforcement operations. Analytics and intelligence notably play a key role in keeping up to speed with the evolving methods employed by criminals. Emphasizing the importance of partnering with international organizations and customs bodies, as well as with police and other local law enforcement agencies, he introduced projects currently under development that aim to foster the exchange of information and good practices. This includes the creation of a new digital tool facilitating the detection and handling of chemical precursors and IED components by frontline officers ("Explosive Precursor – Mobile App"). A 15-day operational exercise will also be organized in September and October 2025 and will provide an opportunity to test operational and cooperation capacities of relevant actors.

30. The panelist from Australia presented the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution "*Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices*"⁷. She shared insights on the process (co-led by Australia, France and Nigeria) starting with the adoption of the first version in 2015 and leading to the adoption of the latest iteration of the resolution in 2024. The latest resolution contains important updates on emerging trends, recent developments and initiatives, as well as challenges and opportunities to build upon existing efforts. The panelist also introduced the Secretary-General's report on IEDs⁸, mandated by the resolution, which outlines efforts and initiatives carried out within and outside the United Nations system, discusses the evolving nature and humanitarian impact of these devices, and provides recommendations to address the threat posed by IEDs. Moving forward, she highlighted opportunities for States to further engage and consider the issue in the General Assembly in 2026.

31. Following the panel presentations, several delegations shared national perspectives on possible links with other fora and international instruments. The Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management and its objective 10 to "*deny unauthorized recipients, including criminals, organized criminal groups and terrorists, access to usable cached, abandoned and uncleared conventional ammunition and its energetic material*" was noted as an additional tool to foster counter-IED efforts. Delegations exchanged national approaches and practices on mainstreaming gender in counter-IED efforts including to strengthen the participation of women. The need to foster gender balance in the Group of Experts was underscored, as some delegations reflected upon efforts made in other fora, such as the creation of gender focal points in the framework of the APMBC and the Arms Trade Treaty. In this regard, reference was made to the Final Document of the 6th CCW Review Conference, which recognizes "*the importance of a balanced involvement of*

⁷ A/RES/79/53, adopted on 2 December 2024.

⁸ "Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices", Report of the Secretary-General, A/79/211, 22 July 2024.

women and men in the Group of Experts in support of its efforts to address the threats posed by IED”.⁹

5. National and regional responses

32. Panelists from Burkina Faso and Cameroon shared national responses from States directly affected by IEDs, while the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and Small Arms Survey presented the development of relevant tools made available to States to counter IEDs and foster coordinated regional responses.

33. The panelist from Burkina Faso underlined the ongoing threat posed by the use of IEDs by terrorist groups and presented a range of national mitigation measures. At the institutional level, demining efforts have been centralized under the authority of the National Arms Control Commission, established in 2021. The legal framework has also been strengthened, notably to better regulate the flows of components that can be used to produce IED. In the most affected areas, the humanitarian response has been enhanced. The panelist further highlighted recurrent challenges including difficulties in information management and the collection of data on the IED threat and demining activities. He also stressed the need for more responsive and comprehensive IED victim assistance. The panelist emphasized the importance of external support citing examples of successful cooperation with partner States and UNMAS.

34. The panelist from Cameroon described similar trends in the IED threat landscape, noting the country’s ongoing efforts to combat terrorist actors, particularly in the Lake Chad region. He outlined the main elements of the national response, highlighting training and risk education for both military personnel and civilian population as central components. The panelist underscored the significant progress achieved in these areas in recent years, including through enhanced cooperation with international and regional partners. Looking ahead, he shared Cameroon’s future counter-IED priorities, focusing on reinforcing national capacities and autonomy. This includes the planned establishment of a national centre of expertise countering IEDs and, subsequently, the strengthening of training capacities to provide assistance to affected regional partners.

35. The panelist from UNIDIR provided an updated overview of the UNIDIR Capability Maturity Model and Self-Assessment Tool for Countering Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED CMM and SAT), which assists States in identifying gaps and challenges in addressing IEDs. The tool assesses national counter-IED efforts across components such as national policy and legislation, security and control of explosives, risk education and the development of counter-IED capabilities. The panelist highlighted its application at the regional level, including in Southeast Asia and West Africa. He concluded by presenting a UNIDIR initiative launched in 2025 in response to the General Assembly’s call for States to “*share information with [UNIDIR], on good practices, lessons learned and national experiences*”¹⁰. This initiative will develop an online compendium of effective national measures, expected to be operational in the second half of 2026. States were encouraged to engage with UNIDIR in this process.

36. The panelist from Small Arms Survey introduced a complementary tool, currently under development, which aims to provide a standard methodology for the establishment of a national IED threat picture. Drawing on operational experiences and lessons learned from counter-IED activities, notably in West Africa, he noted that key stakeholders often lack a clear understanding of the IED threat and that such efforts should be integrated, where possible, into broader regional security, stability and development initiatives. The proposed tool comprises three main steps: a baseline assessment (which can support a counter-IED capability maturity assessment), the development of a strategic plan, and its operationalization. The overall objective is to shift national counter-IED efforts from reactive measures to a more proactive, integrated approach.

37. Following the panel presentations, several delegations underscored the importance of continuing to share experiences, information and good practices in the field of counter-IED,

⁹ CCW/CONF.VI/11, para. 79.

¹⁰ A/RES/79/53, para. 8.

as well as maintaining close cooperation between High Contracting Parties. Delegations highlighted concrete examples of regional cooperation in humanitarian demining, across Africa, Asia and Latin America including the delivery of demining training to strengthen national expertise and operational capacities.

C. Conclusion

38. In their concluding remarks, the IED Coordinators highlighted that the discussions within the Group of Experts have contributed to strengthening the exchange of information between States, international and regional organizations and other relevant actors, in their common efforts countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices. They also underscored the importance of continuing these efforts within the forum.
