

Meeting of the High Contracting Parties 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

21 November 2023

English only

Geneva, 15-17 November 2023

Agenda item 7

General exchange of views

Working paper

Submitted by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

1. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania deeply regret that due to the disruptive activities of one High Contracting Party we could not adopt the Rules of Procedure based on established practice that has served us well for decades, and instead had to resort to discussing substantive issues in an informal setting.
2. Our delegations remain firmly committed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols as essential means of strengthening international humanitarian law, and support all efforts aimed at its universalization.
3. We regard CCW as a unique forum to bring States together to balance military necessity with humanitarian concerns. We encourage all States not yet party to accede without delay, and we call on all High Contracting Parties to comply with their obligations under the CCW and its Protocols.
4. Our delegations view the CCW as an important forum to increase awareness of the existing challenges and to address emerging issues. In this regard, the Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) presents an excellent platform for discussing the disruptive aspects of lethal autonomous weapons systems. We highly value the contributions made by the GGE on LAWS and continue to support the work of this Group. Our delegations recognise the CCW as the appropriate international forum for discussions on this matter.
5. We attach great importance to building and sustaining confidence in compliance. Since joining the CCW, our countries have diligently carried out all of their national reporting obligations. We encourage all High Contracting Parties to submit the annual reports on compliance with the provisions of the Convention and its Protocols, thereby developing mutual trust and creating transparency.
6. For almost two years Russia has continued to blatantly disregard its international humanitarian law obligations, including its obligations under the CCW and its Protocols. Russian forces continue to use anti-personnel mines, victim-activated booby-traps and Improvised Explosive Devices in Ukraine. Russia's aggression has exposed millions of civilians to the risks posed by explosive remnants of war. We call on Russia to cease all violations of the CCW and its Protocols, and to immediately stop its war of aggression, and completely and unconditionally withdraw its military and mercenaries from the entire territory of Ukraine. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's unjustifiable, unprovoked and illegal large-scale aggression against Ukraine, enabled by Belarus.

