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

15 November 2024

English only

Geneva, 13-15 November 2024
Agenda item 7
General exchange of views

Working Paper*

Submitted by Germany

1. Germany aligns itself with the working paper by the European Union.

2. The CCW, by its name, stipulates the prohibition or restriction of certain conventional weapons that cause excessive suffering or have indiscriminate effects. There are credible reports that **Russia**, a member state to this convention, violates international law and uses means of combat contrary to its obligations under CCW in its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. We condemn Russia's violations of international law, including through targeting civilians by using anti-personnel landmines and other explosive weapons. We urge Russia to immediately put an end to the war it started. International humanitarian law must be fully respected, including the CCW and its Protocols.

3. On the situation in the Middle East, Germany condemns Hamas' and other terrorist groups brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attacks across Israel. Civilians in Gaza are also suffering terribly. All efforts need to be directed towards a humanitarian ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

4. We stand in solidarity with the State of Israel while emphasizing that in an armed conflict, all parties are bound by *international humanitarian law*. Israel's actions in exercising its right to defend itself against armed attacks by terrorist groups must respect international law and human rights law - inter alia the obligation to allow for humanitarian assistance.

5. Protecting civilians in armed conflicts remains of key importance for Germany. The provisions of international humanitarian law must be fully respected by all parties to an armed conflict.

6. The meeting of states parties to the CCW and its Protocols remains an important forum to discuss the consequences of the use of conventional weapons. This includes assessing the impacts of armed conflict on women, men, boys and girls as a critical consideration for effectively implementing arms control and disarmament agreements as well as policies and programmes. This also includes the effects of technological developments and humanitarian implications. The possibility to address new challenges to international humanitarian law in this forum remains crucial.

7. Germany welcomes the excellent work accomplished by **the Group of Governmental Experts on LAWS.** We commend the GGE's chairperson Ambassador in den Bosch for his effective leadership and thank him and his team for their tireless efforts and their substantive input that in our view enabled the discussions to move forward considerably. We will address this topic during the appropriate agenda item.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

Please recycle

8. The CCW and its Protocols, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention are essential instruments when it comes to addressing the devastating humanitarian impact on civilians due the indiscriminate use of explosive weapons. We strive for universalization of these important instruments and call on all States which are not members to **join these conventions without further delay**.

9. In light of the humanitarian impact and the heavy consequences on social and economic development caused by the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of **Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines** (MOTAPM), Germany is convinced that further consultations and progress in addressing the humanitarian risks are needed. We regret that a few member states, including the Russian Federation, did block discussions on this matter previously. Germany would welcome the inclusion of MOTAPM on next year's CCW agenda. Improvised Explosive Devices kill and injure civilians and have a detrimental impact on affected communities, causing significant humanitarian challenges and socioeconomic impacts. Both, Amended Protocol II and the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention, are important frameworks to deal with the impact of anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature and the mounting threat posed by these weapons, including addressing the humanitarian impact. Having presided over the 21st meeting of States Parties of the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention last year, Germany is committed to contributing to this year's review conference which will take place at the end of this month in Cambodia. We strive for States Parties to send a strong signal across the world towards ending the use of this cruel weapon. Again, we call on all countries who have not yet done so to join this important instrument.

10. Finally two new initiatives in arms control and disarmament architecture that will make a difference in the protection of civilians need to be highlighted:

11. Firstly, the **Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management** finally closes the gap of a dedicated regulatory instrument on conventional ammunition at the international level. It is a significant milestone for the benefit of people in all regions, not only on war-torn regions, by firmly addressing gaps in through-life ammunition management. We are thankful for the broad support last year and this year to the French-German Resolution in First Committee on “Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management”, which brought into life the Global Framework as recommended by the OEWG and gives new impetus to its practical implementation.

12. Secondly, Germany welcomes the adoption and first follow-up meeting in Oslo in April 2024 of the political declaration on *Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas* (EWIPA), the important result of the Irish-led process for a meaningful and inclusive political declaration. Germany has contributed to the successful negotiation of this declaration and is committed to actively engage in the follow-up process, which can contribute decisively to better protecting civilians. So far, 87 States have endorsed the Declaration. We hope to see many more supporters at the second meeting of States in Costa Rica next year.

13. Germany will remain highly engaged in the CCW and all its protocols.