

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

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English only

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Item 7 of the provisional agenda

General exchange of views

Working paper

Submitted by Canada *

1. Canada would have wished to deliver this document as a statement at the CCW Meeting of High Contracting Parties, and we regret to have to submit this document as a working paper only.
2. As we gather at a time of rising geopolitical tensions, deteriorating respect for international norms, and increasing civilian harm in conflict zones, this Convention and its protocols remain essential pillars of international humanitarian law and responsible state behaviour in armed conflict.
3. Canada calls once again for the universalization of the Convention and all of its Protocols. The CCW reflects our shared commitment to mitigating unnecessary suffering and protecting civilians and combatants alike. To be fully effective, it must be universal in scope. We therefore urge all states not yet party to this Convention—and to each of its Protocols—to accede without delay. Universalization strengthens not only the CCW itself, but also the global humanitarian and disarmament architecture on which all states rely for stability and security.
4. We would like to highlight the productive work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). This GGE continues to make incremental progress in clarifying key concepts, identifying areas of convergence, and exploring potential approaches to addressing the risks associated with emerging technologies in autonomous weapons. Canada underscores the value of these efforts, which contribute to greater understanding and transparency regarding autonomy in weapons systems, and we remain committed to working constructively alongside other delegations to ensure that technological advancement is accompanied by responsible policy development grounded in humanitarian principles.
5. In this respect, we reiterate that international humanitarian law must remain central in the development, deployment, and use of emerging weapons technologies. Compliance with IHL is not optional; it is a binding and universal framework that ensures human dignity and accountability. The introduction of new technologies does not diminish states' legal obligations. Rather, it demands renewed attention to principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution, and to ensuring meaningful human control where it is required to uphold those principles.
6. We have also seen, across multiple theatres of conflict, the devastating humanitarian consequences of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Canada is proud to have endorsed the Political Declaration on the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA), and we call on states that have not yet done so to join us. The EWIPA declaration

* The present document was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent information.



complements our work here in the CCW by seeking to reduce civilian harm, strengthen compliance with IHL, and promote operational policies that protect civilians in urban warfare. We encourage continued dialogue in this forum on practical measures that reinforce these commitments.

7. In moving our collective work forward, Canada believes this is also an opportune moment to re-examine Protocol III of the Convention, which addresses incendiary weapons. The evolving nature of conflict, including the increased potential for urban hostilities, requires us to take a fresh look at existing legal frameworks to ensure they remain fit for purpose and effective in mitigating humanitarian harm. We therefore suggest that States Parties explore ways to strengthen implementation and consider whether further discussions are warranted on the adequacy of current provisions in light of contemporary realities.

8. Across all of these priorities, Canada places strong emphasis on gender inclusivity and the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in disarmament and security processes. Gender-responsive policymaking strengthens our collective effectiveness and ensures that the documented, differentiated impacts of weapons on women, men, boys, and girls are fully understood and addressed. We welcome the growing recognition across UN disarmament fora of the importance of incorporating gender perspectives, and we encourage all delegations to continue integrating these considerations into national and multilateral practice.

9. We reiterate the crucial role of civil society, academia, industry, and humanitarian organizations in our deliberations. Their expertise, advocacy, and field-based insights enrich our understanding and contribute to evidence-based policy outcomes. Meaningful and transparent engagement with civil society strengthens legitimacy, improves implementation, and helps ensure that the voices of those most affected by armed conflict are heard within this chamber.

10. In closing, Canada affirms its unwavering commitment to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, to the protection of civilians, and to the preservation and strengthening of international humanitarian law. Through continued cooperation, inclusivity, and principled engagement, we can ensure that this Convention remains a cornerstone of responsible state practice and humanitarian protection.
