
Seventeenth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War 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

1 December 2023

English only

Geneva, 13 November 2023

Agenda item 7

General exchange of views

Summary of discussions on issues related to compliance with provisions of Protocol V, in respect of which consensus could not be reached at the Conference

Submitted by the President

1. As President of the Seventeenth Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), I thank the participants at the Conference for their substantive work and contribution to the outcome of this important meeting.
2. Given that consensus could not be reached on certain issues, I decided to share and circulate, under my authority and responsibility, a summary of discussions on issues related to compliance with provisions of Protocol V that were raised during the discussions, but in respect of which consensus could not be reached.
3. The summary of information contained in this working paper is presented under the sole responsibility of the President and does not commit the Conference of the High Contracting Parties nor any of the High Contracting Parties that have taken part in it.
4. Under item 8 of the agenda of the Seventeenth Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V to the CCW, a general exchange of views took place, during which delegations reported on their national progress in explosive remnants of war (ERW) clearance, destruction and victim assistance and rehabilitation. Delegations also highlighted the relevance of Protocol V, especially in the current international landscape, and the long-term impact of ERWs, particularly on children and on socio-economic development, underlined the importance of international cooperation and technical assistance, emphasized the importance of information sharing through the national annual report and called for the full implementation and universalization of the Protocol. Some delegations raised serious concerns about the impact of ERWs in different regions and countries.
5. Delegations also expressed their concerns over the situation in Ukraine and called for the Russian Federation to respect international humanitarian law (IHL) and the Protocol. Delegations also reiterated their support for Ukraine in the areas of ERW clearance and victim assistance.
6. Delegations conveyed their concerns based on their sources regarding the alleged use of explosive weapons, including cluster munitions, by the Russian Federation in populated areas of Ukraine. The targets include residential buildings, critical infrastructure, hospitals, and essential power and water facilities, resulting in severe suffering for civilians. Numerous delegations emphasized that such actions and tactics employed by the armed forces of the Russian Federation are likely to have enduring consequences, leading to the persistent presence of unexploded ordnance (UXO) and ERWs in Ukraine.



7. Delegations voiced their endorsement for humanitarian mine action in Ukraine, encompassing activities such as survey and clearance, demining operations, risk education, victim assistance, and technical support.

8. Some delegations expressed serious concerns about the increase in armed conflicts in urban areas, including the terrorist attacks by Hamas against civilians in Israel and loss of civilian lives in Gaza. Several rights of reply were exercised with regard to statements made on this situation.

9. Certain observers have voiced apprehension also over the increase in armed conflicts in recent years, especially in Africa and Asia. The presence of international humanitarian organizations in various regions, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, Syria, Yemen, as well as in Colombia and other countries, helps manage risk awareness activities for communities and mine-action initiatives, including ERWs surveys in several contexts.

10. This meeting marked the first time that the Rules of Procedure were not confirmed due to the different views of one delegation on the participation of observer States and organizations participating in the meeting under Chapter X of the existing Rules of Procedure. After prolonged discussions and informal consultations during this meeting, it was agreed that the participation of all observer States and organizations was limited to two agenda items of the Annual Conference. This was reflected in the final report of the meeting as follows: “Without setting any precedent for future meetings of the Annual Conference of Protocol V, the Rules of Procedure of the Conference were confirmed by the Conference under the understanding that all observer States and organizations at the Conference had the same status among them and could speak under agenda items 8 “General exchange of views” and 9 “Review of the status and operation of the Protocol” only after the statements of the High Contracting Parties.”

11. The President explained, and the Conference agreed in the final document, that such a ruling of the President does not constitute any precedent for the future meetings of Protocol V.

12. The President underscores that High Contracting Parties welcomed the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA), led by the Republic of Ireland. They also encouraged States that have not yet signed the declaration to do so.

13. Following the conclusion of the Annual Conference of Protocol V, the delegation of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland has communicated that competent authorities of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have started the process of ratification of Protocol V. This significantly contributes to the process of universalization. However, as the official Working Paper on “Efforts undertaken regarding universalization: conclusions and recommendations” from the President of the 17th Annual Conference has already been published ([CCW/P.V/CONF/2023/WP.1](#)), this information cannot be included in his Working Paper. The President seizes this opportunity to extend his congratulations to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland.
