

Nineteenth Annual 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

13 November 2025

English only

Geneva, 10 November 2025**Agenda item 8 and 10****General exchanges of views****Issues related to the Implementation Support Unit**

Working Paper

Submitted by the State of Palestine *

1. The State of Palestine reaffirms its commitment to the universal principles and humanitarian objectives embodied in Protocol V. Since our accession to the Protocol, Palestine has worked, within its national capacity and in close cooperation with UNMAS and international partners to mitigate the grave humanitarian and environmental consequences of explosive remnants of war in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the Gaza Strip.
2. The Palestinian Mine Action Centre, in partnership with UNMAS, continues to coordinate and facilitate mine action activities. These include:
 - The assessment, marking, and clearance of contaminated sites;
 - Explosive ordnance risk education for communities; and
 - Capacity development for local Explosive Ordnance Disposal personnel.
3. Since 2007, Gaza has endured large-scale Israeli aggressions, resulting in widespread contamination with ERW and severe destruction. The 2014 aggression alone left more than 8,700 unexploded items, thousands of ERW items have been identified and destroyed in occupied besieged Gaza. These efforts, however, take place under extremely challenging conditions, marked by repeated cycles of aggression and extensive restrictions on the movement of personnel, the import of protective and technical equipment, and access to contaminated areas.
4. Also, aggressions in 2021 and the ongoing genocidal war have dramatically increased the number of remnants. The intensity and density of explosive weapons used in populated areas have produced extensive contamination, posing long-term risks to civilians, humanitarian personnel, and reconstruction efforts. Since 2023, approximately 200,000 civilians have been killed, injured, or trapped under rubble. Taking into consideration that many of the thousands of bodies still trapped under the rubble may be covered with ERW. This situation puts medical personnel at extreme risk when attempting to rescue civilians using even the most basic tools.
5. The intensive airstrikes and bombardment on Gaza has left behind an estimated 37 million tonnes of rubble, equivalent to 200 kilograms per square meter in the most heavily affected areas, and causing economic losses exceeding \$18.5 billion. Current estimates suggest that clearing today's rubble and ERW could take up to 30 years.
6. Once a permanent ceasefire is achieved and reconstruction begins, the international community must prioritize ERW clearance to ensure the safety of both civilians and those

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



engaged in rebuilding efforts. Israeli strict restrictions on items allowed into Gaza and the delayed start of reconstruction is increasing the dangers on civilians. Identifying, removing, and destroying thousands of unexploded ordnances is a highly dangerous process, especially in areas where millions of civilians remain displaced, without shelter and have no access to medical assistance as the ongoing aggression has destructed the medical system. Many bombs remain buried beneath the rubble, posing a constant risk of detonation during recovery and reconstruction operations.

7. Beyond the immediate human toll, the remnants of explosives and their chemical components continue to contaminate soil and groundwater, reduce agricultural productivity, and pose serious public health risks. FAO has declared that 98.5% of Gaza's cropland either damaged or inaccessible. The scale of destruction, civilian casualties, and long-term environmental and economic consequences underscore the profound and lasting impact of the genocidal operations on Gaza.

8. Efforts to implement Protocol V are significantly hindered by restrictions on access, movement, and the importation of specialized clearance equipment. These constraints severely limit the ability of Palestinian and UN teams to conduct systematic surveys, clearance operations, and responses to newly identified hazards.

9. Despite that, the State of Palestine remains firmly committed to fulfilling its obligations under Protocol V, including:

- The marking and removal of explosive remnants;
- Risk education and awareness for affected populations; and
- Assistance to victims of explosive ordnance.

10. The Palestinian people, especially children, the elderly, women, live in perpetual fear of death and injury from landmines, unexploded ordnance (UXO), and other remnants. In addition to the visible injuries, many suffer from long-term psychological distress, anxiety, and depression, which will impact their ability to heal and rebuild for decades to come.

11. We must ensure safety and justice to affected civilians. Also, the international community must recognize a deeper, systemic issue: the prolonged Israeli illegal occupation. The scale of destruction caused by ERW in Palestine is the direct result of illegal prolonged colonial occupation, which continues to endanger civilians and obstruct the path to peace. We cannot stand by in silence while this devastating cycle repeats itself. According to unicef, there are 4000 children that have one or two limbs amputated.

12. We call upon all High Contracting Parties to:

- (i) Support the full implementation of Protocol V through technical, financial, and political assistance to affected States, and accelerate ERW clearance in Palestine.
 - (ii) Take decisive action to prevent further harm and protect all civilians in oPt from further psychological and physical damage caused by ERW. Provide robust psychological support to all victims, integrating trauma-informed care and long-term mental health services for affected Palestinian People especially children and families.
 - (iii) Hold the illegal occupying power accountable for its crimes, and ensure future Palestinian generations are not subjected to horrors of genocide again.
 - (iv) Facilitate unrestricted access for experienced teams to Gaza Strip, ensure safe and sustainable environments for civilian return and recovery.
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