

INEW statement at the high-level roundtable on “uphold the norms that safeguard humanity”

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Thank you Mr. Chair

Distinguished delegates

The Secretary General's *Agenda for Humanity* describes the use of explosive weapons in populated areas as the primary killer of civilians in conflict. As we gather here in Istanbul, the impacts of this practice are being felt globally including in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen. In addition to causing death and injury – civilians are denied essential medical services as hospitals are hit and are overwhelmed by the influx of casualties. Children are being killed and injured at school while they learn to read. People are psychologically scarred by watching their loved ones killed and maimed in front of them. Water and sanitation facilities are being damaged and destroyed, causing outbreaks of disease and malnutrition. Families are making the heart-breaking decision to finally pack up and leave their homes, no longer able to bear living under the threat of bombing and shelling, contributing to widespread international displacement.

In 2011 civil society organisations came together to form the International Network on Explosive Weapons to respond to this fundamental humanitarian issue

Together as a network we document and speak out about the harm caused by the bombing and bombardment of towns and cities. We work in conflict and post-conflict environments to provide humanitarian assistance, to clear explosive remnants of war, and to work with survivors. And we will continue this work. But, as long as bombing and shelling continue in towns, cities and even refugee camps, our actions will not be enough.

The International Network on Explosive Weapons is making commitments here at the World Humanitarian Summit including continuing to document this pattern of harm, building recognition of the problem, developing and advocating assistance to victims, growing the group of stakeholders taking action on this issue, providing humanitarian assistance to affected populations, and working with others to build an international political commitment to stop the use in populated areas of explosive weapons with wide area effects.

The development of international law over the last century has seen progressive movement to limit such practices, and to provide greater protection to civilians. As we work to uphold the norms that safeguard humanity it is our responsibility to further strengthen international recognition

that inflicting this pattern of harm on the civilian population is unacceptable and must not be seen as inevitable.

We urge states to take up the UN Secretary General's recommendation to start work to develop an international political declaration with concrete measures to prevent harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Such a declaration will build recognition that this practice is incompatible with a real commitment to protecting civilians.

As we look at the suffering inflicted in the world around us by the bombing and shelling of towns and cities we have never been more committed to action. We look forward to working with committed states and stakeholders towards the development of a strong political declaration that will lead to changes in policy and practice and that will build international agreement that this pattern of bombing and shelling must stop.

Thank you Mr Chair