

Maputo Regional Meeting on Protecting Civilians from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas

Communique

Representatives of 19 African countries,¹ the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Network on Explosive Weapons and other civil society organizations, met in Maputo, Mozambique, from 27-28 November 2017, to share knowledge and evidence on the distinctive pattern of harm caused to civilians by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, and to explore steps to address this harm at a political and operational level.

Representatives have expressed concern that explosive weapons used in populated areas cause deaths, injuries and traumas to civilian victims, damage and destroy essential infrastructure and critical services, drive forced displacement, leave explosive remnants of war that pose a threat in the long term, disrupt socio-economic activities and potentially compromise human security;

In their exchanges, the representatives concluded that the involvement of African States and civil society can play a pivotal role in enhancing the protection of civilians from the harm caused by explosive weapons in a time when armed conflicts are increasingly fought in population centers;

Furthermore, the States representatives acknowledged the need for further actions to address this issue at national, regional and international levels, inter alia:

- Encourage collection of data and information to increase awareness and enhance knowledge about the impact of explosive weapons on civilians in populated areas;
- Avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas;
- Fully support the process that will lead to the negotiation and adoption of an international political declaration on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas;
- Promote bilateral and regional cooperation through sharing experiences, good practices and expertise on reducing the harm caused by explosive weapons to civilians;
- Constructively engage in discussions and initiatives at international level that could effectively provide greater protection to civilians in armed conflicts;
- Foster deeper and further engagement from African States and facilitate increased involvement as a group of States;
- Continue and strengthen cooperation and partnerships with international organizations and civil society organizations to draw upon their relevant expertise and support;
- Channel contributions to the draft international political declaration on the matter, as well as engage in advocacy, at national, regional and international levels.

Maputo, Mozambique, 28th November 2017

¹ Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia,, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe